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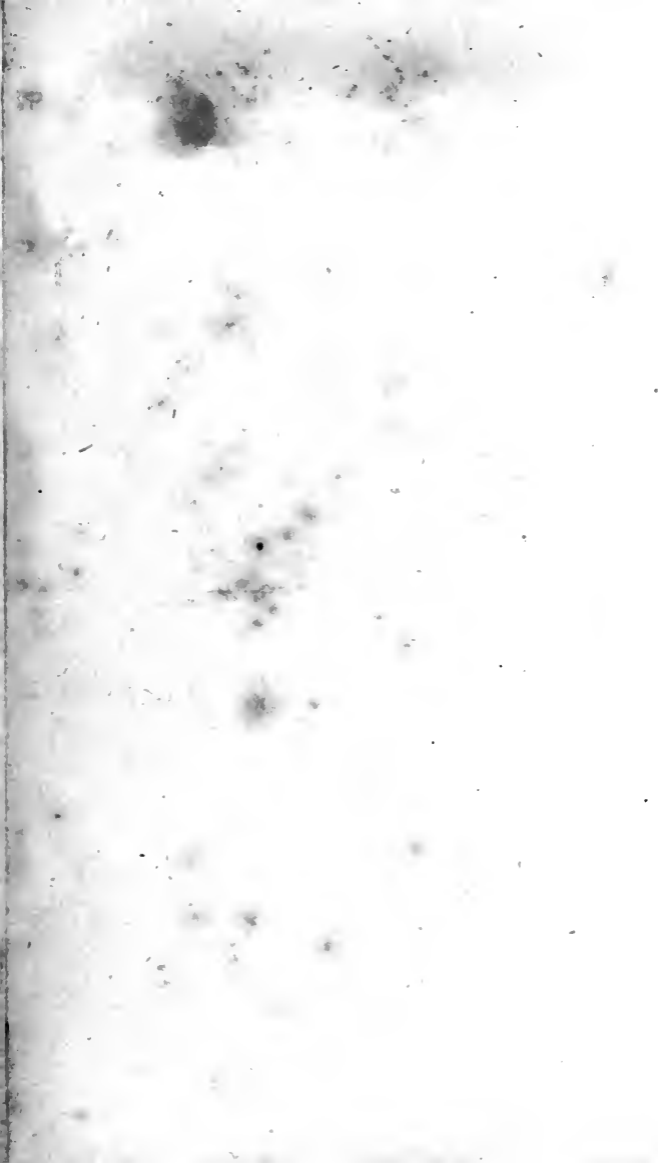
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# THE SPY.

A TALE

OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

BY

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AUTHOR OF THE

PILOT, RED ROVER, LAST OF THE MOHICANS, &c.

LONDON:

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND CO., SOHO SQUARE.

1849.



# THE SPY;

A TALE OF

## THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

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### CHAPTER I.

And though amidst the calm of thought entire,  
Some high and haughty features might betray  
A soul impetuous once—'twas earthly fire,  
That fled composure's intellectual ray ;  
As Etna's fires grow dim before the rising day.

*Gertrude of Wyoming.*

It was near the close of the year 1780, that a solitary traveller was seen pursuing his way through one of the numerous little valleys of West Chester. The easterly wind, with its chilling dampness, and increasing violence, gave unerring notice of the approach of a storm, which, as usual, might be expected to continue for several days : and the experienced eye of the traveller was turned, in vain, through the darkness of the evening, in quest of some convenient shelter, in which, for the term of his confinement by the rain, that already began to mix with the atmosphere in a thick mist, he might obtain such accommodations as his age and purposes required. Nothing, however, offered, but the small and inconvenient tenements of the lower order of the inhabitants, with whom, in that immediate neighbourhood, he did not think it either safe or politic to trust himself.

The county of West Chester, after the British had obtained possession of the island of New York, became common ground, in which both parties continued to act for the remainder of the war of the Revolution. A large proportion of its inhabitants, either restrained by their attachments, or influenced by their fears, affected a neutrality they did not feel. The lower towns were, of course, more particularly under the dominion of the crown, while the upper, finding a security from the vicinity of the continental troops, were bold in asserting their revolutionary opinions, and their right to govern themselves. Great numbers, however, wore masks, which even to this day have not been thrown aside ; and many an individual has gone down to the tomb, stigmatized as a foe to the rights of his countrymen, while,

in secret, he has been the useful agent of the leaders of the revolution; and, on the other hand, could the hidden repositories of divers flaming patriots have been opened to the light of day, royal protections would have been discovered concealed under piles of British gold.

At the sound of the tread of the noble horse ridden by the traveller, the mistress of the farm-house he was passing at the time might be seen cautiously opening the door of the building to examine the stranger; and perhaps, with an averted face, communicating the result of her observations to her husband, who, in the rear of the building, was prepared to seek, if necessary, his ordinary place of concealment in the adjacent woods. The valley was situated about mid-way in the length of the county, and was sufficiently near to either army to make the restitution of stolen goods, no uncommon occurrence in that vicinity. It is true, the same articles were not always regained; but a summary substitute was generally resorted to, in the absence of legal justice, which restored to the loser the amount of his loss, with no inconsiderable addition for the temporary use of his property.

The passage of a stranger, with an appearance of somewhat doubtful character, and mounted on an animal which, although unfurnished with any of the ordinary trappings of war, partook largely of the bold and upright carriage that distinguished his rider, gave rise to many surmises among the gazing inmates of the different habitations; and in some instances, where conscience was more than ordinarily awake, to no little alarm.

Tired with the exercise of a day of unusual fatigue, and anxious to obtain a speedy shelter from the increasing violence of the storm, that now began to change its character to large drops of driving rain, the traveller determined, as a matter of necessity, to make an application for admission to the next dwelling that offered. An opportunity was not long wanting; and, riding through a pair of neglected bars, he knocked loudly at the outer door of a building, of a very humble exterior, without quitting his saddle. A female of middle age, with an outward bearing but little more prepossessing than that of her dwelling, appeared to answer to his summons. The startled woman half closed her door again in affright, as she saw, by the glare of a large wood fire, a mounted man so unexpectedly near its threshold; and an expression of terror mingled with her natural curiosity, as she required his pleasure.

Although the door was too nearly closed to admit of a minute scrutiny of the accommodations within, enough had been seen to cause the horseman to endeavour, once more, to penetrate the gloom, with longing eyes, in search of a more promising roof,



before, with an ill-concealed reluctance, he stated his necessities and wishes. His request was listened to with evident unwillingness, and while yet unfinished, was interrupted, as she replied, in a sharp key, with a tone of reviving confidence, and an air of pert volubility—

“I can’t say I like to give lodgings to a stranger in these ticklish times; I’m nothing but a forlorn lone body; or, what’s the same thing, there’s nobody but the old gentleman at home; but a half mile further up the road is a house where you can get entertainment, and that all for nothing. I am sure ’twill be much convenient to them, and more agreeable to me; because, as I said before, Harvey is away—I wish he’d take advice, and leave off wandering; he’s well to do in the world by this time; and he ought to leave off his unsteady courses, and settle in life. But Harvey Birch will have his own way, and die a vagabond after all.”

The horseman did not wait to hear more than the advice to pursue his course up the road; but had slowly turned his horse towards the bar, and was gathering the folds of an ample cloak around him, preparatory to again facing the storm, when something in the speech of the female suddenly arrested the movement.

“Is this, then, the dwelling of Harvey Birch?” he inquired, in an apparently involuntary manner, then checking himself, as he was about to utter more.

“Why, one can hardly say it is his dwelling,” replied the other, drawing a breath somewhat between a sigh and a groan; “he is never in it, or so seldom, that I hardly remember his face, when he does think it worth his while to show it to his poor old father and—me. But it matters little to me, I’m sure, if he ever comes back again, or not;—turn in the first gate on your left;—no, I care but little, for my part, whether Harvey ever shows his face again or not—no, not I;”—and she closed the door abruptly on the horseman, who gladly extended his ride a half mile further, to obtain lodgings which promised both more comfort and greater security.

Sufficient light yet remained to enable the traveller to distinguish the improvements which had been made in the cultivation, and general appearance, of the grounds around the building to which he was now approaching. The house was of stone, long, low, and with a small wing at either extremity. A piazza, extending along the front, with neatly turned pillars, together with the good order and preservation of its fences and out-buildings, gave it an air altogether superior to the common farm houses of the country. After leading his horse behind an angle of the wall, where he was in some degree protected from the

wind and rain, the traveller threw his valise over his arm, and knocked loudly at the entrance of the building for admission. An aged black soon appeared; and without seeming to think it necessary, under the circumstances, to consult his superiors—first taking one prying look at the applicant, by the light of the candle in his hand—he acceded to the request for accommodations. The traveller was shown into an extremely neat parlour, where a fire had been lighted to cheer the dulness of an easterly storm, and an October evening.—After giving the valise into the keeping of his civil attendant, and politely repeating his request to the old gentleman, who arose to receive him, and paying his compliments to three ladies who were seated at their needles, the stranger commenced laying aside some of the outer garments which he had worn in his ride.

On taking an extra handkerchief from his neck, and removing a cloak of blue cloth, with a surtout of the same material, he exhibited to the scrutiny of the party within, a tall and extremely graceful person, of apparently fifty years of age; his countenance evinced a settled composure and dignity; his nose was straight, and approaching to Grecian; his eye, of a gray colour, was quiet, thoughtful, and rather melancholy; the mouth and lower part of his face expressive of decision and much character. His dress, being suited to the road, was simple and plain, but such as was worn by the higher class of his countrymen; he wore his own hair, dressed in a manner that gave a military air to his appearance, and which was rather heightened by his erect and conspicuously graceful carriage. His whole appearance was so impressive and decidedly that of a gentleman, that as he finished laying aside the garments, the ladies arose from their seats, and, together with the master of the house, received anew, and returned the complimentary greetings which were again offered.

The host was by several years the senior of the traveller, and by his manner, dress, and every thing around him, shewed he had seen much of life and the best society. The ladies were, a maiden of forty, and two younger ones, who did not seem to have reached half those years. The bloom of the elder of these ladies had vanished, but her eyes, and fine hair, gave an extremely agreeable expression to her countenance; and there was a softness and affability in her deportment, that added a charm many more juvenile faces do not possess. The sisters, for such the resemblance between the younger maidens denoted them to be, were in all the pride of youth, and the roses, so eminently the property of the West Chester fair, glowed with their richest colour on their cheeks, and lighted their deep blue eyes with that lustre which gives so much pleasure to the beholder, and indicates so much innocence and happiness in themselves. There was much

of that feminine delicacy in the appearance of the three, which, in a great degree, distinguishes the sex in this country; and, like the gentleman, their demcanour proved them to be women of the higher order of life.

After handing a glass of excellent Madeira to his guest, Mr. Wharton resumed his seat by the fire, with another in his own hand. For a moment he paused, as if debating with his politeness, but at length threw an inquiring glance on the stranger, as he inquired, with a formal bow—

“To whose health am I to have the honour of drinking?”

The traveller had also seated himself, and sat unconsciously gazing on the fire, while Mr. Wharton spoke; turning his eyes slowly on his host with a look of close observation, he replied, bowing in his turn, while a faint tinge gathered on his pale features—

“Mr. Harper.”

“Mr. Harper,” resumed the other, with the formal precision of the day, “I have the honour to drink your health, and hope you will sustain no injury from the rain to which you have been exposed.”

Mr. Harper bowed in silence to the compliment, and soon resumed the meditations from which he appeared to have been interrupted.

The young ladies had again taken their seats beside the workstand, while their aunt, Miss Jeanette Peyton, withdrew, to superintend the preparations necessary to appease the hunger of their unexpected visiter. A short silence prevailed, during which Mr. Harper was apparently enjoying the change in his situation, when Mr. Wharton again broke it, by inquiring, in the same polite, but formal manner, whether smoke was disagreeable to his companion; to which he received as polite a negative, and immediately resumed the pipe he had laid aside at the entrance of the traveller.

There was an evident desire on the part of the host to enter into conversation, but either from an apprehension of treading on dangerous ground, or an unwillingness to intrude upon the rather studied taciturnity of his guest, he several times hesitated before he could venture to make any further remark. At length, a movement from Mr. Harper, as he raised his eyes to the party in the room, encouraged him to proceed.

“I find it very difficult,” said Mr. Wharton, cautiously avoiding, at first, such subjects as he wished to introduce, “to procure that quality of tobacco for my evenings’ amusement, to which I have been accustomed.”

“I should think the shops in New York might furnish the best in the country,” rejoined the other, with his usual gravity.

"Why—yes," returned the host, in rather a hesitating manner, lifting his eyes to the face of Harper, and lowering them quickly under his steady look, "there must be plenty in town, but the war has made many communications with the city, however innocent in themselves, too dangerous to be risked for so trifling an article as tobacco."

The box from which Mr. Wharton had just taken a supply for his pipe, was lying open, within a few inches of the elbow of Harper, who took a small quantity of the article, and applied it to his tongue, in a manner perfectly natural, but one that filled his companion with instant alarm. Without, however, observing that the quality was of the most approved kind, the traveller relieved his host by relapsing again into his meditations. Mr. Wharton now felt unwilling to lose the advantage he had gained, and, making an effort of more than usual vigour, he continued—

"I wish from the bottom of my heart, this unnatural struggle was over, that we might again meet our friends and relatives in peace and love."

"It is much to be desired," said Harper, emphatically, again raising his eyes to the countenance of his host.

"I hear of no movements of consequence since the arrival of our new allies," said Mr. Wharton, shaking the ashes from his pipe, and turning his back to the other, under the pretence of receiving a coal from his youngest daughter.

"None have reached the public yet, I believe," replied the traveller, crossing his leg with steady composure.

"Is it thought any important steps are about to be taken?" continued Mr. Wharton, still occupied with his daughter, yet unconsciously suspending his employment, in expectation of a reply.

"Is it intimated any are in agitation?" inquired the other, in a slight degree adopting the affected indifference of Mr. Wharton's manner.

"Oh! nothing in particular," said the host, hastily—"but it is natural to expect something, you know, sir, from so powerful a force as the one under Rochambeau."

Harper made an assenting inclination with his head but no other reply, to this remark; while Mr. Wharton resumed the subject, by saying—

"They appear more active in the south; Gates and Cornwallis seem willing to bring the war to an issue there."

The brow of Harper contracted, and a deeper shade of melancholy crossed his features; his eye kindled with a transient beam of fire, that spoke a latent source of deep feeling. The admiring gaze of the younger of the sisters had barely time to read its expression, before it passed away, leaving in its room the acquired composure which marked the countenance of the stranger, and

that impressive dignity which so conspicuously denotes the empire of reason.

The elder sister made one or two movements in her chair, before she ventured to say, in a tone which partook in no small measure of triumph—

“General Gates has been less fortunate with the Earl, than with General Burgoyne.”

“But General Gates is an Englishman, Sarah,” cried the younger lady, with quickness; and then colouring to the eyes at her own boldness, she employed herself in tumbling over the contents of her work-basket, silently hoping her remark would be unnoticed.

The traveller had turned his face from one sister to the other, as they had spoken in succession, and an almost imperceptible movement of the muscles of his mouth betrayed a new emotion, as he enquired of the younger, with much courtesy of manner—

“May I venture to ask, what inference you draw from that fact?”

Frances blushed yet deeper at this direct appeal to her opinions, upon a subject on which she had incautiously spoken in the presence of a stranger; but finding an answer necessary, after some little hesitation, and with a good deal of stammering in her manner, she replied—

“Only—only—sir—my sister and myself sometimes differ in our opinions of the prowess of the British.” A smile of much meaning playing on a face of infantile innocency of expression, as she concluded, in a voice that shared in the covert humour of the speaker.

“On what particular points of prowess do you differ?” continued Harper, meeting her look of animation with an open smile of almost paternal softness.

“Why, Sarah thinks the British are never beaten; but I do not put so much faith in their invincibility.”

The traveller listened to her with that pleased indulgence, with which virtuous age loves to contemplate the ardour of youthful innocence; but making no reply, he turned to the fire, and continued for some time gazing on its embers in silence.

Mr. Wharton had in vain endeavoured to pierce the disguise of his guest's political feelings; but, while there was nothing forbidding in his countenance, there was nothing communicative—it was strikingly reserved; and the master of the house arose, in profound ignorance of what, in those days, was the most material point in the character of his guest, to lead the way into another room to the supper table. Mr. Harper offered his hand to Sarah Wharton, and they entered the room together; while Frances followed, greatly at a loss to know, whether she had not wounded the feelings of her father's inmate.

The storm began to rage with great violence without; and the dashing rain on the sides of the building, awakened that silent sense of enjoyment, which is excited by such sounds in a room of quiet comfort and warmth, when a loud summons at the outer door again called the faithful black to the portal. In a minute the servant returned, and informed his master that another traveller, overtaken by the storm, desired to be admitted to the house for a shelter through the night.

At the first sounds of the impatient summons of this new applicant, Mr. Wharton had risen from his seat in evident uneasiness; and with eyes glancing with alternate quickness from his guest to the door of the room, seemed to be expecting something to proceed from this second interruption, which was connected with the stranger who had occasioned the first. He scarcely had time to bid the black, with a faint voice, to show this second comer in, before the door was thrown hastily open, and the stranger himself entered the apartment. He paused a moment as the person of Harper met his view, and then, in a more formal manner, repeated the request he had before made through the servant. Mr. Wharton and his family disliked the appearance of this new visitor excessively; but the inclemency of the weather, and the uncertainty of the consequences, if he were refused the desired lodgings, compelled the old gentleman to give a reluctant acquiescence.

Some of the removed dishes were replaced by the orders of Miss Peyton, and the weather-beaten intruder was invited to partake of the remains of the repast from which the party had just risen. Throwing aside a rough great coat, he very composedly took the offered chair, and gravely proceeded to allay the cravings of an appetite, which appeared by no means delicate. But at every mouthful he would turn an unquiet eye on Harper, who studied his appearance with a closeness of investigation, that was very embarrassing to its subject. At length, pouring out a glass of wine, the new comer nodded significantly to his examiner, previously to swallowing the liquor, and said, with something of bitterness in his manner—

“I drink to our better acquaintance, sir; I believe this is the first time we have met.” The quality of the wine seemed greatly to his fancy, for, on replacing the glass upon the table, he gave his lips a smack, that resounded through the room; and, taking up the bottle, held it between himself and the light for a moment, in silent contemplation of its clear and brilliant colour.

“I think we have never met before, sir,” replied Harper, with a slight smile on his features, as he observed the movements of the other; but appearing satisfied with his scrutiny, he turned to Sarah Wharton, who sat next him, and remarked, with much suavity—

"You, doubtless, find your present abode solitary, after being accustomed to the gaieties of the city."

"Oh; excessively so," said Sarah, hastily; I do wish with my father, that this cruel war was at an end, that we might return to our friends once more."

"And you, Miss Frances, do you long as ardently for peace as your sister?"

"On many accounts I certainly do," returned the maid, venturing to steal a timid glance at her interrogator; and, meeting the same benevolent expression of feeling as before, she continued, as her own face lighted into one of its animated and lovely smiles of intelligence, "but not at the expense of the rights of my countrymen."

"Rights," repeated her sister, impatiently; "whose rights can be stronger than those of a sovereign; and what duty is clearer, than to obey those who have a natural right to command?"

"None, certainly," said Frances, laughing with great pleasantry; and, taking the hand of her sister affectionately within both of her own, she added, with a smile directed towards Harper—

"I gave you to understand, that my sister and myself differed in our political opinions; but we have an impartial umpire in my father, who loves his own countrymen, and loves the British, so sides with neither."

"Yes," said Mr. Wharton, in a little alarm, eyeing first one guest and then the other; "I have near friends in both armies, and I dread a victory by either, as a source of misfortune to myself."

"I take it, you have little reason to apprehend much from the Yankees in that way," interrupted the guest at table, as he coolly helped himself to another glass, from the bottle.

"His majesty may have more experienced troops than the continentals," answered the host, fearfully, "but the Americans have met with distinguished success."

Harper disregarded the observations of both; and, rising, desired to be shown to his place of rest. A small boy was directed to guide him to his room; and wishing a courteous good-night to the whole party, the traveller withdrew. The knife and fork fell from the hands of the unwelcome intruder, as the door closed on the retiring figure of Harper;—he arose slowly from his seat;—listening attentively, he approached the door of the room—opened it—seemed to attend to the retreating footsteps of the other—and, amidst the panic and astonishment of his companions, closed it again. In an instant, the red wig, which concealed his black locks, the large patch, which hid half his face from observation, the stoop, that had made him appear fifty years of age, disappeared.

"My father!—my dear father!"—cried the now handsome young man; "and you, my dearest sisters and aunt—have I at last met you again?"

"Heaven bless you, my Henry, my son," exclaimed the astonished, but delighted parent; while both his sisters sunk on his shoulders, dissolved in tears.

The faithful old black, who had been reared from infancy in the house of his present master, and who, as if in mockery of his degraded state, had been complimented with the name of Cæsar, was the only other witness of this unexpected discovery of the son of Mr. Wharton. After receiving the extended hand of his young master, and imprinting on it a kiss, and leaving on it a tear, Cæsar withdrew. The boy did not re-enter the room; and the black himself, after some time, returned, as the young British captain exclaimed—

"But who is this Mr. Harper?—is he likely to betray me?"

"No—no—no—Massa Harry," cried the African, shaking his head confidently; "I been to see—Massa Harper on he knees—pray to God—no gemman who pray to God tell of good son, come to see old fader—Skinner do that—no Christian."

This poor opinion of the Skinners was not confined to Mr. Cæsar Thompson, as he called himself—but Cæsar Wharton, as he was styled by the little world to which he was known. The convenience, and perhaps the necessities, of the leaders of the American arms, in the neighbourhood of New York, had induced them to employ certain subordinate agents, of extremely irregular habits, in executing their lesser plans of annoying the enemy. It was not a moment for fastidious inquiries into abuses of any description; and oppression and injustice were the natural consequences of the possession of a military power that was uncurbed by the restraints of civil authority. In time, a distinct order of the community was formed, whose sole occupation appears to have been relieving their fellow-citizens from any little excess of temporal prosperity they might be thought to enjoy, under the pretence of patriotism, and the love of liberty.

Occasionally, the aid of military authority was not wanting, in enforcing these arbitrary distributions of worldly goods; and a petty holder of a commission in the state militia, was to be seen giving the sanction of something like legality to acts of the most unlicensed robbery, and, not unfrequently, of bloodshed.

On the part of the British, the stimulus of loyalty was by no means suffered to sleep, where so fruitful a field offered, on which it might be expended. But their freebooters were enrolled, and their efforts more systematized. Long experience had taught their leaders the efficacy of concentrated force; and, unless tradition does great injustice to their exploits, the result did little credit to their foresight. The corps—we presume from their known affection to that useful animal—had received the significant appellation of "Cow-boys."



Cæsar was, however, far too loyal to associate men who held the commission of George III., with the irregular warriors, whose excesses he had so often witnessed, and from whose rapacity, neither his poverty nor his bondage had suffered even him to escape uninjured. The Cow-Boys, therefore, did not receive their proper portion of the severity of the black's remark, when he said, no Christian, nothing but a "Skinner," could betray a pious child, while honouring his father with a visit, full of peril, and the danger of captivity.

## CHAPTER II.

The rose of England bloomed on Gertrude's cheek—  
 What though these shades had seen her birth, her sire  
 A Briton's independence taught to seek  
 Far Western worlds ; and there his household fire  
 The light of social love did long inspire,  
 And many a halcyon day he liv'd to see  
 Unbroken, but by one misfortune dire,  
 When fate had reft his mutual heart—but she  
 Was gone—and Gertrude climb'd a widow'd father's knee.

*Gertrude of Wyoming.*

THE father of Mr. Wharton was a native of England, and of a family whose parliamentary interest had enabled them to provide for a younger son in the colony of New York. The young man, like hundreds of others in his situation, had settled permanently in the country. He married, and the sole issue of his connexion had been sent, early in life, to receive the benefits of the English schools. After taking his degrees at one of the universities of the mother country, the youth had been suffered to acquire a knowledge of life, with the advantages of European society. But the death of his father recalled him, after passing two years in this manner, to the possession of an honourable name, and a very ample estate.

It was much the fashion of that day, to place the youth of certain families in the army or navy of England, as the regular stepping-stones to preferment. Most of the higher offices in the colonies were filled by men who had made arms their profession ; and it was no uncommon sight, to see a veteran warrior laying aside the sword, to assume the ermine on the benches of the highest judicial authority.

In conformity with this system, the senior Mr. Wharton had intended his son for a soldier, but a natural imbecility of character in his child interfered with his wishes.

A twelvemonth had been spent by the young man, in weighing the advantages possessed by the different classes of troops, among which he was to serve, when the death of his father occurred. The ease of his situation, and the attentions lavished upon a youth in the actual enjoyment of one of the largest estates in the colo-

nies, interfered greatly with his ambitious projects. Love decided the matter; and Mr. Wharton, in becoming a husband, ceased to think of becoming a soldier. For many years he continued happy in his family, and respected by his countrymen; as a man of integrity and consequence, when all his enjoyments vanished, as it were, at a blow. His only son, the youth introduced in the preceding chapter, had entered the army, and had arrived in his native country, but a short time before the commencement of hostilities, with the reinforcements the ministry had thought it prudent to throw into the disaffected parts of North America. His daughters were just growing into life, and their education required all the advantages the city could afford. His wife had been for some years in declining health, and had barely time to fold her son to her bosom, and rejoice in the reunion of her family, before the revolution burst forth, in a continued blaze, from Georgia to Massachusetts. The shock was too much for the feeble condition of the mother, who saw her child called to the field, to combat against the members of her own family in the South, and she sank under the blow.

There was no part of the continent where the manners of England, and its aristocratic notions of blood and alliances, prevailed with more force than in a certain circle immediately around the metropolis of New York. The customs of the early Dutch inhabitants had, indeed, blended in some measure with the English manners; but still the latter prevailed. This attachment to Great Britain was increased by the frequent intermarriages of the officers of the mother-country with the wealthier and more powerful families of the vicinity, until, at the commencement of hostilities, their united influence had very nearly thrown the colony into the scales on the side of the crown. A few, however, of the leading families espoused the cause of the people; and a sufficient stand was made against the efforts of the ministerial party, to organize, and, aided by the army of the confederation, to maintain, an independent and republican form of government.

The city of New York, and the adjacent territory, were alone exempted from the rule of the new commonwealth; and the royal authority extended no further than its dignity could be supported by the presence of an army. In this condition of things, the loyalists of influence adopted such measures as best accorded with their different characters and situations. Many bore arms in support of the ancient laws; and, by their bravery and exertions, endeavoured to secure what they deemed to be the rights of their prince, and their own estates from confiscation. Others left the country; seeking in that place, they emphatically called home, an asylum, as they fondly hoped, for a season only, against the confusion and dangers of war. A third, and more wary portion,

remained in the place of their nativity, with a prudent regard to their ample possessions, and, perhaps, influenced by their attachments to the scenes of their youth. Mr. Wharton was of this description. After making a provision against future contingencies, by secretly transmitting the whole of his money to the British funds, this gentleman determined to continue in the theatre of strife, and to maintain so strict a neutrality, as to ensure the safety of his large estate, whichever party succeeded. He was apparently engrossed in the education of his daughters, when a relation, high in office in the new state, intimated, that a residence in what was now a British camp, differed but little, in the eyes of his countrymen, from a residence in the British capital. Mr. Wharton soon saw this was an unpardonable offence in the existing state of things, and instantly determined to remove the difficulty, by retiring to the country. He possessed a convenient residence in the county of West Chester, and having been for many years in the habit of withdrawing thither, during the heats of the summer months, it was kept furnished, and ready for his accommodation. His eldest daughter was already admitted into the society of women; but Frances, the younger, required a year or two more of the usual cultivation, to appear with proper eclat; at least so thought Miss Jeanette Peyton; and as this lady, a younger sister of their deceased mother, had left their paternal home, in the colony of Virginia, with the devotedness and affection peculiar to her sex, to superintend the welfare of her orphan nieces, Mr. Wharton felt that her opinions were entitled to profound respect. In conformity to her advice, therefore, the feelings of the parent were made to yield to the welfare of his children.

Mr. Wharton withdrew to the "Locusts," with a heart rent with the pain of separating from all that was left him of a wife he had adored, but in obedience to a constitutional prudence that pleaded loudly in behalf of his worldly goods. His handsome town residence was inhabited, in the mean while, by his daughters and their aunt. The regiment to which Captain Wharton belonged formed part of the permanent garrison of the city, and the knowledge of the presence of his son was no little relief to the father, in his unceasing meditations on his absent daughters. But Captain Wharton was a young man, and a soldier; his estimate of character was not always the wisest, and his propensities led him to imagine, that a red coat never concealed a dishonourable heart.

The house of Mr. Wharton became a fashionable lounge to the officers of the royal army, as did that of every other family thought worthy of their notice. The consequences of this association were, to some few of the visited, fortunate; to more, injurious, by exciting expectations which were never to be rea-

lized ; and, unhappily, to no small number ruinous. The known wealth of the father, and, possibly, the presence of a high-spirited brother, forbade any apprehension of the latter danger to the young ladies ; but it was impossible that all the admiration bestowed on the fine figure and lovely face of Sarah Wharton should be thrown away. Her person was formed with the early maturity of the climate, and a strict cultivation of the graces had made her, decidedly, the belle of the city. No one promised to dispute with her this female sovereignty, unless it might be her younger sister. Frances, however, wanted some months to the charmed age of sixteen ; and the idea of competition was far from the minds of either of the affectionate girls. Indeed, next to the conversation of Colonel Wellmere, the greatest pleasure of Sarah was in contemplating the budding beauties of the little Hebe, who played around her with all the innocency of youth, with all the enthusiasm of her ardent temper, and with no little of the archness of her native humour. Whether or not it was owing to the fact, that Frances received none of the compliments which fell to the lot of her elder sister, in the often repeated discussions on the merits of the war, between the military beaux who frequented the house, it is certain their effects on the sisters were exactly opposite. It was much the fashion, then, for the British officers to speak slightly of their enemies ; and Sarah took all the idle vapourings of her dangles to be truths. The first political opinions which reached the ears of Frances were coupled with sneers on the conduct of her countrymen. At first she believed them ; but there was occasionally a general who was obliged to do justice to his enemy in order to obtain justice for himself, and Frances became somewhat sceptical on the subject of the inefficiency of her countrymen. Colonel Wellmere was among those who delighted most in expending his wit on the unfortunate Americans, and, in time, Frances began to listen to his eloquence with great suspicion, and some little resentment.

It was a hot sultry day, that the three were sitting in the parlour of Mr. Wharton's house, the Colonel and Sarah, seated on a sofa, engaged in one of their combats of the eyes, aided by no little flow of small talk, and Frances, occupied at her tambouring frame, in an opposite corner of the room, when the gentleman suddenly exclaimed—

“How gay the arrival of the army under General Burgoyne will make the city, Miss Wharton !”

“Oh ! how pleasant it must be,” said the thoughtless Sarah, in reply ; “I am told there are many charming women with that army ; as you say, it will make us life and gaiety.”

Frances shook back the abundance of her golden hair, and raised

from the work her eyes, dancing with the ardour of her national feeling, and laughing, with a kind of concealed humour, she asked—

“Is it then so certain, that General Burgoyne will be permitted to reach the city?”

“Permitted!” echoed the Colonel, in affected surprise, “who is there to prevent it, if he wishes it himself, my pretty Miss Fanny?”

Frances was at precisely that age, when young people are most jealous of their station in society: neither quite a woman, nor yet a child. The “pretty Miss Fanny” was rather too familiar to be relished; and she dropped her eyes on her work again, with cheeks that glowed like crimson, as she continued very gravely—

“General Starke took the Germans into custody—may not General Gates think the British too dangerous to go at large?”

“Oh! they were Germans, as you say,” cried the Colonel, excessively vexed at the necessity of explaining at all, “mere mercenary troops; but when the really British regiments come in question, you will see a very different result.”

“Of that there is no doubt,” cried Sarah, without in the least partaking of the resentment of the Colonel to her sister, but hailing already in her heart the triumph of the British.

“Pray, Colonel Wellmere,” said Frances, recovering her good humour, and raising her joyous eyes once more to the face of the gentleman, “was the Lord Percy of Lexington a kinsman of him who fought at Chevy Chase?”

“Why, Miss Fanny, you are becoming a rebel,” said the Colonel, endeavouring to laugh away the anger he felt; “what you are pleased to insinuate was a chase at Lexington, was nothing more than a judicious retreat—a—kind of—”

“Running fight,” interrupted the good-humoured girl, laying great emphasis on the first word.

“Positively, young lady—” Colonel Wellmere was interrupted by a laugh from a person who had hitherto been unnoticed.

There was a small family apartment adjoining the room occupied by the trio, and the air had blown open the door communicating between the two. A fine young man was now seen sitting near the entrance, who, by his smiling countenance, was evidently a pleased listener to the foregoing conversation. He rose instantly, and coming through the door, with his hat in his hand, appeared a tall graceful youth, of dark complexion, and sparkling eyes of black, from which the mirth had not yet entirely vanished, as he made his bow to the ladies.

“Mr. Dunwoodie!” cried Sarah, in surprise, “I was ignorant of your being in the house; you will find a cooler seat in this room.”

“I thank you,” replied the young man, “but I must go and

seek your brother, who placed me there in ambuscade, as he called it, with a promise of returning an hour ago." Without making any further explanation, he bowed politely to the young women, distantly and with hauteur to the gentleman, and withdrew. Frances followed him into the hall, and blushing richly, inquired, in a hurried voice—

"But why—why do you leave us, Mr. Dunwoodie?—Henry must soon return."

The gentleman caught one of her hands in his own, and the stern expression of his countenance gave place to a look of admiration, as he replied—

"You managed him famously, my dear little kinswoman; never—no never, forget the land of your birth: remember Miss Wharton, if you are the grand-daughter of an Englishman, you are also the grand-daughter of a Peyton."

"Oh!" returned the laughing girl, "it would be difficult to forget that, with the constant lectures on genealogy before me with which aunt Jeanette favours me—but why do you go?"

"I am on the wing for Virginia, and have much to do." He pressed her hand as he spoke, and, looking back, while in the act of closing the door, exclaimed, "be true to your country—be American." The ardent girl kissed her hand to him as he retired, and then instantly applying it with its beautiful fellow to her burning cheeks, ran into her own apartment to hide her confusion.

Between the open sarcasm of Frances, and the ill-concealed disdain of the young man, Colonel Wellmere had felt himself placed in an awkward predicament; but, ashamed to resent such trifles in the presence of his mistress, he satisfied himself with observing, superciliously, as Dunwoodie left the room—

"Quite a liberty for a youth in his situation; a shop-boy with a bundle, I fancy."

The idea of picturing the elegant and graceful Peyton Dunwoodie as a shop-boy, could never enter the mind of Sarah, and as she looked around her in surprise, when the Colonel continued;—

"This Mr. Dun—Dun—"

"Dunwoodie! Oh no—he is a relation of my aunt," cried the young lady, "and an intimate friend of my brother; they were at school together, and only separated in England, when one went into the army, and the other to a French military academy."

"His money appears to have been thrown away," observed the Colonel, showing the spleen he was unsuccessfully striving to conceal.

"We ought to hope so," added Sarah, with a smile; "for it is said he intends joining the rebel army. He was brought in

here in a French ship, and has just been exchanged ; you may soon meet in arms."

"Well, let him—I wish Washington plenty of such heroes ;" and he turned to a more pleasant subject, by changing the discourse to themselves.

A few weeks had elapsed after this scene occurred, when the army of Burgoyne laid down their arms. Mr. Wharton, beginning to think the result of the contest to be doubtful, resolved to conciliate his countrymen, and gratify himself, by taking his daughters into his own abode, Miss Peyton consented to be their companion ; and from that time, until the period at which we commenced our narrative, they had formed one family.

Whenever the main army made any movements, Captain Wharton had, of course accompanied it ; and once or twice, under the protection of strong parties, acting in the neighbourhood of the Locusts, he had enjoyed rapid and stolen interviews with his friends. A twelvemonth had, however, passed without his seeing them ; and the impatient Henry had adopted the disguise we have mentioned, and unfortunately arrived on the very evening that an unknown and rather suspicious guest was an inmate of the house, which seldom contained any others than its regular inhabitants.

"But, do you think he suspects me ?" asked the captain, with anxiety, after pausing to listen to Cæsar's opinion of the Skinners.

"How should he ?" cried Sarah, "when your sisters and father could not penetrate your disguise."

"There is something mysterious in his manner ; his looks are too prying for an indifferent observer," continued young Wharton, thoughtfully, "and his face seems familiar to me. The recent fate of André has created much irritation on both sides. Sir Henry threatens retaliation for his death ; and Washington is as firm as if half the world were at his command. The rebels would think me a fit subject for their plans just now, should I be so unlucky as to fall into their hands."

"But my son," cried his father, in great alarm, "you are not a spy ; you are not within the rebel—that is, the American lines ;—there is nothing here to spy."

"That might be disputed," rejoined the young man, musing : "their pickets were as low as the White Plains when I passed through in disguise. It is true, my purposes are innocent ; but how is it to appear. My visit to you would seem a cloak to other designs. Remember, sir, the treatment received by yourself, not a year ago, for sending me a supply of fruit for the winter."

"That proceeded from the misrepresentations of my kind neighbours," said Mr. Wharton, "who hoped, by getting my estate confiscated, to purchase good farms, at low prices. Peyton

Dunwoodie, however, soon obtained our discharge ; we were detained but a month."

"We!" repeated the son, in amazement ; "did they take my sisters also?—Fanny, you wrote me nothing of this."

"I believe," said Frances, colouring highly, "I mentioned the kind treatment we received from your old friend, Major Dunwoodie ; and that he procured my father's release."

"True ;—but were you with him in the rebel camp?"

"Yes," said the father, kindly, "Fanny would not suffer me to go alone. Jeannette and Sarah took charge of the Locusts, and this little girl was my companion in captivity."

"And Fanny returned from such a scene a greater rebel than ever," cried Sarah, indignantly ; "one would think the hardships her father suffered would have cured her of such whims."

"What say you to the charge, my bonny sister?" cried the Captain, gaily ;—"did Peyton strive to make you hate your king more than he does himself?"

"Peyton Dunwoodie hates no one," said Frances, quickly ; and blushing at her own ardour, she added immediately, "he loves you, Henry, I know, for he has told me so again and again."

Young Wharton tapped his sister on the cheek, with a shrewd smile, as he asked her, in an affected whisper—"did he tell you also that he loved my little sister Fanny?"

"Nonsense," said Frances ; and the remnants of the supper table soon disappeared under her superintendence.

### CHAPTER III.

'Twas when the fields were swept of Autumn's store,  
And growling winds the fading foliage tore,  
Behind the Lowmon hill, the short liv'd light,  
Descending slowly, usher'd in the night ;  
When from the noisy town, with mournful look,  
His lonely way the meagre pedler took.—*Wilson.*

A STORM below the highlands of the Hudson, if it be introduced with an easterly wind, seldom lasts less than two days. Accordingly, as the inmates of the Locusts assembled, on the following morning, around their early breakfast, the driving rain was seen to strike in nearly horizontal lines against the windows of the building, and forbade the idea of exposing either man or beast to the tempest. Harper was the last to appear : after taking a view of the state of the weather, he apologized to Mr. Wharton for the necessity there existed for his trespassing upon his goodness for a longer time. To appearance, the reply was as courteous as the excuse ; yet Harper wore a resignation in his deportment that was widely different from the uneasy manner of the father. Henry Wharton had resumed his disguise with a reluctance amounting



to disgust, but in obedience to the commands of his parent. No communication passed between him and the stranger, after the first salutations of the morning had been paid by Harper to him, in common with the rest of the family. Frances had, indeed, thought there was something like a smile passing over the features of the traveller, when, on entering the room, he first confronted her brother; but it was confined to the eyes, seeming to want power to affect the muscles of the face, and was soon lost in the settled and benevolent expression which reigned in his countenance, with a sway but seldom interrupted. The eyes of the affectionate sister were turned in anxiety, for a moment, on her brother, and glancing again on their unknown guest, met his look, as he offered her, with peculiar grace, one of the little civilities of the table; and the heart of the maiden, which had begun to throb with violence, regained a pulsation as tempered as youth, health, and buoyant spirits could allow. While yet seated at the table, Cæsar entered, and laying a small parcel in silence by the side of his master, modestly retired behind his chair, where, placing one hand on its back, he continued in an attitude half familiar, but profoundly respectful.

“What is this, Cæsar?” inquired Mr. Wharton, turning the bundle over in examination of its envelope, and eyeing it rather suspiciously.

“The ’baccy, sir; Harvey Birch, he got home, and bring you a little good ’baccy from York.”

“Harvey Birch,” rejoined the master with great deliberation, stealing a look at his guest. “I do not remember desiring him to purchase any tobacco for me; but as he has brought it, he must be paid for his trouble.”

For an instant only, as the negro spoke, did Harper suspend his silent meal; his eye moved slowly from the servant to the master, and again all remained in its impenetrable reserve.

To Sarah Wharton, this intelligence gave unexpected pleasure; rising from her seat, with impatience, she bade the black show Birch into the apartment; when, suddenly recollecting herself, she turned to the traveller with an apologising look, and added, “if Mr. Harper will excuse the presence of a pedler.”

The indulgent benevolence expressed in the countenance of the stranger, as he bowed in silent acquiescence, spoke more eloquently than the nicest framed period, and the young lady repeated her order, with a confidence in its truth that removed all embarrassment.

In the deep recesses of the windows of the cottage were seats of pannelled work; and the rich damask curtains, that had ornamented the parlour in Queen-street, had been transferred to the Locusts, and gave to the room that indescribable air of comfort,

which so gratefully announces the approach of a domestic winter. Into one of these recesses Captain Wharton now threw himself, drawing the curtain before him in such a manner as to conceal most of his person from observation; while his younger sister, losing her natural frankness of manner, in an air of artificial constraint, silently took possession of the other.

Harvey Birch had been a pedler from his youth; at least so he frequently asserted, and his skill in the occupation went far to prove the truth of the declaration. He was supposed to be a native of one of the eastern colonies; and from something of superior intelligence which belonged to his father, it was thought they had known better fortunes in the land of their nativity. Harvey possessed, however, the common manners of the country, and was in no way distinguished from men of his class, but by his acuteness, and the mystery which enveloped his movements. Ten years before, they had arrived together in the vale, and, purchasing the humble dwelling at which Harper had made his unsuccessful application, continued ever since peaceful inhabitants, but little noticed and but little known. Until age and infirmities had prevented, the father devoted himself to the cultivation of the small spot of ground belonging to his purchase, while the son pursued with avidity his humble barter. Their orderly quietude had soon given them so much consideration in the neighbourhood, as to induce a maiden of five and thirty to forget the punctilio of her sex, and to accept the office of presiding over their domestic comforts. The roses had long before vanished from the cheeks of Katy Haynes, and she had seen in succession, both her male and female acquaintance forming the union so desirable to her sex, with but little or no hope left for herself, when, with views of her own, she entered the family of the Birches. Necessity is a hard master, and for the want of a better companion, the father and son were induced to accept her services; but still Katy was not wanting in some qualities, which made her a very tolerable house-keeper. On the one hand, she was neat, industrious, honest, and a good manager. On the other, she was talkative, selfish, superstitious, and inquisitive. By dint of using the latter quality with consummate skill, she had not lived in the family but five years when she triumphantly declared, that she had heard, or rather overheard, sufficient to say what had been the former fate of her associates. Could Katy have possessed enough of divination to pronounce upon their future lot, her task would have seemed comparatively easy. From the private conversations of the parent and child, she learnt that a fire had reduced them from competence to poverty, and at the same time diminished the number of their family to two. There was a tremulousness in the voice of the father, as he touched lightly on the event, which affected even

the heart of Katy ; but no barrier is sufficient to repel vulgar curiosity. She persevered, until a very direct intimation from Harvey, by threatening to supply her place with a female a few years younger than herself, gave her awful warning, that there were bounds beyond which she was not to pass. From that period the curiosity of his housekeeper had been held in such restraint, that, although no opportunity of listening was ever neglected, she had been able to add but little to her stock of knowledge. There was, however, one piece of intelligence, and that of no little interest to herself, which she had succeeded in obtaining ; and from the moment of its acquisition, she directed her energies to the accomplishment of one object, aided by the double stimulus of love and avarice.

Harvey was in the frequent habit of paying mysterious visits, in the depth of the night, to the fire-place of the apartment, that served for both kitchen and parlour. Here he was observed by Katy ; and, availing herself of his absence, and the occupations of the father, by removing one of the hearth-stones, she discovered an iron-pot, glittering with metal that seldom fails to soften the hardest heart. Katy succeeded in replacing the stone without discovery, and never dared to trust herself with another visit. From that moment, however, the heart of the virgin lost its obduracy ; and nothing interposed between Harvey and his happiness, but his own want of observation.

The war did not interfere with the traffic of the pedler, who seized on the golden opportunity which the interruption of the regular trade afforded, and appeared absorbed in the one grand object of amassing money. For a year or two, his employment was uninterrupted, and his success proportionate ; but at length, dark and threatening hints began to throw suspicion around his movements, and the civil authority thought it incumbent on them to examine narrowly into his mode of life. His imprisonments, though frequent, were not long ; and his escapes from the guardians of the law comparatively easy, to what he endured from the persecution of the military. Still Birch survived, and still he continued his trade, though compelled to be very guarded in his movements, especially whenever he approached the northern boundaries of the county ; or, in other words, the neighbourhood of the American lines. His visits to the Locusts had become less frequent, and his appearance at his own abode so seldom, as to draw forth from the disappointed Katy, in the fulness of her heart, the complaint we have related, in her reply to Harper. Nothing, however, seemed to interfere with the pursuits of this indefatigable trader ; who, with a view to dispose of certain articles for which he could only find purchasers in the very wealthiest families in the county, had now braved the fury of the tempest,

for the half mile between his own residence and the house of Mr. Wharton.

In a few minutes after receiving the commands of his young mistress, Cæsar reappeared, ushering into the apartment the subject of the foregoing digression. In person, the pedler was a man above the middle height, spare, but full of bone and muscle: at first sight, his strength seemed unequal to manage the unwieldy burden of his pack; yet he threw it on and off with great dexterity, and with as much apparent ease as if it had been feathers. His eyes were gray, sunken, restless, and, for the flitting moments that they dwelt on the countenances of those with whom he conversed, seemed to read the very soul. They possessed, however, two distinct expressions, which, in a great measure, characterized the whole man. When engaged in traffic, intelligence of his face appeared lively, active, and flexible, though uncommonly acute; if the conversation turned on the ordinary transactions of life his air became abstracted and restless; but if, by chance, the revolution and the country were the topic, his whole system seemed altered—all his faculties were concentrated; he would listen for a great length of time without speaking, and then would break silence by some light and jocular remarks, that were too much at variance with his former manner not to be affectation. But of the war, and of his father, he seldom spoke, and always from some apparent necessity.

To a superficial observer, avarice would seem his ruling passion—and, all things considered, he was as unfit a subject for the plans of Katy Haynes as can be readily imagined. On entering the room, the pedler relieved himself from his burden, which, as it stood on the floor, reached nearly to his shoulders, and saluted the family with modest civility. To Harper he made a silent bow, without lifting his eyes from the carpet; but the curtain prevented any notice of the presence of Captain Wharton. Sarah gave but little time for the usual salutations, before she commenced her survey of the contents of the pack; and, for several minutes, the two were engaged in bringing to light the various articles it contained. The tables, chairs, and floor, were soon covered with silks, crapes, gloves, muslins, and all the stock of an itinerant trader. Cæsar was employed to hold open the mouth of the pack, as its hoards were discharged, and occasionally aided his young lady, by directing her admiration to some articles of finery, which, from their deeper contrast in colours, he thought more worthy of her notice. At length, Sarah, having selected several articles, and satisfactorily arranged the prices, observed in a cheerful voice—

“But, Harvey, you have told us no news? Has Lord Cornwallis beaten the rebels again?”

The question could not have been heard ; for the pedler, burying his body in the pack, brought forth a quantity of lace of exquisite fineness, and holding it up to view, required the admiration of the young lady. Miss Peyton dropped the cup she was engaged in washing, from her hand ; and Frances exhibited the whole of that lovely face, which had hitherto only suffered one of its joyous eyes to be seen, beaming with a colour that shamed the damask, which enviously concealed her figure.

The aunt quitted her employment ; and Birch soon disposed of a large portion of this valuable article. The praises of the ladies had drawn the whole person of the younger sister into view ; and Frances was slowly rising from the window, as Sarah repeated her question, with an exultation in her voice, that proceeded more from pleasure in her purchase, than her political feelings. The younger sister resumed her seat, apparently examining into the state of the clouds, while the pedler, finding a reply was expected, answered slowly—

“There is some talk below about Tarleton having defeated General Sumpter, on the Tiger river.”

Captain Wharton now involuntarily thrust his head between the opening of the curtains into the room ; and Frances, in turning her ear, in breathless silence, noticed the quiet eyes of Harper looking at the pedler, over the book he was affecting to read, with an expression that denoted him to be a listener of no ordinary interest.

“Indeed !” cried the exulting Sarah ; “Sumpter—Sumpter—who is he ? I’ll not buy even a pin, until you tell me all the news,” she continued, laughing, and throwing down a muslin she had been examining.

For a moment the pedler hesitated ; his eye glanced towards Harper, who was yet gazing at him with settled meaning, and the whole manner of Birch was altered. Approaching the fire, he took from his mouth a large allowance of the Virginian weed, and depositing it, with the superabundance of its juices, without mercy to Miss Peyton’s shining andirons, returned to his goods, and replied in a more lively tone—

“He lives somewhere among the niggars to the south.”

“No more niggarr than be yourself, Mister Birch,” interrupted Cæsar tartly, and dropping the covering of the goods in high displeasure.

“Hugh Cæsar—hush—never mind it now,” said Sarah Wharton soothingly, waiting with impatience to hear further.

“A black man so good as white, Miss Sally,” continued the offended African, “so long he behave heself.”

“And frequently much better,” rejoined his mistress : “but Harvey, who is this Mr. Sumpter ?”

A slight indication of humour showed itself on the face of the pedler, as he continued—"As I was saying, he lives among the coloured people in the south"—Cæsar resumed his occupation—"and has lately had a skirmish with this Colonel Tarleton"—

"Who defeated him of course," cried Sarah, with confidence.

"So say the troops at Morrisania," returned the other laconically.

"But what do you say?" Mr. Wharton ventured to inquire, yet speaking involuntarily in a low tone.

"I repeat but what I hear," said Birch, offering a piece of cloth to the inspection of Sarah, who rejected it in silence, evidently determined to hear more before she made any further purchases.

"They say, however, at the Plains," the pedler continued, after first throwing his eyes again round the room, and letting them rest for an instant on Harper, "that Sumpter and one or two more were all that was hurt, and that the riglars were all cut to pieces, for the militia were fixed snugly in a log barn."

"Not very probable," said Sarah, contemptuously, "though I make no doubt the rebels got behind the logs."

"I think," said the pedler coolly, again offering the silk, "it's quite ingenious to get a log between one and a gun, instead of getting between a gun and a log." The eyes of Harper dropped quietly on the pages of the volume in his hand, while Frances, rising, came forward with a smile in her face, as she inquired, in a tone of affability that the pedler never before had witnessed from her—

"Have you more of the lace, Mr. Birch!"

The desired article was immediately produced, and Frances became a purchaser also; by her order a glass of liquor was offered to the trader, who took it with thanks, and, having paid his compliments to the master of the house and the ladies, drank the beverage.

"So, it is thought that Colonel Tarleton has worsted General Sumpter?" said Mr. Wharton, affecting to be employed in mending the cup that was broken by the eagerness of his sister-in-law.

"I believe they think so at Morrisania," said Birch drily.

"Have you any other news, friend?" asked Captain Wharton, venturing to thrust his face without the curtains again.

"Have you heard that Major André has been hung?" inquired the pedler with emphasis, in reply.

Captain Wharton stated, and for a moment glances of great significance were exchanged between him and the trader, when he observed with affected indifference, "that must have been some five weeks ago."

"Does his execution make much noise?" asked the father, striving to make his broken china unite.

“People will talk you know, 'Squire,” returned the pedler, exhibiting his goods respectfully to the young ladies.

“Is there any probability of movements below, my friend, that will make travelling dangerous?” asked Harper, looking steadily at the other, in expectation of his reply.

Some bunches of ribbons fell from the hands of Birch; his countenance changed instantly, losing its keen expression in intent meaning, as he answered slowly—“It is some time since the rig'lar cavalry were out, and I saw some of De Lancey's men were cleaning their arms, as I passed their quarters; it would be no wonder if they took the scent soon, for the Virginia horse are low in the county.”

“Are they in much force?” asked Mr. Wharton, suspending all employment in anxiety.

“I did not count them,” said the pedler, giving his attention to his trade again.

Frances was the only observer of the change in the manner of Birch, and, on turning to Harper, he had resumed his book in silence. The maid took some of the ribbons in her hand—laid them down again—and, bending over the goods, so that her hair, falling in rich curls, shaded her face, she observed, blushing with a colour that suffused her neck—

“I thought the southern horse had marched towards the Delaware.”

“It may be so,” said Birch; “I passed the troops at a distance.”

Cæsar had now selected a piece of calico, in which the colours of yellow and red were contrasted on a white ground, and, after admiring it for several minutes, laid it down with a sigh, as he exclaimed, “berry pretty calico.”

“That,” said Sarah; “yes, that would make a proper gown for your wife, Cæsar.”

“Yes, Miss Sally,” cried the delighted black, “make old Dinah heart leap for joy—so berry genteel.”

“Yes,” added the pedler, quaintly, “that would make Dinah look like a rainbow.”

Cæsar eyed his young mistress eagerly, until, laying it down with a smile, she enquired the price of Harvey.

“Why, much as I light of chaps,” said the pedler,

“How much?” demanded Sarah, in surprise.

“According to my luck in finding purchasers; for my friend Dinah, you may have it at four shillings.”

“It is too much,” said Sarah, turning to some goods for herself.

“Monstrous price for coarse calico, Mister Birch,” grumbled Cæsar, dropping the opening of the pack again.

“We will say three, then,” added the pedler, “if you like that better.”

"Be sure like 'em better," said Cæsar, smiling good-humouredly, re-opening the pack—Miss Sally like a three shilling when she give, and a four shilling when she take."

The bargain was immediately concluded; but in measuring, the cloth wanted a little of the well known ten yards required by the dimensions of Dinah. By dint of a strong arm, however, it grew to the desired length, under the experienced eye of the pedler, who conscientiously added a ribbon of corresponding brilliancy with the calico, and Cæsar hastily withdrew, to communicate the joyful intelligence to his aged partner.

During the movements created by the conclusion of the purchase, Captain Wharton had ventured to draw aside the curtain, so as to admit a view of his person, and he now inquired of the pedler, who had begun to collect his scattered goods, at what time he had left the city.

"At early twilight," was the answer.

"So lately!" cried the other in surprise; and then correcting his manner, by assuming a more guarded air, he continued—"Could you pass the tickets at so late an hour?"

"I did," was the laconic reply.

"You must be well known by this time, Harvey, to the officers of the British army," cried Sarah, smiling archly on the pedler.

"I know some of them by sight," said Birch, glancing his eyes round the apartment, taking in their course Captain Wharton, and resting for an instant on the countenance of Harper.

Mr. Wharton had listened intently to each speaker in succession, and had so far lost the affectation of indifference, as to be crushing in his hand the pieces of china on which he had expended so much labour in endeavouring to mend it; when, observing the pedler tying the last knot in his pack, he asked abruptly—

"Are we about to be disturbed again with the enemy?"

"Who do you call the enemy?" said the pedler, raising himself erect, and giving the other a look, before which the eyes of Mr. Wharton sank in instant confusion.

"All are enemies who disturb our peace," said Miss Peyton, observing that her brother was unable to speak. "But are the royal troops out from below?"

"'Tis quite likely they soon may be," returned Birch, raising his pack from the floor, and preparing to leave the room.

"And the continentals," continued Miss Peyton mildly, "are the continentals in the country?"

Harvey was about to utter something in reply, when the door opened, and Cæsar made his appearance, attended by his delighted spouse.

The race of blacks of which Cæsar was a favourable specimen is becoming very rare. The old family servant, who, born and



reared in the dwelling of his master, identified himself with the welfare of those whom it was his lot to serve, is giving place in every direction to that vagrant class which has sprung up within the last thirty years, and whose members roam through the country, unfettered by principles, or uninfluenced by attachments. For it is one of the curses of slavery, that its victims become incompetent to the attributes of a freeman. The short curly hair of Cæsar had acquired from age a colouring of grey, that added greatly to the venerable cast of his appearance. Long and indefatigable applications of the comb, had straightened the close curls of his forehead, until they stood erect in a stiff and formal precision, that gave at least two inches to his stature. The shining black of his youth had lost its glistening hue, and had been succeeded by a dingy brown. His eyes, which stood at a most formidable distance from each other, were small, and characterized by an expression of good feeling, occasionally interrupted by the petulance of an indulged servant; they, however, now danced with inward delight. His nose possessed in an eminent manner, all the requisites for smelling, but with the most modest unobtrusiveness; his nostrils being abundantly capacious, without thrusting themselves in the way of their neighbours; his mouth capacious to a fault, that was only tolerated on account of the double row of pearls it contained. In person Cæsar was short, and we would say square, had not all the angles and curves of his figure bid defiance to anything like mathematical symmetry. His arms were long and muscular, and terminated by two bony hands, that exhibited on one side a colouring of blackish grey, and on the other a faded pink. But it was in his legs that nature had indulged in her most capricious humours. There was an abundance of the material, but it had been injudiciously used. The calves were neither before nor behind, but rather on the outside of the limb, inclining forward, and so close to the knee as to render the free use of that joint a subject of doubt. In the foot, considering it as a base on which the body was to rest, Cæsar had no cause of complaint, unless, indeed, it might be that the leg was placed so near the centre, as to make it sometimes a matter of dispute, whether he was not walking backwards. But whatever might be the faults a quary could discover in his person, the heart of Cæsar Thompson was in the right place, and, we doubt not, of very just dimensions.

Accompanied by his ancient companion, Cæsar now advanced, and paid his tribute of gratitude in words. Sarah received them with great complacency, and made a few compliments to the taste of the husband, and the probable appearance of the wife. Frances, with a face beaming with a look of pleasure that corresponded to the smiling countenances of the blacks, offered the service of her

needle in fitting the admired calico to its future uses. The offer was humbly and gratefully accepted.

As Cæsar followed his wife and the pedler from the apartment, and was in the act of closing the door, he indulged himself in a grateful soliloquy, by saying aloud—

“Good little lady—Miss Fanny—take care of old fader—love to make a gown for old Dinah, too.” What else his feelings might have induced him to utter is unknown, but the sound of his voice was heard some time after the distance rendered his words indistinct.

Harper had dropped his book, and sat an admiring witness of the scene; and Frances enjoyed a double satisfaction, as she received an approving smile from a face which concealed, under the traces of deep thought and engrossing care, the benevolent expression which characterizes all the best feelings of the human heart.

#### CHAPTER IV.

“It is the form, the eye, the word,  
The bearing of that stranger Lord;  
His stature manly, bold, and tall,  
Built like a castle’s battled wall,  
Yet moulded in such just degrees,  
His giant strength seems lightsome ease.  
Weather and war their rougher trace  
Have left on that majestic face;—  
But ’tis his dignity of eye!  
There, if a suppliant, would I fly,  
Secure, ’mid danger, wrongs, and grief,  
Of sympathy, redress, relief—  
That glance, if guilty, would I dread  
More than the doom that spoke me dead.  
“Enough, enough!” the princess cried,  
“’Tis Scotland’s hope, her joy, her pride!”—*Walter Scott.*

THE party sat in silence for many minutes after the pedler withdrew. Mr. Wharton had heard enough to increase his uneasiness, without in the least removing his apprehensions on behalf of his son. The Captain was impatiently wishing Harper in any other place than the one he occupied with such apparent composure; while Miss Peyton completed the disposal of her breakfast equipage, with the mild complacency of her nature, aided a little by an inward satisfaction at her possessing in large a portion of the trader’s lace—Sarah was busily occupied in arranging her purchases, and Frances was kindly assisting her in the occupation, disregarding her own neglected bargains for the moment, when the stranger suddenly broke the silence by saying—

“If any apprehensions of me induce Captain Wharton to maintain his disguise, I wish him to be undeceived; had I motives for betraying him, they could not operate under present circumstances.”

The younger sister sank into her seat colourless and astonished. Miss Peyton dropped the tea tray she was lifting from the table; and Sarah sat with her purchases unheeded in her lap, in speechless surprise. Mr. Wharton was stupified; but the captain, hesitating a moment from astonishment, sprang into the middle of the room, and exclaimed, as he tore off the instruments of his disguise—

“I believe you, from my soul, and this tiresome imposition shall continue no longer under the roof of my father. Yet I am at a loss to conceive in what manner you know me.”

“You really look so much better in your proper person, Captain Wharton,” said Harper, with a slight smile, “I would advise you never to conceal it in future. There is enough to betray you, if other sources of detection were wanting;” as he spoke, he pointed to a picture suspended over the mantel-piece, which exhibited the British officer in his regimentals.

“I had flattered myself,” cried young Wharton, with a laugh, “that I looked better on the canvass than in a masquerade. You must be a close observer, sir.”

“Necessity has made me one,” said Harper, mildly, rising from his seat.

Frances met him as he was about to withdraw, and, taking his hand between both her own, said with earnestness, her cheeks mantling with their richest vermillion—“You cannot—you will not betray my brother.”

For an instant Harper paused in silent admiration of the lovely pleader, and then, folding her hands on his breast, replied solemnly—“I cannot, and I will not;” he released her hands, and laying his own on her head gently, continued—“if the blessing of a stranger can profit you, receive it.” He turned, and bowing low, retired to his apartment.

The whole party were deeply impressed with the ingenuous and solemn manner of the traveller, and all but the father found immediate relief in his declaration. Some of the cast-off clothes of the captain, which had been removed with the goods from the city, were produced; and young Wharton, released from the uneasiness of his disguise, began at last to enjoy a visit which had been undertaken at so much personal risk to himself. Mr. Wharton retiring to his apartment in pursuance of his regular engagements, the ladies, with the young man, were left to an uninterrupted communication on such subjects as were most agreeable. Even Miss Peyton was affected with the spirits of her younger relatives; and they sat for an hour enjoying, in heedless confidence, the pleasures of an unrestrained conversation, without reflecting on any danger which might be impending over them. The city and their acquaintances were not long neglected; for

Miss Peyton, who had never forgotten the many agreeable hours of her residence within its boundaries, soon inquired, among others, after their old acquaintance, Colonel Wellmere.

"Oh!" cried the Captain, gaily, "he yet continues there, as handsome and as gallant as ever."

Although a woman be not actually in love, she seldom hears without a blush the name of a man whom she *might* love, and who has been connected with herself, by idle gossips, in the amatory rumour of the day. Such had been the case with Sarah, and she dropped her eyes on the carpet with a smile, that, aided by the blush which suffused her cheek, in no degree detracted from her native charms.

Captain Wharton, without heeding this display of interest in his sister, immediately continued—"At times he is melancholy—we tell him it must be love." Sarah raised her eyes to the face of her brother, and was consciously turning them on the rest of the party, when she met those of her sister, laughing with good humour and high spirits, as she cried. "Poor man, does he despair?"

"Why, no—one would think he could not; the eldest son of a man of wealth, so handsome, and a Colonel."

"Strong reasons, indeed, why he should prevail," said Sarah, endeavouring to laugh; "more particularly the latter."

"Let me tell you," replied the Captain, gravely, "a Lieutenant-Colonelcy in the Guards is a very pretty thing."

"And Colonel Wellmere a very pretty man," cried Frances, with a laugh.

"Nay, Frances," returned her sister, "Colonel Wellmere was never a favourite with you; he is too loyal to his king, to be agreeable to your taste."

Frances took the hand of her sister, as she said, "and is not Henry loyal to his king?"

"Come, come," said Miss Peyton, "no difference of opinion about the Colonel—he is a favourite of mine."

"Fanny likes majors better," cried the brother, pulling her upon his knee.

"Nonsense," said the blushing girl, as she endeavoured to extricate herself from the grasp of her laughing brother.

"It surprises me," continued the Captain, "that Peyton, when he procured the release of my father, did not endeavour to detain my sister in the rebel camp."

"That might have endangered his own liberty," said the maid, smiling archly, and resuming her seat: "you know it is liberty for which Major Dunwoodie is fighting."

"Liberty!" exclaimed Sarah; "very pretty liberty, which exchanges one master for fifty."

"The privilege of changing masters at all is a liberty," returned the other, good humouredly.

"And one you ladies would sometimes be glad to exercise," cried the Captain.

"We like, I believe, to have the liberty of choosing who they shall be in the first place," said the laughing girl; "don't we, aunt Jeanette?"

"Me!" cried Miss Peyton, starting; "what do I know of such things, child? you must ask some one else, if you wish to learn such matters."

"Ah!" returned the maid, looking playfully at her aunt, "you would have us think you were never young; but what am I to believe of all the tales I have heard about the handsome Miss Jeanette Peyton?"

"Nonsense, my dear, nonsense," said the aunt, endeavouring to suppress a smile; "it is very silly to believe all you hear."

"Nonsense, do you call it?" cried the Captain, gaily; "to this hour General Montrose toasts Miss Peyton; I heard him within the week, at Sir Henry's table."

"Why, Henry, you are as saucy as your sister," returned the lady; "and to break in upon your folly, I must take you to see my new home made manufactures, in contrast with the finery of Birch."

The young people rose to follow their aunt, in perfect good humour with each other and the world. On ascending the stairs to the place of deposit for Miss Peyton's articles of economy, she availed herself, however, of an opportunity to inquire of her nephew whether General Montrose suffered as much from the gout, as he had done when she knew him.

It is a painful discovery that we make, as we advance in life, that none of us are exempt from its frailties. When the heart is fresh, and the view of the future unsullied by the blemishes which have been gathered from the experience of the past, our feelings are most holy; we love to identify with the persons of our natural friends, all those qualities to which we ourselves aspire, and all those virtues we have been taught to revere. The confidence with which we esteem seems a part of our nature; and there is a purity thrown around the affections which tie us to our kindred, that after-life can seldom hope to see uninjured. The family of Mr. Wharton continued to enjoy, for the remainder of the day, a happiness to which they had long been strangers; and one that sprang, in its younger members, from the delights of the most confident affection, and the exchange of the most disinterested endearments.

Harper appeared only at the dinner table, and retired with the cloth, under the pretence of some engagements in his own room.

Notwithstanding the confidence created by his manner, the family felt his absence a relief; for the visit of Captain Wharton was necessarily to be confined to a very few days, both from the limitation to his leave of absence, and the danger of a discovery.

All dread of consequences, however, was lost in the pleasure of the meeting. Once or twice during the day, Mr. Wharton had suggested a doubt as to the character of his unknown guest, and the possibility of the detection of his son proceeding in some manner from his information; but the idea was earnestly opposed by all his children; even Sarah united with her brother and sister in pleading warmly in favour of the sincerity expressed in the outward appearance of the traveller.

"Such appearances, my children," replied the desponding parent, "are but too often deceitful; when men like Major André lend themselves to the purposes of fraud, it is idle to reason from qualities, much less externals."

"Fraud!" cried his son quickly; "surely, sir, you forget that Major André was serving his king, and that the usages of war justified the measure."

"And did not the usages of war justify his death, Henry?" inquired Frances, speaking in a low voice, unwilling to abandon what she thought the cause of her country, and yet unable to suppress her feelings for the man.

"Never!" exclaimed the young man, springing from his seat, and paeing the floor rapidly—"Frances, you shock me; suppose it should be my fate, even now, to fall into the power of the rebels; you would vindicate my execution—perhaps exult in the cruelty of Washington."

"Henry!" said Frances, solemnly, quivering with emotion, and with a face pale as death, "you little know my heart."

"Pardon me, my sister—my little Fanny," cried the repentant youth, pressing her to his bosom, and kissing off the tears which had burst in torrents from her eyes.

"It is very foolish to regard your hasty words, I know," said Frances, extricating herself from his arms, and raising her yet humid eyes to his face with a smile; "but reproach from those we love is most severe, Henry; particularly—where we—we think—we know"—the paleness of the maid gradually gave place to the colour of the rose, as she concluded in a low voice, with her eyes directed to the carpet, "we are undeserving of it."

Miss Peyton moved from her own seat to one next her niece, and, kindly taking her hand, observed, "you should not suffer the impetuosity of your brother to affect you so much; boys, you know," she continued with a smile, "are proverbially ungovernable."

"And you might add cruel, from my conduct," said the cap-

tain, seating himself on the other side of his sister; "but on the subject of the death of André we are all of us uncommonly sensitive. You did not know him; he was all that was brave—that was accomplished—that was estimable." Frances smiled faintly, and shook her head, but made no reply. Her brother, observing the marks of incredulity in her countenance, continued—"you doubt it, and justify his death?"

"I do not doubt his worth," replied the maid, mildly, "nor his being deserving of a more happy fate; but I doubt the impropriety of Washington's conduct. I know but little of the customs of war, and wish to know less, but with what hopes of success could the Americans contend, if they yielded all the principles which long usage had established, to the exclusive purposes of the British?"

"Why contend at all?" cried Sarah, impatiently; "besides, being rebels, all their acts are illegal."

"Women are but mirrors, which reflect the images before them," cried the captain, good naturedly. "In Frances I see the picture of Major Dunwoodie, and in Sarah"—

"Colonel Wellmere," interrupted the younger sister, laughing, and blushing crimson. "I must confess I am indebted to the major for my reasoning—am I not, aunt Jeanette?"

"I believe there is something like it, indeed, child," replied Miss Peyton with a smile, "in his last letter to me."

"Yes, I plead guilty; and you, Sarah, have not forgotten the learned discussion of Colonel Wellmere."

"I trust I never forget the right," said Sarah, emulating her sister in colour, and rising, under the pretence of avoiding the heat of the fire.

Nothing occurred of any moment during the rest of the day; but in the evening Cæsar reported that he had overheard voices in the room of Harper conversing in a low tone. The apartment occupied by the traveller was the wing at the extremity of the building, opposite to the parlour in which the family ordinarily assembled; and it seems, that Cæsar had established a regular system of espionage, with a view to the safety of his young master. This intelligence gave some uneasiness to all the members of the family; but the entrance of Harper himself, with the air of benevolence and sincerity which shone through his reserve, soon removed the doubts from the breast of all but Mr. Wharton. His children and sister believed Cæsar to have been mistaken, and the evening passed off without any additional alarm.

On the afternoon of the succeeding day, the party were assembled in the parlour around the tea-table of Miss Peyton, when a change in the weather occurred. The thin *scud*, that apparently floated but a short distance above the tops of the hills,

began to drive from the west towards the east with astonishing rapidity. The rain yet continued to beat against the eastern windows of the house with incredible fury; in that direction the heavens were dark and gloomy. Frances was gazing at the scene with the desire of youth to escape from the tedium of confinement, when, as if by magic, all was still. The rushing winds had ceased, the pelting of the storm was over, and, springing to the window, the maid, with delight pictured in her face, saw a glorious ray of sunshine lighten on the opposite wood. The foliage glittered with the chequered beauties of the October leaf, reflecting back from the moistened boughs the richest lustre of an American autumn. In an instant, the piazza which opened to the south was thronged with the inmates of the cottage. The air was mild, balmy, and refreshing; in the east, clouds, which might be likened to the retreating masses of a discomfited army, hung around the horizon in awful and increasing darkness. At a little elevation above the cottage, the thin vapour was still rushing towards the east with amazing velocity; while in the west the sun had broken forth in all his majesty, and shed his parting radiance on the scene below, aided by the fullest richness of a clear atmosphere and freshened herbage. Such moments belong only to the climate of America, and are enjoyed in a degree proportioned to the suddenness of the contrast, and the pleasure we experience in escaping from the turbulence of the elements to the quiet of a peaceful evening, and an air still as the softest mornings in June.

“What a magnificent scene!” said Harper, in a low tone; “how grand! how awfully sublime!—May such a quiet speedily await the struggle in which my country is engaged, and such a glorious evening follow the day of her adversity.”

Frances, who stood next to him, alone heard the voice. Turning in amazement from the view to the speaker, she saw him standing bare headed, erect, and with his eyes to heaven. There was no longer the quiet which had seemed their characteristic, but they were lighted into something like enthusiasm, and a slight flush passed over his pale features.

There can be no danger apprehended from such a man, thought Frances; such feelings belong only to the virtuous.

The musings of the party were now interrupted by the sudden appearance of the pedler. He had taken advantage of the first gleam of sunshine to hasten to the cottage. Heedless of wet or dry as it lay in his path, with arm, swinging to and fro, and with his head bent forward of his body several inches, Harvey Birch approached the piazza, with a gait peculiarly his own; it was the quick, lengthened pace of a vender of goods.

“Fine evening,” said the pedler, saluting the party without raising his eyes; “quite warm and agreeable for the season.”



Mr. Wharton assented to the remark, and inquired kindly after the health of his father. Harvey heard him, and continued standing for some time in moody silence, but the question being repeated, he answered with a slight tremor in his voice—

“He fails fast; old age and hardships will do their work.” The pedler turned his body from the view of most of the family; but Frances noticed his glistening eyes and quivering lip, and, for the second time, Harvey rose in the estimation of the maid.

The valley in which was the residence of Mr. Wharton, ran in a direction from the north-west to south-east, and the house stood on the side of a hill which terminated its length in the former direction. A small opening, occasioned by the receding of the opposite hill, and the fall of the land to the level of the tide water, afforded a view of the sound over the tops of the distant woods on its margin. The surface of the water which had so lately been lashing the shores with boisterous fury, was already losing its ruffled darkness in the long and regular undulations that succeed the tempest, while the light air from the south-west was gently touching their summits, lending its feeble aid in stilling the waters. Some dark spots were now to be distinguished, occasionally rising into view, and again sinking behind the lengthened waves which interposed themselves to the sight. They were unnoticed by all but the pedler. He had seated himself on the piazza, at a distance from Harper, and appeared to have forgotten the object of his visit. His roving eye, however, soon caught a glimpse of these new objects in the view, and he sprang up with alacrity, gazing intently towards the water. The juices of the tobacco soon disfigured the floor of Miss Peyton; he changed his place, glanced his eye with marked uneasiness on Harper, and then said with great emphasis—

“The rig'lars must be out from below.”

“Why do you think so?” inquired Captain Wharton eagerly. “God send it may be true; I want their escort in again.”

“Them ten whale boats would not move so fast,” answered Birch dryly, “unless they were better manned than common.”

“Perhaps,” cried Mr. Wharton in alarm, “they are—they are continentals returning from the island.”

“They look like rig'lars,” said the pedler, with great meaning.

“Look!” repeated the Captain, “there is nothing but spots to be seen.”

Harvey disregarded his observation, but seemed to be soliloquizing, as he said in an under tone, “they came out before the gale—have laid on the island these two days—horse are on the road—there will soon be fighting near us.” During this speech, Birch several times glanced his eye towards Harper, with evident uneasiness, but no corresponding emotion betrayed any

interest of that gentleman in the scene. He stood in silent contemplation of the view, and seemed enjoying the change in the air. As Birch concluded, however, Harper turned to his host, and mentioned that his business would not admit of unnecessary delay; he would, therefore, avail himself of the fine evening to ride a few miles on his journey. Mr. Wharton made many professions of regret at losing so agreeable an inmate; but was too mindful of his duty not to speed the parting guest, and orders were instantly given to that effect.

The uneasiness of the pedler increased in a manner for which nothing apparent could account; his eye was constantly wandering towards the lower end of the vale, as if in expectation of some interruption from that quarter. At length Cæsar appeared, leading the noble beast which was to bear the weight of the traveller. The pedler officiously assisted to tighten the girths, and fasten the blue cloak and valise to the mail straps.

Every preparation being completed, Harper proceeded to take his leave. To Sarah and her aunt he paid his compliments with ease and kindness; but when he came to Frances, he paused a moment, while his face assumed an expression of more than ordinary benignity; his eye repeated the blessing which had before fallen from his lips, and the maid felt her cheeks glow, and heart beat with a quicker pulsation, as he spoke his adieus. There was a mutual exchange of polite courtesy between the host and his parting guest; but as Harper frankly offered his hand to Captain Wharton, he remarked, in a manner of great solemnity—

“The step you have undertaken is one of much danger, and disagreeable consequences to yourself may result from it; in such a case, I may have it in my power to prove the gratitude I owe your family for its kindness.”

“Surely, sir,” cried the father, losing sight of delicacy in apprehension for his child. “you will keep secret the discovery which your being in my house has enabled you to make.”

Harper turned quickly to the speaker, and then, losing the sternness which had begun to gather on his countenance, he answered mildly, “I have learnt nothing in your family, sir, of which I was ignorant before; but your son is safer from my knowledge of his visit than he would be without it.”

He bowed to the whole party, and without taking any notice of the pedler, other than by simply thanking him for his attentions, mounted his horse, and riding steadily and gracefully through the little gate, was soon lost behind the hill which sheltered the valley to the northward.

The eyes of the pedler followed the retiring figure of the horseman so long as it continued within view, and as it disappeared from his sight, he drew a long and heavy sigh, as if relieved from

a load of apprehension. The Whartons had meditated in silence on the character and visit of their unknown guest for the same period, when the father approached Birch, and observed—

“I am yet your debtor, Harvey, for the tobacco you were so kind as to bring me from the city.”

“If it should not prove so good as the first,” replied the pedler, fixing a last and lingering look in the direction of Harper’s route, “it is owing to the scarcity of the article.”

“I like it much,” continued the other; “but you have forgotten to name the price.”

The countenance of the trader changed, and losing its expression of deep care in natural acuteness, he answered—

“It is hard to say what ought to be the price; I believe I must leave it to your own generosity.”

Mr. Wharton had taken a hand well filled with the images of Carolus III. from his pocket, and now extended it towards Birch with three of the pieces between his finger and thumb. Harvey’s eyes twinkled as he contemplated the reward; and rolling over in his mouth a large quantity of the article in question, coolly stretched forth his hand, into which the dollars fell with a most agreeable sound; but not satisfied with the transient music of their fall, the pedler gave each piece in succession a ring on the stepping-stone to the piazza, before he consigned it to the safe keeping of a huge deer-skin purse, which vanished from the sight of the spectators so dexterously, that not one of them could have told about what part of his person it was secreted.

The very material point in his business so satisfactorily completed, the pedler rose from his seat on the floor of the piazza, and approached to where Captain Wharton stood, supporting his sisters on either arm, as they listened with the lively interest of affection to his conversation.

This agitation of the preceding incidents had caused such an expenditure of the juices which had become necessary to the mouth of the pedler, that a new supply of the weed was required before he could turn his attention to business of lesser moment. This done, he asked abruptly—

“Captain Wharton, do you go in to-night?”

“No!” said the Captain, laconically, and looking at his lovely burdens with great affection. “Mr. Birch, would you have me leave such company so soon, when I may never enjoy it again?”

“Brother!” said Frances, in a low tone, “jesting on such a subject is cruel.”

“I rather guess,” continued the pedler coolly, “now the storm is over, the Skinners may be moving; you had better shorten your visit, Captain Wharton.”

“Oh!” cried the British officer, “a few guineas will buy off

these rascals at any time, should I meet them. No, no, Mr. Birch, here I stay until morning."

"Money could not liberate Major André," said the pedler dryly.

Both the sisters now turned to the Captain in alarm, and the elder observed—

"You had better take the advice of Harvey; rest assured, brother, his opinion in such matters ought not to be disregarded."

"Yes," added the younger, "if, as I suspect, Mr. Birch assisted you to come here, your safety, our happiness, dear Henry, requires you to listen to him now."

"I brought myself out, and can take myself in," said the Captain, positively; "our bargain went no further than to procure my disguise, and let me know when the coast was clear; and in the latter particular, you were mistaken, Mr. Birch."

"I was," said the pedler, with some interest, "and the greater is the reason why you should get back to-night; the pass I gave you will serve but once."

"Cannot you forge another?"

The pale cheek of the trader showed an unusual colour, but he continued silent, with his eyes fixed to the ground, until the young man added, with great positiveness—"here I stay this night, come what will."

"Captain Wharton," said the pedler, with great deliberation and marked emphasis, "beware of a tall Virginian, with huge whiskers; he is below you to my knowledge; the devil can't deceive him; I never could but once myself."

"Let him beware of me," said Wharton haughtily; "but, Mr. Birch, I exonerate you from further responsibility."

"Will you give me that in writing?" asked the cautious Birch.

"Oh! cheerfully," cried the Captain, with a laugh; "Cæsar! pen, ink, and paper, while I write a discharge for my trusty attendant Harvey Birch, pedler, &c. &c."

The implements for writing were produced, and the Captain, with great gayety, wrote the desired acknowledgment in language of his own; which the pedler took, and carefully depositing it by the side of the images of his Catholic Majesty, made a sweeping bow to the whole family, and departed as he had approached. He was soon seen at a distance, stealing into the door of his own humble dwelling.

The father and sister of the Captain were too much rejoiced at retaining the young man, to express, or even entertain, the apprehensions his situation might reasonably excite; but, on retiring to their evening repast, a cooler reflection induced the Captain to think of changing his mind. Unwilling to trust himself out of the protection of his father's dominions, the young man despatched Cæsar to desire another interview with Harvey.

The black soon returned with the unwelcome intelligence that it was now too late. Katy had told him that Harvey must be miles on his road to the northward, "having left home at early candle light with his pack." Nothing now remained to the Captain but patience, until the morning afforded further opportunity for deciding on the best course for him to pursue,

"This Harvey Birch, with his knowing looks and portentous warnings, gives me more uneasiness than I am willing to own," said Captain Wharton, rousing himself from a fit of musing, in which the danger of his situation made no small part of his meditations.

"How is it that he is able to travel to and fro in these difficult times without molestation?" inquired Miss Peyton.

"Why the rebels suffer him to escape so easily, is more than I can answer," returned the other; "but Sir Henry would not permit a hair of his head to be injured."

"Indeed!" cried Francis with interest; "is he then known to Sir Henry Clinton?"

"At least he ought to be," said the Captain, smiling significantly.

"Do you think, my son," asked Mr. Wharton, "there is no danger of his betraying you?"

"Why—no; I reflected on that before I trusted myself to his power," said the Captain, thoughtfully; "he seems to be faithful in matters of business. The danger to himself, should he return to the city, would prevent such an act of villany."

"I think," said Frances, adopting the manner of her brother, "Harvey Birch is not without good feelings; at least he has the appearance of them at times."

"Oh!" cried his sister, exulting, "he has loyalty, and that with me is a cardinal virtue."

"I am afraid," said her brother, laughing, "love of money is a stronger passion than love to his king."

"Then," said the father, "you cannot be safe while in his power—for no love will withstand the temptation of money, when offered to avarice."

"Surely, sir," cried the youth, recovering his gayety, "there must be one love that can resist anything—is there not, Fanny?"

"Here is your candle," said the distressed maiden, "you keep your father up beyond his usual hour."

## CHAPTER V.

Through Solway sands, through Tarass moss  
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross,  
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,  
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;

In Eske, or Liddle, fords were none,  
 But he would ride them, one by one ;  
 Alike to him was time or tide,  
 December's snow, or July's pride ;  
 Alike to him was tide or time,  
 Moonless midnight, or matin prime.—*Walter Scott.*

ALL the members of the Wharton family laid their heads on their pillows that night with a fearful foreboding of some interruption of their ordinary quiet. This uneasiness kept the sisters from enjoying their usual repose, and they rose from their bed on the following morning, unrefreshed, and almost without having closed their eyes.

On taking an eager and hasty survey of the valley from the windows of their room, nothing, however, but its usual serenity was to be seen ; it was glittering with the opening brilliancy of one of those lovely, mild days, which occur about the time of the falling of the leaf ; and which, by their frequency, class the American autumn with the most delightful seasons in other countries. We have no spring ; vegetation here seems to leap into existence, instead of creeping, as in the same latitude of the old world : but how gracefully it retires ! September, October, even November and December, compose the season for enjoyment in the open air ; they have their storms, but they are distinct, and not of long continuance, leaving a clear atmosphere and a cloudless sky.

As nothing could be seen likely to interrupt the enjoyments and harmony of such a day, the sisters descended to the parlour, with a returning confidence in their brother's security, and their own consequent happiness.

The family were early in assembling around the breakfast table ; and Miss Peyton, with a little of that minute precision which creeps into the habits of single life, had pleasantly insisted that the absence of her nephew should in no manner interfere with the regular hours she had established ; consequently, the party were already seated when the Captain made his appearance ; though the untasted coffee sufficiently proved, that by none of his relatives was his absence disregarded.

"I think I did much better," he cried, taking a chair between his sisters, and receiving their offered salutes, "to secure a good bed, and such a plentiful breakfast, instead of trusting to the hospitality of that renowned corps, the Cow-Boys."

"If you could sleep," said Sarah, "you were more fortunate than Frances and myself : every murmur of the night air sounded to me like the approach of the rebel army."

"Why," said the Captain, laughing "I do acknowledge a little inquietude myself—but how was it with you," turning to his younger and evidently favourite sister, and tapping her cheek ;

“did you see banners in the clouds, and mistake Miss Peyton’s Æolian harp for rebellious music?”

“Nay, Henry,” rejoined the maid, looking at him affectionately, “much as I love my own country, the approach of her troops just now would give me great pain.”

The brother made no reply, but returning the fondness expressed in her eye by a look of fraternal tenderness, he gently pressed her hand in silence; when Cæsar, who had participated largely in the anxiety of the family, and who had risen with the dawn, and kept a vigilant watch on the surrounding objects as he stood gazing from one of the windows, exclaimed, with a face that approached to something like the hues of a white man—

“Run—massa—Harry—run—if love old Cæsar, run—here come the rebel horse.”

“Run!” repeated the British officer, gathering himself up in an air of military pride; “no, Mr. Cæsar, running is not my trade.” While speaking, he walked deliberately to the window, where the family were already collected in the greatest consternation.

At a distance of more than a mile, about fifty dragoons were to be seen, winding down one of the lateral entrances to the valley. In advance with an officer, was a man attired in the dress of a countryman, who pointed in the direction of the cottage. A small party now left the main body, and moved rapidly towards the object of their destination.

On reaching the road which led through the bottom of the valley, they turned their horses’ heads to the north—The Whartons continued chained in breathless silence to the spot, watching their movements, when the party having reached the dwelling of Birch, made a rapid circle round his grounds, and in an instant his house was surrounded by a dozen sentinels.

Two or three of the dragoons now dismounted and disappeared: in a few minutes, however, they returned to the yard, followed by Katy, from whose violent gesticulations, it was evident that matters of no trifling concern were on the carpet. A short communication with the loquacious housekeeper followed the arrival of the main body of the troop, and the advanced party remounting, the whole moved towards the Locusts with great speed.

As yet none of the family had sufficient presence of mind to devise any means of security for Captain Wharton; but the danger now became too pressing to admit of any delay, and various means of secreting him were hastily proposed; but they were all haughtily rejected by the young man, as unworthy of his character.—It was too late to retreat to the woods in the rear of the cottage, for he would unavoidably be seen, and, followed by a troop of horse, as inevitably taken.

At length, his sisters, with trembling hands, replaced his original disguise, the instruments of which had been carefully kept at hand by Cæsar, in expectation of some apprehended danger.

This arrangement was hastily and imperfectly completed, as the dragoons entered the lawn and orchard of the Locusts, riding with the rapidity of the wind; and in their turn the Whartons were surrounded.

Nothing remained now, but to meet the impending examination with as much indifference as the family could assume. The leader of the horse dismounted, and, followed by a couple of his men, approached the outer door of the building, which was slowly and reluctantly opened for his admission by Cæsar. The heavy tread of the trooper, as he followed the black to the door of the parlour, rung in the ears of the females as it approached nearer and nearer, and drove the blood from their faces to their hearts, with a chill that nearly annihilated all feeling.

A man, whose colossal stature manifested the possession of vast strength, entered the room, and removing his cap, saluted the family with a mildness his appearance did not indicate as belonging to his nature. His dark hair hung around his brow in profusion, though stained with the powder which was worn at that day, and his face was nearly hid in his whiskers by which it was disfigured. Still, the expression of his eye, though piercing, was not bad, and his voice, though deep and powerful, was not unpleasant.—Frances ventured to throw a timid glance at his figure as he entered, and saw at once the man, from whose scrutiny, Harvey Birch had warned them, there was so much to be apprehended.

“You have no cause for alarm, ladies,” said the officer, pausing a moment, and contemplating the pale faces around him—“my business will be confined to a few questions, which, if freely answered, will instantly remove us from your dwelling.”

“And what may they be, sir?” stammered Mr. Wharton, rising from his chair, and waiting anxiously for the reply.

“Has there been a strange gentleman staying with you during the storm?” continued the dragoon, speaking with interest, and in some degree sharing in the evident anxiety of the father.

“This gentleman—here—favoured us with his company during the rain, and has not yet departed;” answered the agitated parent, unable to look his interrogator in the face.

“This gentleman!” repeated the other, turning to Captain Wharton, and contemplating his figure for a moment, until the anxiety of his countenance gave place to a lurking smile. He approached the youth with an air of comic gravity, and, with a low bow, continued—“I am sorry for the severe cold you have in your head, sir.”



"Me!" exclaimed the captain, in surprise; "I have no cold in my head."

"I fancied it then, from seeing you had covered such handsome black locks with that ugly old wig," rejoined the stranger; "it was my mistake, you will please to pardon it."

Mr. Wharton groaned aloud; but the ladies, ignorant of the extent of their visitor's knowledge, remained in trembling yet rigid silence. The captain himself moved his hand involuntarily to his head, and discovered that the trepidation of his sisters had left some of his natural hair exposed. The dragoon watched the movement with a continued smile, when, seeming to recollect himself, turning to the father, he proceeded—

"Then, sir, I am to understand there has not been a Mr. Harper here within the week."

"Mr. Harper," echoed the other, feeling a load removed from his heart—"yes, sir—I had forgotten; but he is gone; and if there be anything wrong in his character, we are in entire ignorance of it—to me he was a total stranger."

"You have but little to apprehend from his character," answered the dragoon, drily; "but he is gone—how—when—and whither?"

"He departed as he arrived," said Mr. Wharton, gathering renewed confidence from the manner of the trooper, "on horseback, last evening, and he took the northern road."

The officer listened to him with intense interest, his countenance gradually lighting into a smile of pleasure; and the instant Mr. Wharton concluded his laconic reply, he turned on his heel and left the apartment. The Whartons, judging from his manner, thought he was about to proceed in quest of the object of his inquiries. They noticed the dragoon, on gaining the lawn, in earnest, and apparently pleased, conversation with his two subalterns. In a few moments orders were given to some of the troop, and horsemen left the valley at full speed, by its various roads.

The suspense of the party within, who were all highly interested witnesses of this scene, was shortly terminated; for the heavy tread of the dragoon soon announced his second approach. He bowed again politely as he re-entered the room, and walking up to Captain Wharton, said, with comic gravity—

"Now, sir, my principal business being done, may I beg to examine the quality of that wig?"

The British officer imitated the manner of the other, as he deliberately uncovered his head, and handing him the wig, observed, "I hope, sir, it is to your liking."

"I cannot without violating the truth, say it is, sir," returned the dragoon; "I prefer your ebony hair, from which you seem to have combed the powder with great industry. But that must

have been a sad hurt you have received under this enormous black patch."

"You appear so close an observer of things, I should like your opinion of it, sir," said Henry, removing the silk, and exhibiting his cheek free from blemish.

"Upon my word, sir, you improve most rapidly in externals," added the trooper, preserving his muscles in inflexible gravity: "if I could but persuade you to exchange this old surtout for that handsome blue coat by your side, I think I never could witness a more agreeable metamorphosis, since I was changed myself from a lieutenant to a captain."

Young Wharton very composedly did as was required: and stood an extremely handsome, well-dressed young man. The dragoon looked at him for a minute with the drollery that characterized his manner, and then continued—

"This is a new comer in the scene; it is usual, you know, for strangers to be introduced; I am Captain Lawton, of the Virginia horse."

"And I, sir, am Captain Wharton, of his Majesty's 60th regiment of foot," returned Henry, bowing stiffly, and recovering his natural manner.

The countenance of Lawton changed instantly, and his assumed quaintness vanished. He viewed the figure of Captain Wharton, as he stood proudly swelling with a conscious pride that disdained further concealment, and cried, with great earnestness—

"Captain Wharton, from my soul I pity you."

"Oh! then cried the father in agony, "if you pity him, dear sir, why molest him? he is not a spy; nothing but a desire to see his friends prompted him to venture so far from the regular army in disguise. Leave him with us; there is no reward, no sum, which I will not cheerfully pay."

"Sir, your anxiety for your friend excuses your language," said Lawton, haughtily; "but you forget I am a Virginian, and a gentleman." Turning to the young man, he continued—"Were you ignorant, Captain Wharton, that our pickets have been below you for several days?"

"I did not know it until I reached them, and it was then too late to retreat," said Wharton, sullenly. "I came out, as my father has mentioned, to see my friends, understanding your parties to be at Peekskill, and near the Highlands, or surely I would not have ventured."

"All this may be very true," said Lawton, musing; "but the affair of André has made us on the alert. When treason reaches the grade of general officers, Captain Wharton, it behoves the friends of liberty to be vigilant."

Henry bowed to this remark in distant silence, but Sarah ven-

tured to urge something in behalf of her brother. The dragoon heard her politely, and apparently with commiseration ; but willing to avoid useless and embarrassing petitions, answered mildly—

“ I am not the commander of the party, madam ; Major Dunwoodie will decide what must be done with your brother ; at all events, he will receive nothing but kind and gentle treatment.”

“ Dunwoodie !” exclaimed Frances, with a face in which the roses contended with the paleness of apprehension for the mastery ; “ thank God ! then Henry is safe.”

Lawton regarded her with a mingled expression of pity and admiration ; then shaking his head doubtfully, he continued—

“ I hope so ; and with your permission, we will leave the matter for his decision.”

The colour of Frances changed from the paleness of fear to the glow of hope. Her dread on behalf of her brother was certainly greatly diminished ; yet her form shook, her breathing became short and irregular, and her whole frame gave tokens of extraordinary agitation. Her eyes rose from the floor to the dragoon, and were again fixed immovably on the carpet—she evidently wished to utter something, but was unequal to the effort. Miss Peyton was a close observer of these movements of her niece, and advancing with an air of feminine dignity, inquired—

“ Then, sir, we may expect the pleasure of Major Dunwoodie’s company shortly ?”

“ Immediately, madam,” answered the dragoon, withdrawing his admiring gaze from the person of Frances, “ expresses are already on the road to announce to him our situation, and the intelligence will speedily bring him to this valley, unless, indeed ;” he continued, contracting his lips, and looking droll, as he turned to Mr. Wharton, “ some private reasons may exist to make a visit particularly unpleasant.”

“ I shall always be happy to see Major Dunwoodie,” said the father hastily, overhearing the soliloquy of the trooper.

Oh ! doubtless, sir,” said the other ; “ he is a general favourite. May I presume on it so far as to ask leave and dismount and refresh my men, who compose a part of his squadron ?”

There was a manner about the trooper, that would have made the omission of such a request easily forgiven by Mr. Wharton, but he was fairly entrapped by his own eagerness to conciliate, and it was useless to withhold a consent which he thought would probably be extorted ; he therefore made the most of the necessity of the case, and gave such orders as would facilitate the wishes of Captain Lawton.

The officers were politely invited to take their morning’s repast at the family breakfast table ; and having first made their arrangements without, the invitation was frankly accepted. None of the

watchfulness, which was so necessary to their situation, was neglected by the wary partisan. The patrols were seen on the distant hills, taking their protecting circuit around their comrades, who were enjoying, in the midst of dangers, a security that can only spring from the watchfulness of discipline, and the indifference of habit.

The addition to the party at Mr. Wharton's table was in number only three, and they were all of them men who, under the rough exterior induced by actual and arduous service, concealed the manners of the highest class of society. Consequently, the interruption to the domestic privacy of the family was marked by the observance of strict decorum. The ladies left the table to their guests, who proceeded, without much superfluous diffidence, to do proper honours to the hospitality of Mr. Wharton.

At length, Captain Lawton suspended for a moment his violent attacks on the buckwheat cakes, to inquire of the master of the house, if there was not a pedler, of the name of Birch, who lived in the valley at times.

"At times only, I believe, sir," replied Mr. Wharton, cautiously; "he is seldom here; I may say I never see him."

"That is strange, too," said the trooper, looking at the disconcerted host intently, "considering he is your next neighbour; he must be quite domestic, sir; and to the ladies it must be somewhat inconvenient. I doubt not but that muslin in the window-seat cost twice as much as he would have asked them for it."

Mr. Wharton turned in consternation, and saw some of the recent purchases scattered about the room.

The two subalterns smiled on each other significantly, but the Captain resumed his breakfast with an eagerness that created a doubt whether he ever expected to enjoy another. The necessity of a supply from the dominion of Dinah soon, however, afforded another respite, of which Lawton availed himself to say—

"I had a wish to break this Mr. Birch of his unsocial habits, and gave him a call this morning; had I found him within, I should have placed him where he would enjoy life in the midst of society, for a short time at least."

"And where might that be, sir?" asked Mr. Wharton, conceiving it necessary to say something.

"The guard-room," said the trooper, drily.

"What is the offence of poor Birch?" asked Miss Peyton, handing the dragoon a fourth dish of coffee.

"Poor!" cried the Captain; "if he is poor, John Bull must pay him ill."

"Yes, indeed," said one of the subalterns, "king George owes him a dukedom."

"And congress a halter," continued the commanding officer, commencing anew on a fresh supply of the cakes.

"I am sorry," said Mr. Wharton, that any neighbour of mine should incur the displeasure of our rulers."

"If I catch him," cried the dragoon, while buttering another cake, "he will dangle from the limbs of one of his namesakes."

"He would make a very pretty ornament, suspended from one of those locusts before his own door," added the lieutenant, coolly.

"Never mind," continued the Captain, "I will have him yet before I'm a Major."

As the language of these officers appeared to flow from the strength of their feelings, the Whartons thought it prudent to discontinue the subject. It was no new intelligence to any of the family, that Harvey Birch was distrusted, and greatly harassed, by the American officers. His escapes from their hands, not less than his imprisonments, had been the conversation of the country in too many instances, and under circumstances of too great mystery, to be easily forgotten. In fact, no small part of the bitterness expressed by Captain Lawton against the pedler, arose from the unaccountable disappearance of the latter, when intrusted to the custody of two of his most faithful dragoons.

A twelvemonth had not yet elapsed, since Birch had been seen lingering near the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief, and at a time when important movements were expected hourly to occur. So soon as the information of this fact was communicated to the officer, whose duty it was to guard the avenues to the American camp, he despatched Captain Lawton in pursuit of the suspected pedler.

Acquainted with all the passes of the hills, and indefatigable in the discharge of his duty, the trooper had, with much trouble and toil, succeeded in effecting his object. The party had halted at a farm house for the purposes of refreshment, and the prisoner was placed in a room by himself, but under the keeping of the two men before mentioned; all that was known subsequently is, that a woman was seen busily engaged in the employments of the household near the sentinels, and was particularly attentive to the wants of the Captain, until he was deeply engaged in the employments of the supper table.

Afterwards, neither woman nor pedler were to be found. The pack, indeed, was discovered open, and nearly empty, and a small door, communicating with a room adjoining to the one in which the pedler had been secured, was also open.

Captain Lawton never could forgive the deception; his antipathies to his enemies were not very moderate, but this was adding an insult to his penetration that rankled deeply. He sat in portentous silence, brooding over this exploit of his prisoner, yet mechanically pursuing the business before him; until, after sufficient time had passed to make a very comfortable meal, a trum-

pet suddenly broke on the ears of the party, sending its martial tones up the valley in startling melody. The trooper rose instantly from the table, exclaiming—

“Quick, gentlemen, to your horses; there comes Dunwoodie,” and, followed by his officers, he precipitately left the room.

With the exception of the sentinels left to guard Captain Wharton, the dragoons mounted, and marched out to meet their comrades.

None of the watchfulness necessary in war, where similarity of language, appearance, and customs rendered prudence doubly necessary, was omitted by this cautious leader. On getting sufficiently near, however, to a body of horse of more than double his own number, to distinguish countenances, Lawton plunged his rowels in his charger, and in a moment was by the side of his commander.

The ground in front of the cottage was again occupied by the horse; and, observing the same precautions as before, the newly arrived troops hastened to participate in the cheer prepared for their comrades.

## CHAPTER VI.

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“let the conquerors boast  
 Their fields of fame—he who in virtue arms  
 A young warm spirit against beauty’s charms,  
 Who feels her brightness, yet defies her thrall,  
 Is the best, bravest conqueror of them all.”—*Moore.*

THE ladies of the Wharton family had collected about a window, deeply interested in the scene we have related.

Sarah viewed the approach of her countrymen with a smile of contemptuous indifference for the persons and appearance of men, whom she thought arrayed in the unholy cause of rebellion. Miss Peyton looked on the gallant show with an exulting pride, which arose in the reflection, that the warriors before her were the chosen troops of her native colony, while Frances gazed with an intensity of interest that absorbed all other considerations.

The two parties had not yet joined, before her quickly glancing eyes distinguished one horseman in particular from those around him. Even the steed of this youthful soldier seemed to be conscious that he sustained the weight of no common man;—his hoofs but lightly touched the earth, and his airy tread was the curbed motion of a blooded charger.

The dragoon sat gracefully in his saddle, with a firmness and ease that showed him master of both himself and horse;—his figure united the just proportions of strength and activity, being tall, round, and muscular. It was to this officer Lawton made his report, and side by side they rode into the field opposite to the cottage.

The heart of the maiden beat with a pulsation nearly stifling, as he paused for a moment, and took a survey of the building, with an eye whose dark and sparkling glance could be seen, notwithstanding the distance between them;—her colour changed, and for an instant, as she saw the youth throw himself from his saddle, she was compelled to seek relief to her trembling limbs in a chair.

The officer gave a few hasty orders to his second in command, walked rapidly into the lawn, and approached the cottage. Frances rose from her seat, and vanished from the apartment. The dragoon ascended the steps of the piazza, and had barely time to touch the outer door, when it opened to his admission.

The youth of Frances, when she left the city, had prevented her sacrificing, in conformity to the customs of that day, all her native beauties on the altar of fashion. Her hair, which was of a golden richness of colour, was left, untortured, to fall in the natural ringlets of her infancy, and shaded a face which was glowing with the united charms of health, youth, and artlessness;—her eyes spoke volumes, but her tongue was silent;—her hands were interlocked before her, and, aided by her taper form, bending forward in an attitude of expectation, gave a loveliness and interest to her appearance, that for a moment chained her lover in silence to the spot.

Frances silently led the way into the vacant parlour, opposite to the one in which the family were assembled, and turning to the soldier frankly, placing both her hands in his own, exclaimed—  
“Ah, Dunwoodie! how happy, on many accounts, I am to see you; I have brought you in here, to prepare you to meet an unexpected friend in the opposite room.”

“To whatever cause it may be owing,” cried the youth, pressing her hands to his lips, “I, too, am happy in being able to see you alone. Frances, the probation you have decreed to my love is cruel; war and distance may shortly separate us for ever.”

“We must submit to the necessity which governs us,” said the maid, losing the glow of excitement in a more melancholy feeling. “But it is not love speeches I would hear now: I have other and more important matter for your attention.”

“What can be of more importance than to make you mine by a tie that may be indissoluble! Frances, you are cold to me—me—from whose mind, days of service and nights of alarm have never been able to banish your image.”

“Dear Dunwoodie,” said Frances, softening nearly to tears, and again extending her hand to him, as the richness of her colour gradually returned, “you know my sentiments—this war once ended, and you may take that hand for ever—but I can never consent to tie myself to you by any closer union than already exists, so long as you are arrayed in arms against my only brother. Even

now that brother is awaiting your decision to restore him to liberty, or conduct him to a probable death."

"Your brother!" cried Dunwoodie, starting and turning pale; "your brother! explain yourself—what dreadful meaning is concealed in your words?"

"Has not Captain Lawton told you of the arrest of Henry, as a spy, by himself this very morning?" continued Frances, in a voice barely audible, and fixing on her lover a look of the deepest and most anxious interest.

"He told me of arresting a Captain of the 60th in disguise, but without mentioning where or whom," replied the Major in a similar tone, and dropping his head between his hands, he endeavoured to conceal his feelings from his companion.

"Dunwoodie! Dunwoodie!" exclaimed Frances, losing all her former confidence in the most fearful apprehensions, "what means this agitation?" As the Major slowly raised his face, in which was pictured the most expressive concern, she continued, "surely, surely, you will not betray your friend—my brother—your brother—to an ignominious death."

"Frances!" exclaimed the young man in agony, "what can I do—what can I do?"

"Do!" repeated the maid, gazing at him wildly; "would Major Dunwoodie yield his friend to his enemies—the brother of his betrothed wife?"

"Oh speak not so unkindly to me, dearest Miss Wharton—my own Frances. I would this moment die for you—for Henry—but cannot forget my duty—cannot forfeit my honour; you yourself would be the first to despise me if I did."

"Peyton Dunwoodie!" said Frances, solemnly, and with a face of ashy paleness, "you have told me—you have sworn—that you loved me."

"I do, I do," interrupted the soldier, with fervour; but the maid, motioning with her hand for silence, continued, in a voice that trembled with her emotions—

"Do you think I can throw myself into the arms of a man whose hands are stained with the blood of my only brother?"

"Frances!" exclaimed the Major, in agony, "you wring my very heart;" then pausing for a moment to struggle with his feelings, he endeavoured to force a smile, as he added, "but after all, we may be torturing ourselves with unnecessary fears, and Henry, when I know the circumstances, may be nothing more than a prisoner of war; in which case I can liberate him on a parole."

There is no more delusive passion than hope; and it seems to be the unhappy privilege of youth to cull all the pleasures that can be gathered from its indulgence. It is when we are most



worthy of confidence ourselves, that we are least apt to distrust ; and what we think ought to be, we are fond to think will be.

The half-formed expectations of the young soldier were communicated to the desponding sister more by the eye than the voice, and the blood rushed again to her cheek, as she cried—

“ Oh ! there can be no just grounds to doubt it : I knew—I knew—Dunwoodie, you would never desert us in the hour of our greatest need.” The violence of her feelings conquered, and the agitated girl burst into a flood of tears.

The office of consoling those who love is one of the dearest prerogatives of affection, and Major Dunwoodie, although but little encouraged by his own momentary suggestion of relief, could not undeceive the lovely woman who leaned on his shoulder, as he wiped the traces of her agitated feelings from her face, with a trembling, but reviving confidence, in the safety of her brother, and the protection of her lover.

Frances having sufficiently recovered her recollection to command herself, now eagerly led the way into the opposite room, to communicate to her family the pleasing intelligence which she already conceived as certain.

Dunwoodie followed her reluctantly, and with dreadful forebodings of the result ; but a few moments brought him into the presence of his relatives, and he summoned all his resolution to meet the approaching trial with firmness.

The salutations of the young men were cordial and sincere, and, on the part of Henry Wharton, as collected as if nothing had occurred to disturb his self-possession.

The abhorrence of being, in any manner, auxiliary to the arrest of his friend ; the danger to the life of Captain Wharton ; and the heart-breaking declarations of Frances, had, however, created an uneasiness in the bosom of Major Dunwoodie, which all his efforts could not conceal. His reception by the rest of the family was kind and sincere, both from old regard, and a remembrance of former obligations, heightened by the anticipations they could not fail to read in the expressive eyes of the blushing maid by his side. After exchanging greetings with every member of the family, Major Dunwoodie beckoned to the sentinel, whom the wary prudence of Captain Lawton had left in charge of the prisoner, to leave the room. Turning to Captain Wharton, with an air of fixed resolution, he inquired mildly—

“ Tell me, Henry, the circumstances of this disguise, in which Captain Lawton reports you to have been found, and remember—remember—Captain Wharton—your answers are entirely voluntary.”

“ The disguise was used by me, Major Dunwoodie,” replied

the English officer, gravely, "to enable me to visit my friends, without incurring the danger of becoming a prisoner of war."

"But you did not wear it until you saw the troop of Lawton approaching?" inquired the Major, quickly.

"Oh! no," interrupted Frances, eagerly, forgetting all the circumstances in her anxiety for her brother; "Sarah and myself placed them on him when the dragoons appeared; it was our awkwardness that led to the discovery."

The countenance of Dunwoodie brightened as turning his eyes in fond admiration on the lovely speaker, he heard her explanation, and he added—

"Probably some articles of your own, which were at hand, and were used on the spur of the moment."

"No," said Wharton, with dignity, "the clothes were worn by me from the city; they were procured for the purpose to which they were applied, and I intended to use them in disguising me in my return this very day."

The appalled Frances shrunk back from between her brother and lover, where her ardent feelings had carried her, as the whole truth glanced over her mind, and she sank into a seat, gazing wildly on the young men who stood before her.

"But the pickets—the party at the plains"—added Dunwoodie, turning pale.

"I passed them too in disguise," continued Wharton, proudly; "I made use of this pass, for which I paid; and, as it bears the name of Washington, I presume it is forged."

Dunwoodie caught the paper from his hand eagerly, and stood gazing on the signature for some time in silence, during which the soldier gradually prevailed over the man, when he turned to the prisoner, with a searching look, as he asked—

"Captain Wharton, whence did you procure this paper?"

"That is a question, I conceive, Major Dunwoodie has no right to ask," said the other distantly.

"Your pardon, sir," resumed the American officer; "my feelings may have led me into an impropriety."

Mr. Wharton who had been a deeply interested auditor to the conversation, now so far conquered his feelings as to say, "surely, Major Dunwoodie, the paper cannot be material; such artifices are used daily in war."

"This name is no counterfeit," said the dragoon, studying the characters, and speaking in a low voice; "is treason yet among us undiscovered? The confidence of Washington has been abused, for the fictitious name is in a different hand from the pass. Captain Wharton, my duty will not suffer me to grant you a parole: you must accompany me to the Highlands."

"I did not expect otherwise, Major Dunwoodie," said the pri-

soner haughtily, moving towards his father, and speaking to him in a low tone.

Dunwoodie turned slowly towards his sister, when the figure of Frances once more arrested his gaze. She had risen from her seat, and stood again with her hands clasped before him in an attitude of intense interest: feeling himself unable to contend longer with his feelings, he made a hurried excuse for a temporary absence, and left the room. Frances followed him, and obedient to the direction of her eye, the soldier re-entered the apartment in which had been their first interview.

“Major Dunwoodie,” said Frances, in a voice barely audible, as she beckoned to him to be seated; her cheek, which had been of a chilling whiteness, was flushed with a suffusion that crimsoned her whole countenance, she struggled with herself for a moment, and continued, “I have already acknowledged to you my esteem; even now, when you most painfully distress me, I wish not to conceal it. Believe me, Henry is innocent of everything but imprudence. Our country can sustain no wrong.” Again she paused, and almost gasped for breath; her colour changed rapidly from red to white, until the blood rushed into her face, covering her features with the brightest vermilion; and she added hastily, in an under tone, “I have promised Dunwoodie, when peace is restored to our country, to become your wife; give to my brother his liberty on parole, and I will this day go with you to the altar, follow you to the camp; and, in becoming a soldier’s bride, learn to endure a soldier’s privations.”

Dunwoodie seized the hand which the blushing girl had, in her ardour, extended towards him, and pressed it for a moment to his bosom; then rising from his seat, he paced the room in excessive agitation, and exclaimed—

“Frances, say no more, I conjure you, unless you wish to break my heart.”

“You then reject my offered hand?” said the maid, with an air of offended delicacy, rising with dignity, though her pale cheek and quivering lip plainly showed the conflicting passions within.

“Reject it!” cried her lover, with enthusiasm; “have I not sought it with entreaties—with tears? Has it not been the goal of all my earthly wishes? But to take it under such conditions would be to dishonour us both. Yet hope for better things. Henry must be acquitted; perhaps not tried. No intercession of mine will be wanting, you must well know; and believe me, Frances, I am not without favour with Washington.”

“That very paper, that abuse of his confidence, to which you alluded, will steel him to my brother’s sufferings. If threats or entreaties could move his stern sense of justice, would André

have suffered?" said Frances, despairingly, as she flew from the room to conceal the violence of her emotions.

Dunwoodie remained for a minute nearly stupified, at the distress of his mistress and the pain of his own feelings; and then followed with a view to vindicate himself, and relieve her apprehensions. On entering the hall that divided the two parlours, he was met by a small ragged boy who looked one moment at his dress, and placing a piece of paper in his hands in silence, immediately vanished through the outer door of the building. The bewildered state of his mind, and the suddenness of the occurrence, gave the Major barely time to observe the messenger to be a country lad, meanly attired, and that he held in his hand one of those toys which are to be bought in cities, and which he now apparently contemplated with the conscious pleasure of having fairly purchased, by the performance of the service required. The soldier turned his eyes to the subject of the note. It was written on a piece of torn and soiled paper, and in a hand barely legible; but, after some little labour, he was able to make out as follows:—

*"The rig'lars are at hand, horse and foot."*

Dunwoodie started; and forgetting everything in the duties of a soldier, precipitately left the house. While walking rapidly towards the troops, he noticed on a distant hill a vidette riding with speed; several pistols were fired in quick succession, and the next instant the trumpets of the corps rung in his ears with the enlivening strain of "to arms." By the time he had reached the ground occupied by his squadron, the Major saw that every man was in active motion. Lawton was already in his saddle, eyeing the opposite extremity of the valley with the eagerness of expectation, and crying to the musicians, in tones but little lower than their own—

"Sound away, my lads, and let these Englishmen know, that the Virginia horse are between them and the end of their journey."

The videttes and patrols now came pouring in, each making in succession his hasty report to the commanding officer, who gave his orders coolly, and with a promptitude that made obedience certain. Once only, as he wheeled his horse to ride over the ground in front, did Dunwoodie trust himself with a look at the cottage, and his heart beat with an unusual rapidity as he saw a female figure standing, with clasped hands, at a window of the room in which he had met Frances. The distance was too great to distinguish her features through the intervening object; but the soldier could not doubt that it was his mistress. The paleness of his cheek and the languor of his eye endured but for a moment longer. As he rode towards the intended battle-ground, a flush of ardour began to show itself on his sunburnt features; and his dragoons, who studied the face of their leader, as the best index

to their own fate, saw again the wonted flashing of the eyes, and cheerful animation, which they had so often witnessed on the eve of battle. By the additions of the videttes and parties that had been out, and which now had all joined, the whole number of the horse was increased to nearly two hundred. There was also a small body of wounded men, whose ordinary duties were those of guides, but who, in cases of emergency, were embodied and did duty as foot soldiers; these were dismounted, and proceeded, by the order of Dunwoodie, to level the few fences which might interfere with the intended movements of the cavalry. The neglect of husbandry, which had been occasioned by the war, left this a comparatively easy task. Those long lines of heavy and durable walls, which now sweep through every part of the country, forty years ago were unknown. The slight and tottering fences of stone were then used more to clear the land for the purposes of cultivation, than as permanent barriers in the divisions of estates, and required the constant attention of the husbandman, to preserve them against the fury of the tempests and the frosts of winter. Some few of them had been built with more care immediately around the dwelling of Mr. Wharton; but those which had intersected the vale below were now generally a pile of ruins, over which the horses of the Virginians would bound with the fleetness of the wind. Occasionally a short line yet preserved its erect appearance, but as none of these crossed the ground on which Dunwoodie intended to act, there remained only the slighter fences of rails to be thrown down. Their duty was hastily, but effectually performed; and the guides withdrew to the post assigned to them for the approaching fight.

Major Dunwoodie had received from his scouts all the intelligence concerning his foe, which was necessary to enable him to make his arrangements. The bottom of the valley was an even plain, that fell with a slight inclination from the foot of the hills on either side, to the level of a natural meadow, that wound through the country on the banks of a small stream, by whose waters it was often inundated and fertilized. This brook was easily forded in any part of its course; and the only impediment it offered to the movements of the horse was in a place where it changed its bed from the western to the eastern side of the valley, and where its banks were more steep and difficult of access than common; here the highway crossed it by a rough wooden bridge, as it did again at the distance of half a mile above the Locusts.

The hills on the western side of the valley were abrupt, and frequently obtruded themselves in rocky prominences into its bosom, lessening the width to half its usual dimensions. One of these projections was but a short distance in the rear of the squadron of dragoons, and Dunwoodie directed Captain Lawton

to withdraw, with two troops, behind its cover. The officer obeyed with a kind of surly reluctance, that was, however, somewhat lessened by the anticipations of the effect his sudden appearance would make on his enemy. Dunwoodie knew his man, and had selected the Captain for this service, both because he feared his precipitation in the field, and knew, when needed, his support would never fail to appear. It was only in front of the enemy that Captain Lawton was hasty; at all other times his discernment and self-possession were consummately preserved; but he sometimes forgot them in his eagerness to engage. On the left of the ground on which Dunwoodie intended to meet his foe, was a close wood, which skirted that side of the valley for the distance of a mile. Into this, then, the guides retired, and took their station near its edge, in such a manner as would enable them to maintain a scattering, but effectual fire, on the advancing column of the enemy.

It cannot be supposed that all these preparations were made unheeded by the inmates of the cottage; on the contrary, every feeling which can agitate the human breast, in witnessing such a scene, was actively alive. Mr. Wharton alone saw no hopes to himself in the termination of the conflict. If the British should prevail, his son would be liberated; but what would then be his own fate! He had hitherto preserved his neutral character in the midst of trying circumstances. The fact of his having a son in the royal, or, as it was called, the regular army, had very nearly brought his estates to the hammer. Nothing had obviated this result, but the powerful interest of the relation, who held a high political rank in the state, and his own vigilant prudence. In his heart, he was a devoted loyalist; and when the blushing Frances had communicated to him the wishes of her lover, on their return from the American camp the preceding spring, the consent he had given to her future union with a rebel, was as much extracted by the increasing necessity which existed for his obtaining republican support, as by any consideration for the happiness of his child. Should his son now be rescued, he would, in the public mind, be united with him as a plotter against the freedom of the states: and should he remain a captive, and undergo the impending trial, the consequences might be still more dreadful. Much as he loved his wealth, Mr. Wharton loved his children better; and he sat gazing on the movements without, with a listless vacancy in his countenance, that denoted his imbecility of character.

Far different were the feelings of his son. Captain Wharton had been left in the keeping of two dragoons, one of whom marched too and fro the piazza with a measured tread, and the other had been directed to continue in the same apartment with

his prisoner. The young man had witnessed all the movements of Dunwoodie with admiration at the ability he had displayed, and some fearful anticipations of the consequences to his friends. He particularly disliked the ambush of the detachment under Lawton, who could be distinctly seen from the windows of the cottage, cooling his impatience, by pacing on foot the ground in front of his men. Henry Wharton threw several hasty and inquiring glances around, to see if no means of liberation would offer, but invariably found the eyes of his sentinel fixed on him with the watchfulness of an Argus. He longed, with the ardour of youth, to join in the glorious fray, but was compelled to remain a dissatisfied spectator of a scene in which he would so cheerfully have been an actor. Miss Peyton and Sarah continued gazing on the preparations with varied emotions, in which concern for the fate of the Captain formed the most prominent feeling, until the moment the shedding of blood seemed approaching, when, with the timidity of their sex, they sought the retirement of an inner room. Not so Frances; she had returned to the apartment where she had left Dunwoodie, and, from one of its windows, been a deeply interested spectator of all his movements. The wheelings of the troops, the deadly preparations, had all been unnoticed; the maid saw her lover only, and with mingled emotions of admiration and dread that nearly chilled her. At one moment, the blood rushed to her heart, as she saw the young warrior riding gracefully, and with admirable skill, through his ranks, evidently giving life and courage to all whom he addressed; and the next, it curdled with the thought, that the very gallantry she so much valued, might soon prove the means of placing the grave between her and the object of her regard. Frances gazed until she could gaze no longer.

In a field on the left of the cottage, and at a short distance in the rear of the troops, were a small group, whose occupations seemed to differ from all around them. They were in number only three, being two men and a mulatto boy. The principal personage of this party was a man, whose leanness made his really tall stature appear excessive. He wore spectacles—was unarmed, had dismounted, and seemed to be dividing his attention between a cigar, a book, and the incidents of the field before him. To this party Frances determined to send a note, directed to Dunwoodie. She wrote hastily, with a pencil, "*Come to me, Peyton, if it be but for a moment;*" and Cæsar emerged from the cellar kitchen, taking the precaution to go by the rear of the building, to avoid the sentinel on the piazza, who had very cavalierly ordered all the family to remain housed. The black delivered the note to the gentleman, with a request that it might be forwarded to Major Dunwoodie. It was the surgeon of the horse

to whom Cæsar addressed himself; and the teeth of the African chattered, as he saw displayed upon the ground the several instruments which were in preparation for the anticipated operations. The doctor himself seemed to view the arrangement with great satisfaction, as he deliberately raised his eyes from his book to order the boy to convey the note to his commanding officer, and then dropping them quietly on the page, he continued his occupation. Cæsar was slowly retiring, as the third personage, who, by his dress, might be an inferior assistant of the surgical department, coolly inquired, "if he would have a leg taken off." This question seemed to remind the black of the existence of those limbs, for he made such use of them as to reach the piazza at the same instant that Major Dunwoodie rode up at half speed. The brawny sentinel squared himself, and poised his sword with military precision, as he stood on his post while his officer passed; but no sooner had the door closed, than, turning to the negro, he said, with great deliberation—

"Harkee, blacky, if you quit the house again without my knowledge, I will shave off one of those ebony ears with this razor."

Thus assailed in another member, Cæsar hastily retreated into the kitchen, muttering something, in which the words "Skinner, and rebel rascal," formed a principal part of his speech.

"Major Dunwoodie," said Frances to her lover, as he entered, "I may have done you injustice; if I have appeared harsh"—

The emotions of the agitated girl prevailed, and she burst into tears.

"Frances," cried the soldier with warmth, "you are never harsh, never unjust, but when you doubt my love."

"Ah! Dunwoodie," added the sobbing girl, "you are about to risk your life in battle; remember that there is one heart whose happiness is built on your safety; brave I know you are; be prudent"—

"For your sake?" inquired the delighted youth.

"For my sake," replied Frances, in a voice barely audible, and dropping on his bosom.

Dunwoodie folded her to his heart, and was about to speak, as a trumpet sounded in the southern end of the vale. Imprinting one long kiss of affection on her unresisting lips, the soldier tore himself from his mistress, and hastened to the scene of strife.

Frances threw herself on a sofa, buried her hand under its cushion, and with her shawl drawn over her face, to exclude as much of sound as possible, continued there until the shouts of the combatants, the rattling of the fire-arms, and the thundering tread of the horses had ceased.



## CHAPTER VII.

I see you stand, like grey-hounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot;  
Follow your spirit. And upon this charge  
Cry—

*Shakespeare.*

THE rough and unimproved face of the country, the frequency of covers, together with the great distance from their own country, and the facilities afforded them for rapid movements to the different points of the war, by the undisputed command of the ocean, had all united to deter the English officers from employing a heavy force in cavalry, in their early efforts to subdue the revolted colonies.

Only one regiment of regular horse was sent from the mother country during the struggle. But legions and independent corps were formed in different places as it best accorded with the views of the royal commanders, or suited the exigency of the times. These were not unfrequently composed of men raised in the colonies, and at other times drafts were had from the regiments of the line, and the soldier was made to lay aside the musket and bayonet, and taught to wield the sabre and carabine. One particular body of the subsidiary troops were included in this arrangement, and the Hessian yagers were transformed into a corps of heavy and inactive horse.

Opposed to them were the hardest spirits of America. Most of the cavalry regiments of the continental army were led and officered by gentlemen from the south. The high and haughty courage of the commanders had communicated itself to the privates, who were men selected with care and attention to the service they were intended to perform.

While the British were confined to their empty conquests in the possession of a few of the larger towns, or marched through countries that were swept of everything like military supplies, the light troops of their enemies had the range of the whole of the interior before them.

The sufferings of the line of the American army were great beyond example; but possessing the power and feeling themselves engaged in a cause which justified severity, the cavalry officers were vigilant in providing for their wants, and the horse were well mounted, well fed, and consequently very effective. Perhaps the world could not furnish more brave, enterprising, and resistless corps of light cavalry, than a few that were in the continental service at the time of which we write.

Dunwoodie's men had often tried their prowess against the enemy, and now sat panting to be led once more against foes whom they seldom charged in vain. Their wishes were soon to

be gratified; for their commander had scarcely time to regain his seat in the saddle, before a body of the enemy came sweeping round the base of the hill, which intersected the view to the south. A few minutes enabled the Major to distinguish their character. In one troop he saw the green coats of the Cow-boys, and in the other the leathern helmets and wooden saddles of the yagers. Their numbers were about equal to the body under his immediate orders.

On reaching the open space near the cottage of Harvey Birch, the enemy halted and drew up his men in line, and was evidently making preparations for a charge. At this moment a column of foot appeared in the vale, and pressed forward to the bank of the brook which we have already mentioned.

Major Dunwoodie was not less distinguished for coolness and judgment, than, where occasion offered, by his dauntless intrepidity. He at once saw his advantage, and determined to profit by it. The column he led began slowly to retire from the field, when the youthful German, who commanded the enemy's horse, fearful of missing an easy conquest, gave the word to charge. Few troops were more hardy than the Cow-boys; they sprang eagerly forward in the pursuit with a confidence created by the retiring foe and the column in their rear; the Hessians followed more slowly, but in better order. The trumpets of the Virginians now sounded long and lively; they were answered by a strain from the party in ambush that went to the hearts of their enemies. The column of Dunwoodie wheeled in perfect order, opened, and, as the word to charge was given, the troops of Lawton emerged from their cover, with their leader in advance, waving his sabre over his head, and shouting in a voice that was heard above the clangour of the martial music.

The charge threatened too much for the refugee troop. They scattered in every direction, flying from the field as fast as their horses, the chosen beasts of West Chester, could carry them. Only a few were hurt: but such as did meet the arms of their avenging countrymen never survived the blow, to tell who struck it. It was upon the poor vassals of the German tyrant that the shock fell. Disciplined to the most exact obedience, these ill-fated men met the charge bravely, but they were swept before the mettled horses and nervous arms of their antagonists like chaff before the wind. Many of them were literally ridden down, and Dunwoodie soon saw the field without an opposing foe. The proximity of the infantry prevented pursuit, and behind its column, the few Hessians who escaped unhurt, sought protection.

The more cunning refugees dispersed in small bands, taking various and devious routes back to their old station in front of Haerlem. Many was the sufferer, in his cattle, furniture, and

person, that was created by this route; for the dispersion of a troop of Cow-boys was only the extension of an evil.

Such a scene could not be expected to be acted so near them, and the inmates of the cottage take no interest in the result. In truth, the feelings it excited pervaded every bosom, from the kitchen to the parlour. Terror and horror had prevented the ladies from being spectators, but they did not feel the less. Frances continued lying in the posture we have mentioned, offering up fervent and incoherent petitions for the safety of her countrymen, although in her inmost heart she had personified her nation by the graceful image of Major Dunwoodie. Her aunt and sister were less exclusive in their devotions, but Sarah began to feel, as the horrors of war were thus brought home to her senses, less pleasure in her anticipated triumphs.

The inmates of Mr. Wharton's kitchen were four—namely, Cæsar and his spouse, their grand-daughter, a jetty damsel of twenty, and the boy before alluded to. The blacks were the remnants of a race of negroes which had been entailed on his estate from Mr. Wharton's maternal ancestors, who were descended from the early Dutch colonists. Time, depravity, and death had reduced them to this small number, and the boy, who was white, had been added by Miss Peyton to the establishment, as an assistant, to perform the ordinary services of a footman. Cæsar, after first using the precaution to place himself under the cover of an angle in the wall, for a screen against any roving bullet which might be traversing the air, became an amused spectator of the skirmish. The sentinel on the piazza was at the distance but a few feet from him, and entered into the spirit of the chase with all the ardour of a tried blood-hound; he noticed the approach of the black, and his judicious position, with a smile of contempt, as he squared himself towards the enemy, offering his unprotected breast to any dangers which might come.

After considering the arrangement of Cæsar, for a moment, with ineffable disdain, the dragoon said, with great coolness—

“You seem very careful of that beautiful person of yours, Mr. Blueskin.”

“I guess a bullet hurt a coloured man as quick as a white,” muttered the black, surlily, casting a glance at his rampart with much self-satisfaction.

“I'm thinking it's all guess with you, Snowball. Suppose I make the experiment,” returned the sentinel; as he spoke, he deliberately drew a pistol from his belt, and levelled it at the black. Cæsar's teeth chattered at the appearance of the dragoon, although he believed nothing serious was intended. It was at this moment that the column of Dunwoodie began to retire, and the royal cavalry commenced their charge.

“There, Mister Light-Horseman,” said Cæsar eagerly, who believed the Americans were retiring in earnest, “why you rebels don’t fight—see—see how King George’s men make Major Dunwoodie run. Good gentleman too, but don’t like to fight a rig’lar.”

“Damn you regulars,” cried the other, fiercely; “wait a minute, blackey, and you’ll see Captain Jack Lawton come out from behind yonder hill, and scatter these Cowboys like wild geese who’ve lost their leader.”

Cæsar supposed the party under Lawton to have sought the shelter of the hill from similar motives to what had induced him to place the wall between himself and the battle-ground; but the fact soon verified the trooper’s prophecy, and the black witnessed with consternation the total rout of the royal horse.

The sentinel manifested his exultation at the success of his comrades with loud shouts, which soon brought his companion, who had been left in the more immediate charge of Henry Wharton, to the open window of the parlour.

“See, Tom, see,” cried the delighted trooper, “how Captain Lawton makes that Hessian’s leather cap fly; and now the Major has killed the officer’s horse—zounds, why did’nt he kill the Dutchman, and save the horse?”

A few pistols were discharged at the flying Cow-boys, and a spent bullet broke a pane of glass within a few feet of Cæsar. Imitating the posture of the great tempter of our race, the black sought the protection of the inside of the building, and immediately ascended to the parlour.

The small lawn in front of the Locusts was hidden from the view of the road by a close line of shrubbery, and the horses of the two dragoons had been left linked together under its shelter, to await the movements of their masters.

At this moment two Cow-boys, who had been cut off from a retreat to their own party, rode furiously through the gate, with an intention of escaping to the open wood in the rear of the cottage.

The victorious Americans pressed the retreating Germans until they had driven them under the protection of the fire of the infantry; and feeling themselves, in the privacy of the lawn, relieved from any immediate danger, the predatory warriors yielded to a temptation that few of the corps were ever known to resist—opportunity and horseflesh. With a hardihood and presence of mind that could only exist from long practice in similar scenes, they made towards their intended prizes by an almost spontaneous movement. They were busily engaged in separating the fastenings of the horses, when the trooper on the piazza discharged his pistols, and rushed, sword in hand, to the rescue.

The entrance of Cæsar into the parlour had induced the wary dragoon within to turn his attention more closely on his prisoner;

but this new interruption drew him again to the window. He threw his body out of the building, and with dreadful imprecations endeavoured, by his threats and appearance, to frighten the marauders from their prey. The moment was enticing. Three hundred of his comrades were within a mile of the cottage; unriden horses were running at large in every direction, and Henry Wharton seized the unconscious sentinel by his legs, and threw him headlong into the lawn. Cæsar vanished from the room, and drew a bolt of the outer door.

The fall of the soldier was not great, and recovering his feet, he turned his fury for a moment on his prisoner. To scale the window in the face of his enemy was, however, impossible, and on trial he found the main entrance barred.

His comrade now called loudly upon him for aid, and forgetful of everything else, the discomfited trooper rushed to his assistance. One horse was instantly liberated, but the other was already fastened to the saddle of a Cow-boy, and the four retired behind the building, cutting furiously at each other with their sabres, and making the air resound with the violence of their imprecations. Cæsar threw the outer door open, and pointing to the remaining horse, that was quietly biting the faded herbage of the lawn, exclaimed—

“Run—now—run—Massa Harry, run.”

“Yes,” cried the youth, as he vaulted into the saddle, “now, indeed, my honest fellow, is the time to run.” He beckoned hastily to his father, who stood at the window in speechless anxiety, with his hands extended towards his child in the attitude of benediction, and adding, “God bless you, Cæsar, salute the girls,” he dashed through the gate with the rapidity of lightning.

The African watched him with anxiety as he gained the highway, saw him incline to the right, and riding furiously under the brow of some rocks, which on that side rose perpendicularly, disappear behind a projection, which soon hid him from view.

The delighted Cæsar closed the door, pushing bolt after bolt, and turning the key until it would turn no more, soliloquizing the whole time on the happy escape of his young master.

“How well he ride—teach him myself—salute a young lady—I guess a Miss Fanny would’nt let old coloured man kiss her pretty red cheek.”

When the fortune of the day was decided, and the time arrived for the burial of the dead, two Cow-boys and a Virginian were found in the rear of the Locusts, to be included in the number.

Happily for Henry Wharton, the searching eyes of his captor were examining, through a pocket glass, the column of infantry that still held its position on the bank of the stream, while the remnants of the Hessian yagers were seeking its friendly protection.

His horse was of the best blood of Virginia, and carried him with the swiftness of the wind along the valley, and the heart of the youth was already beating tumultuously with pleasure at his deliverance, when a well-known voice reached his startled ear, crying aloud—

“Bravely done, Captain! Don’t spare the whip, and turn to your left before you cross the brook.”

Wharton turned his head in surprise, and saw, sitting on the point of a jutting rock, that commanded a bird’s-eye view of the valley, his former guide, Harvey Birch. His pack, much diminished in size, lay at the feet of the pedler, who waved his hat at the youth, exultingly, as the latter flew by him. The English Captain took the advice of this mysterious being, and finding a wood road, which led to the highway that intersected the valley, turned down its direction, was soon opposite to his friends, and the next minute crossed the bridge, and stopped his charger before his old acquaintance, Colonel Wellmere.

“Captain Wharton!” exclaimed the astonished commander of the English troops, “dressed in blue, and mounted on a rebel dragoon horse! are you from the clouds in this attire, and in such a style?”

“Thank God!” cried the youth, recovering his breath, “I am safe and have escaped from the hands of my enemies; but five minutes since and I was a prisoner, and threatened with the gallows.”

“The gallows, Captain Wharton! surely those traitors to the king would never dare to commit another murder in cold blood; is it not enough that they took the life of André? wherefore did they threaten you with a similar fate?”

“Under the pretence of a similar offence,” said the Captain, briefly explaining to the group of listeners the manner of his capture, the grounds for his personal apprehension, and the method of his escape. By the time he had concluded his narration, the fugitive Germans were collected in the rear of the column of infantry, and Colonel Wellmere cried aloud—

“From my soul I congratulate you, my brave friend; mercy is a quality with which these traitors are unacquainted, and you are doubly fortunate in escaping from their hands, and uninjured. Prepare yourself to grant me your assistance, and I will soon afford you a noble revenge.”

“I do not think there was danger of personal outrage to any man, Colonel Wellmere, from a party where Major Dunwoodie commands,” returned young Wharton, with a slight glow on his face; “his character is above the imputation of such an offence; neither do I think it altogether prudent to cross this brook into the open plain, in the face of those Virginian horse, flushed as they must be with the success they have just obtained.”

“Do you call the rout of those irregulars and these sluggish Hessians a deed to boast of?” said the other, with a contemptuous smile; “you speak of the affair, Captain Wharton, as if your boasted Mr. Dunwoodie, for Major he is none, had discomfited the body guards of your king.”

“And I must be allowed to say, Colonel Wellmere, that if the body guards of my king were in yon field, they would meet a foe that it would be dangerous to despise. Sir, my boasted Mr. Dunwoodie is the pride of Washington’s army as a cavalry officer,” cried Henry with warmth.

“Dunwoodie—Dunwoodie,” repeated the Colonel slowly; “surely I have met the gentleman before.”

“I have been told you once saw him, sir, for a moment, at the town residence of my sisters,” replied Wharton, with a lurking smile.

“Ah, I do remember me of such a youth,” said the Colonel with affected irony; “and does the most potent congress of these rebellious colonies intrust their soldiers to the leading of such a warrior?”

“Ask the commander of your Hessian horse, whether he thinks Major Dunwoodie worthy of the confidence,” said Henry Wharton keenly, indignant at the trifling of the other, when applied to such a man as his friend, and at a moment so unseasonable.

Colonel Wellmere was far from wanting that kind of pride which makes a man bear himself bravely in the presence of his enemies. He had served in America a long time without ever meeting with any but new raised levies, or the militia of the country; these would sometimes fight, and that fearlessly, but they as often chose to run away without pulling a trigger. He was too apt to judge from externals, and thought it impossible for men whose gaiters were so clean, whose tread was so regular, and who wheeled with so much accuracy, to be beaten. In addition to all these, they were Englishmen, and their success was certain. Colonel Wellmere had never been kept much in the field, or these notions, which he had brought with him from home, and which had been greatly increased by the vapourings of a garrisoned town, would have long since vanished. He listened to the warm reply of Captain Wharton with a supercilious smile, and then inquired—

“You would not have us retire, sir, before these boasted horsemen, without doing something that may deprive them of part of the glory which you appear to think they have gained.”

“I would have you advised, Colonel Wellmere, of the danger you are about to encounter.”

“Danger is but an unseemly word for a soldier,” continued the British commander with a sneer.

“And one as little dreaded by the 60th as any corps who wear the royal livery,” cried Henry Wharton, fiercely; “give but the word to charge, and then let our actions speak.”

“Now again I know my young friend,” said Wellmere, soothingly; “but if you have anything to say before we fight, that can in any manner help us in our attack, we’ll listen. You know the force of the rebels; are there more of them in ambush?”

“Yes,” replied the youth, chafing still with the other’s sneers, “in the skirt of this wood on our right are a small party of foot, their horse are all before you.”

“Where they will not continue long,” cried Wellmere, turning to the few officers around him; “gentlemen, we will cross the stream in column, and display on the plain beyond, or else we shall not be able to entice these valiant Yankees within the reach of our muskets. Captain Wharton, I claim your assistance as an aid-de-camp.”

The youth shook his head in disapprobation of a movement which his good sense taught him was rash, but prepared with alacrity to perform his duty in the impending trial.

During the conversation, which was held at a small distance in advance of the British column, and in full view of the Americans, Dunwoodie had been collecting his scattered troops, securing his few prisoners, and retiring to the ground where he had been posted at the first appearance of his enemy. Satisfied with the success he had already obtained, and believing the English too wary to give him an opportunity of harassing them farther, he was about to withdraw the guides, and, leaving a strong party on the ground to watch the movement of the regulars, to fall back a few miles, to a favourable place for taking up his quarters for the night. Captain Lawton was reluctantly listening to the reasoning of his commander, and had brought out his favourite glass, to see if no opening could be found for an advantageous attack, when he suddenly exclaimed—

“How’s this? a blue coat among those scarlet gentry,” again applying his glass to his eye; “as I hope to live to see old Virginia, it is my masquerading friend of the 60th, the handsome Captain Wharton, escaped from two of my best men.”

He had not done speaking when the survivor of these heroes joined his troop, bringing with him his own horse and those of the Cow boys; he reported the death of his comrade, and the escape of his prisoner. As the deceased was the immediate sentinel over the person of young Wharton, and the other was not to be blamed for defending the horses which were more particularly under his care, his captain heard him with uneasiness, but without anger.

This intelligence made an entire change in the views of Major



Dunwoodie. He saw at once that his own reputation was involved in the escape of his prisoner. The order to recall the guides was countermanded, and he now joined his second in command, watching, as eagerly as the impetuous Lawton himself, for some opening to assail his foe to advantage.

But two hours before, and Dunwoodie had felt the chance which made Henry Wharton his captive, as the severest blow he had ever sustained. Now he panted for an opportunity in which, by risking his own life, he might return his friend to bondage. All other considerations were lost in the goadings of his wounded spirit, and he might have soon enulated Lawton in hardihood, had not Wellmere and his troops at this moment crossed the brook into the open plain.

"There," cried the delighted Captain, as he pointed out the movement with his finger, "there comes John Bull into the mouse-trap, and with his eyes wide open."

"Surely," said Dunwoodie, eagerly, "he will not display his column on that flat; Wharton must tell him of the ambush. But if he does"—

"We will not leave a dozen sound skins in his battalion," interrupted the other, springing into his saddle.

The truth was soon apparent; for the English column, after advancing for a short distance on the level land, displayed with an accuracy that would have done them honour on a field day in their own Hyde Park.

"Prepare to mount—mount;" cried Dunwoodie; the last word being repeated by Lawton in a tone that rang in the ears of Cæsar, who stood at the open window of the cottage. The black recoiled in dismay, having lost all his confidence in Captain Lawton's timidity, for he thought he yet saw him emerging from his cover and waving his sword on high.

As the British line advanced slowly and in exact order, the guides opened a galling fire. It began to annoy that part of the royal troops which was nearest to them. Wellmere listened to the advice of the veteran who was next to him in rank, and ordered two companies to dislodge the American foot from their hiding-place. The movement created a slight confusion; and Dunwoodie seized the opportunity to charge. No ground could be more favourable for the manœuvres of horse, and the attack of the Virginians was irresistible. It was aimed chiefly at the bank opposite to the wood, in order to clear the Americans from the fire of their friends who were concealed; and it was completely successful. Wellmere, who was on the left of his line, was overthrown by the impetuous fury of his assailants. Dunwoodie was in time to save him from the impending blow of one of his men, and raised him from the ground, had him placed on a horse, and

delivered to the custody of his orderly. The officer who had suggested the attack upon the guides had been intrusted with its execution, but the menace was sufficient for these irregulars. In fact, their duty was performed, and they retired along the skirt of the wood with intent to regain their horses, which had been left under a guard at the upper end of the valley.

The left of the British line was outflanked by the Americans, who doubled in their rear, and thus made the rout in that quarter total. But the second in command, perceiving how the battle went, promptly wheeled his party, and threw in a heavy fire on their dragoons, as they passed him to the charge; with this party was Henry Wharton, who had volunteered to assist in dispersing the guides; a ball had struck his bridle arm, and compelled him to change hands. As the dragoons dashed by them, rending the air with their shouts, and with trumpet sounding a lively strain, the charger ridden by the youth became ungovernable—he plunged, reared, and his rider being unable, with his wounded arm, to manage the impatient animal, Henry Wharton found himself, in less than a minute, unwillingly riding by the side of Captain Lawton. The dragoon comprehended at a glance the ludicrous situation of his new comrade, but had only time to cry aloud before they plunged into the English line—

“The horse knows the righteous cause better than his rider. Captain Wharton, you are welcome to the ranks of freedom.”

No time was lost, however, by Lawton, after the charge was completed, in securing his prisoner again; and, perceiving him to be hurt, he directed him to be conveyed to the rear.

The Virginian troopers dealt out their favours, with no gentle hands, on that part of the royal foot who were thus left in a great measure at their mercy. Dunwoodie, noticing that the remnant of the Hessians had again ventured on the plain, led on in pursuit, and easily overtaking their light and half fed horses, soon destroyed the remainder of their detachment.

In the mean while, great numbers of the English, taking advantage of the smoke and confusion in the field, were enabled to get in the rear of the body of their countrymen, who still preserved their order in a line parallel to the wood, but who had been obliged to hold their fire from the fear of injuring friends as well as foes. The fugitives were directed to form a second line within the wood itself, and under cover of its trees. This arrangement was not yet completed, when Captain Lawton called to a youth, who commanded the other troop left with that part of the force which remained on the ground, and proposed charging the unbroken line of the British. The proposal was as promptly accepted as it had been made, and the troops were arrayed for the purpose. The eagerness of their leader prevented the prepara-

tions necessary to insure success, and the horse, receiving a destructive fire as they advanced, were thrown into additional confusion. Both Lawton and his more juvenile comrade fell at this discharge. Fortunately for the credit of the Virginians, Major Dunwoodie re-entered the field at this critical instant; he saw his troops in disorder; at his feet lay weltering in blood George Singleton, a youth endeared to him by numberless virtues, and Lawton was unhorsed and stretched senseless on the plain. The eye of the youthful warrior flashed with unwonted fires. Riding between this squadron and the enemy, in a voice that reached to the hearts of his dragoons, he recalled them to their duty. His presence and words acted like magic. The clamour of voices ceased; the line was formed promptly and with exactitude; the charge sounded; and led on by their commander, the Virginians swept across the plain with an impetuosity that nothing could withstand, and the field was instantly cleared of the enemy; those who were not destroyed, sought a shelter in the woods. Dunwoodie slowly withdrew from the fire of the English who were covered by the trees, and commenced the painful duty of collecting his dead and wounded.

The sergeant, charged with conducting Henry Wharton to where he might procure surgical aid, set about performing his duty with alacrity, in order to return as soon as possible to the scene of strife. They had not reached the middle of the plain, before the captain noticed a man whose appearance and occupation forcibly arrested his attention. His head was bald and bare, but a well-powdered wig was to be seen, half concealed, in the pocket of his breeches. His coat was off, and his arms naked to the elbow; blood had disfigured much of his dress, and his hands, and even face, bore this mark of his profession; in his mouth was a segar; in his right hand some instruments of strange formation, and in his left the remnants of an apple, with which he occasionally relieved the duty of the before mentioned segar. He was standing, lost in the contemplation of a Hessian, who lay breathless before him. At a little distance were three or four of the guides, leaning on their muskets, and straining their eyes in the direction of the combatants, and at his elbow stood a man who, from the implements in his hand, and bloody vestments, seemed an assistant in his duty.

“There, sir, is the doctor,” said the attendant of Henry, very coolly; “he will patch up your arm in the twinkling of an eye;” and beckoning to the guides to approach, he whispered and pointed to his prisoner, and then galloped furiously towards his comrades.

Wharton advanced to the side of this strange figure, and observing himself to be unnoticed, was about to request his assist-

ance, when the other broke silence in a soliloquy—"now, I know this man to have been killed by Captain Lawton, as well as if I had seen him strike the blow. How often have I strove to teach him the manner in which he can disable his adversary, without destroying life. It is cruel thus unnecessarily to cut off the human race, and furthermore, such blows as these render professional assistance unnecessary; it is in a measure treating the lights of science with disrespect."

"If, sir, your leisure will admit," said Henry Wharton, "I must beg your attention to this slight hurt of mine."

"Ah!" cried the other starting, and examining him from head to foot, "you are from the field below; is there much business there sir?"

"Indeed," answered Henry, accepting the offer of the surgeon to assist in removing his coat, "'tis a stirring time I can assure you."

"Stirring!" repeated the surgeon, busily employed with his dressings; "you give me great pleasure, sir, for so long as they can stir there must be life, and while there is life, you know, there is hope; but here my art is of no use; I did put in the brains of one patient, but I rather think the man must have been dead before I saw him. It is a curious case, sir; I will take you to see it—only across the fence there, where you may perceive so many bodies together. Ah! the ball has glanced around the bone without shattering it; you are fortunate in falling into the hands of an old practitioner, or you might have lost this limb."

"Indeed!" said Henry, with a slight uneasiness; "I did not apprehend the injury to be so serious."

"Oh! the hurt is not bad; but you have such a pretty arm for an operation," replied the surgeon, coolly, "the pleasure of the thing might easily tempt a novice."

"The devil!" cried the horror-stricken Captain; "can there be any pleasure in mutilating a fellow creature?"

"Sir," said the surgeon, with great gravity, "a scientific amputation is a very pretty operation, and doubtless might tempt a younger man, in the hurry of business, to overlook all the particulars of the case."

Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the dragoons, slowly marching towards their former halting place, and new applications from the slightly wounded soldiers, who now came riding in, making hasty demands on the skill of the doctor. The guides took charge of Wharton, and, with a heavy heart, the young man retraced his steps to his father's cottage.

The English had lost in the charges about one-third of their foot, but the remainder were rallied in the wood, and Dunwoodie, perceiving them to be too strongly posted to assail, had left

a strong party with Captain Lawton, with orders to watch their motions, and seize every opportunity to harass them before they re-embarked. Intelligence had reached the Major of another party being out by the way of the Hudson, and his duty required that he should hold himself in readiness to defeat the intentions of these also. Captain Lawton received his orders, with strong injunctions to make no efforts on the foe, unless a favourable chance should offer. The injury received by this officer was in the head, being stunned by a glancing bullet, and parting with a laughing declaration from the Major, that if he again forgot himself, they should all think him more materially hurt, each took his own course. The British were a light party, without baggage, that had been sent out to destroy certain stores understood to be collected for the use of the American army. They now retired through the woods to the heights, and keeping the route along their summits, in places unassailable by cavalry, commenced their retreat to their boats.

### CHAPTER VIII.

“ With fire and sword, the country round  
Was wasted far and wide ;  
And many a chiding mother then,  
And new-born infant died ;  
But things like these, you know, must be  
At every famous victory.”

THE last sounds of the combat died on the ears of the anxious listeners in the cottage, and were succeeded by the stillness of suspense. Frances had continued by herself, striving to exclude the uproar, and vainly endeavouring to summon resolution to meet the dreadful result. The ground where the charge on the foot had taken place was but a short mile from the Locusts, and, in the intervals of the musketry, the cries of the soldiers had even reached the ears of its inhabitants. After witnessing the escape of his son, Mr. Wharton had joined his sister and eldest daughter in their retreat, and the three continued fearfully waiting for news from the field. Unable longer to remain under the painful uncertainty of her situation, Frances soon added herself to the uneasy group, and Cæsar was directed to examine into the state of things without, and report on whose banners victory had alighted. The father now briefly related to his astonished children the circumstance and manner of their brother's escape. They were yet in the freshness of their surprise, when the door opened, and Captain Wharton, attended by a couple of the guides, and followed by the black, stood before them.

“ Henry—my son, my son,” cried the agitated parent stretching out his arms, yet unable to rise from his seat. “ what is it I see ; you are again a captive, and in danger of your life ?”

"The better fortune of these rebels has prevailed," said the youth, endeavouring to force a cheerful smile, and taking a hand of each of his distressed sisters. "I strove nobly for my liberty, but the perverse spirit of rebellion has even lighted on their horses. The steed I mounted carried me, greatly against my will, I acknowledge, into the very centre of Dunwoodie's men."

"And you were again captured," continued the father, casting a fearful glance on the armed attendants who had entered the room.

"That, sir, you may safely say; this Mr. Lawton, who sees so far, had me in custody again immediately."

"Why, you didn't hold 'em in, Massa Harry?" cried Cæsar, advancing eagerly, and disregarding the anxious looks and pallid cheeks of the female listeners.

"That," said Wharton, smiling, "was a thing easier said than done, Mr. Cæsar, especially as these gentlemen," glancing his eyes at the guides, "had seen proper to deprive me of the use of my better arm."

"Wounded!" exclaimed both sisters in a breath, catching a view of the bandages.

"A mere scratch, but disabling me at a most critical moment," continued the brother, kindly, and stretching out the injured limb to manifest the truth of his declaration. Cæsar threw a look of bitter animosity on the irregular warriors who were thought to have had an agency in the deed, and left the room. A few more words sufficed to explain all that Captain Wharton knew relative to the fortune of the day. The result he thought yet doubtful, for when he left the ground, the Virginians were retiring from the field of battle.

"They had tree'd the squirrel," said one of the sentinels abruptly, "and didn't quit the ground without leaving a good hound for the chase, when he comes down."

"Ay," added his comrade, drily, "I am thinking Captain Lawton will count the noses of what are left before they see their whale-boats."

Frances had stood supporting herself by the back of a chair, during this dialogue, catching, in breathless anxiety, every syllable as it was uttered; her colour changed rapidly; her limbs shook under her; until, with desperate resolution, she inquired—"Is any officer hurt on—the—on either side?"

"Yes," answered the man, cavalierly, "these southern youths are so full of mettle, that it's seldom we fight but one or two gets knocked over; one of the wounded, who came up before the troops, told me that Captain Singleton was killed, and Major Dunwoodie"—

Frances heard no more, but fell back lifeless in the chair behind

her. The attention of her friends soon revived her, when the Captain, turning to the man, said, fearfully,—“Surely Major Dunwoodie is unhurt?”

“Never fear him,” added the guide, disregarding the agitation of the family; “they say a man who is born to be hung will never be drowned: if a bullet could kill the Major he would have been dead long ago. I was going to say, that the Major is in a sad taking because of the captain’s being killed; but had I known how much store the lady set by him, I wouldn’t have been so plain spoken.”

Frances now rose quickly from her seat, with cheeks glowing with confusion, and leaning on her aunt, was about to retire, when Dunwoodie himself appeared. The first emotion of the agitated girl, when she saw him, was unalloyed happiness; in the next instant she shrunk back appalled from the unusual expression that reigned in his countenance. The sternness of battle yet sat on his brow; his eye was fixed, penetrating, and severe. The smile of affection, that used to lighten his dark features on meeting his mistress, was supplanted by the lowering look of care; his whole soul seemed to be absorbed with one engrossing emotion, and he proceeded at once to his object.

“Mr. Wharton,” he earnestly began, “in times like these, we need not stand on idle ceremony: one of my officers, I am afraid, is hurt mortally; and presuming on your hospitality, I have brought him to your door.”

“I am happy, sir, that you have done so,” said Mr. Wharton, at once perceiving the importance to his son, of conciliating the American troops; “the necessitous are always welcome, and doubly so, in being the friend of Major Dunwoodie.”

“Sir, I thank you for myself, and in behalf of him who is unable to render you his thanks,” returned the other hastily; “if then you please, we will have him conducted where the surgeon may see and report upon his case without delay.” To this there could be no objection, and Frances felt a chill at her heart, as her lover withdrew, without casting a solitary look on herself.

There is a devotedness in female love that admits of no rivalry. All the tenderness of the heart, all the powers of the imagination, are enlisted in behalf of the tyrant passion, and where all is given, much is looked for in return. Frances had spent hours of anguish, of torture, on account of Dunwoodie, and he now met her without a smile, and without a greeting. The ardour of feeling in the maid was unabated, but the elasticity of her hopes was weakened. As the supporters of the nearly lifeless body of Dunwoodie’s friend passed her, in their way to the apartment prepared for his reception, she caught a view of this seeming rival in her interest with her lover. His pale and ghastly counte-

nance, sunken eye, and difficult breathing, gave her a glimpse of death in its most fearful form. Dunwoodie was by his side, and held his hand, giving frequent and stern injunctions to the men to proceed with care, and, in short, manifested all the solicitude that the most tender friendship could, on such an occasion, inspire. Frances moved lightly before them, and, with an averted face, held open the door for their passage to the bed; it was only as the Major touched her garments, on entering the room, that she ventured to raise her mild blue eyes to his face. But the glance was unreturned, and Frances unconsciously sighed as she sought the solitude of her own apartment.

Captain Wharton voluntarily gave a pledge to his keepers not to attempt again escaping, and then proceeded to execute those duties on behalf of his father, which were thought necessary in a host. On entering the passage for that purpose, he met the operator who had so dexterously dressed his arm, advancing to the room of the wounded officer.

"Ah!" cried the disciple of Esculapius, "I see you are doing well: but stop; have you a pin? No! here, I have one; you must keep the cold air from your hurt, or some of the youngsters will be at work yet."

"God forbid," muttered the Captain, in an under tone, and attentively adjusting the bandages, when Dunwoodie appeared at the door, impatiently crying aloud—"Hasten, Sitgreaves, hasten; or George Singleton will die from loss of blood."

"What! Singleton! God forbid. Bless me—is it George—poor little George," exclaimed the surgeon, as he quickened his pace with evident emotion, and hastened to the side of the bed; "he is alive, though, and while there is life there is hope. This is the first serious case I have had to-day, where the patient was not already dead. Captain Lawton teaches his men to strike with so little discretion—poor George—bless me, it is a musket bullet."

The youthful sufferer turned his eyes on the man of science and in a faint smile endeavoured to stretch forth his hand. There was an appeal in the look and action that touched the heart of an operator, with a force that was irresistible. The surgeon removed his spectacles to wipe an unusual moisture from his eyes, and proceeded, carefully to the discharge of his duty. While the previous arrangements were, however, making, he gave vent in some measure to his feelings, by saying—"When it is only a bullet, I have always some hopes; there is a chance that it hits nothing vital; but, bless me, Captain Lawton's men cut so at random—generally sever the jugular, or let out the brains, and both are so difficult to remedy—the patient mostly dying before one can get at him. I never had success but once in replacing a



man's brain, although I tried three this very day. Is it easy to tell where Lawton's troop charge in a battle, they cut so at random."

The group around the bed of Captain Singleton were too much accustomed to the manner of their surgeon to regard or reply to his soliloquy; but they quietly awaited the moment when he was to commence his examination. This now took place, and Dunwoodie stood looking the operator in the face, with an expression that seemed to read his soul. The patient shrunk from the application of the probe, and a smile stole over the features of the surgeon, as he muttered—"There has been nothing before it in that quarter." He now applied himself in earnest to his work, took off his spectacles, and threw aside his wig. All this time Dunwoodie stood in feverish silence, holding one of the hands of the sufferer in both his own, watching the countenance of Doctor Sitgreaves. At length Singleton gave a slight groan, and the surgeon rose with alacrity, and said aloud—"Ah! there is some pleasure in following a bullet, it may be said to meander through the human body, injuring nothing vital; but as for Captain Lawton's men."

"Speak," interrupted Dunwoodie, in a voice hardly articulate; "is there hope? can you find the ball?"

"It's no difficult matter to find that which one has in his hand, Major Dunwoodie," replied the surgeon, coolly, and preparing his dressings; "it took what that literal fellow, Captain Lawton, calls a *circumbendibus*, a route never taken by the swords of his men, notwithstanding the multiplied pains I have been at to teach him how to cut scientifically. Now, I saw a horse this day with his head half severed from his body."

"That," said Dunwoodie, as the blood rushed to his cheeks again, and his dark eyes sparkled with the rays of hope revived, "was some of my own handiwork; I killed that horse myself."

"You!" exclaimed the surgeon, dropping his dressing in surprise, "you! but then you knew it was a horse."

"I had such suspicions, I own," said the Major, smiling, and holding a beverage to the lips of his friend.

"Such blows alighting on the human frame are fatal," continued the doctor, pursuing his business, "and set at nought all the benefits which flow from the lights of science; they are useless in battle, for disabling your foe is all that is required. I have sat, Major Dunwoodie, many a cold hour, while Captain Lawton has been engaged, and after all my expectation, not a single case worth recording has occurred—all scratches or death wounds; ah! the sabre is a sad weapon in unskilful hands. Now, Major Dunwoodie, many are the hours I have thrown away in endeavouring to impress this on Captain Lawton."

The impatient Major pointed silently to his friend, and the surgeon quickened his movements as he continued—"Ah! poor George, it is a narrow chance: but"—he was interrupted by a messenger requiring the presence of the commanding officer in the field. Dunwoodie pressed the hand of his friend, and beckoned the doctor to follow him, as he withdrew.

"What think you?" he whispered, on reaching the passage, "will he live?"

"He will," said the surgeon, laconically, turning on his heel.

"Thank God!" cried the youth, hastening below.

Dunwoodie for a moment joined the family, who were now collecting in the ordinary parlour. His face was no longer wanting in smiles, and his salutations, though hasty, were cordial. He took no notice of the escape and recapture of Henry Wharton, but seemed to think the young man had continued where he had left him before the encounter. On the ground they had not met. The English officer withdrew in haughty silence to a window, leaving the Major uninterrupted to make his communications. The excitement produced by the events of the day in the youthful feelings of the sisters, had been succeeded by a languor that kept them both silent, and it was with Miss Peyton that Dunwoodie held his discourse.

"Is there any hope, my cousin, that your friend can survive his wound?" said the lady, advancing towards her kinsman, with a smile of benevolent regard.

"Everything, my dear madam, everything," answered the soldier cheerfully. "Sitgreaves says he will live, and he has never yet deceived me."

"Your pleasure is not much greater than my own at this intelligence. One so dear to Major Dunwoodie cannot fail to excite an interest in the bosom of his friends."

"Say one so deservedly dear, madam," returned the Major with warmth; "he is the beneficent spirit of the corps, equally beloved by us all; so mild, so equal, so just, so generous, with the meekness of a lamb and the fondness of a dove—it is only in the hour of battle that Singleton is a lion."

"You speak of him as if he were your mistress, Major Dunwoodie," observed the smiling spinster, glancing her eye at her niece, who sat pale and listening in a corner of the room.

"I love him as one," cried the excited youth; "but he requires care and nursing; all now depends on the attention he receives."

"Trust me, sir," said Miss Peyton, with dignity, "he will want for nothing under this roof."

"Pardon me, dear madam," cried the youth hastily; "you are all that is benevolent, but Singleton requires a care which

many men would feel to be irksome. It is at moments like these, that the soldier most finds the want of female tenderness." As he spoke, he turned his eyes on Frances with an expression that again thrilled to the heart of his mistress; she rose from her seat with burning cheeks, and said—"All the attention that can with propriety be given to a stranger, will be cheerfully bestowed on your friend."

"Ah!" cried the Major, shaking his head, "that cold word propriety will kill him; he must be fostered, cherished, soothed."

"These are offices for a sister or a wife," said the maid, with still increasing colour.

"A sister!" repeated the soldier, the blood rushing into his own face tumultuously; "A sister! he has a sister; and one that might be here with to-morrow's sun." He paused, mused in silence, glanced his eye uneasily at Frances, and muttered, in an under tone—"Singleton requires it, and it must be done."

The ladies had watched his varying countenance in some surprise, and Miss Peyton now observed, that—"If there were a sister of Captain Singleton near them, her presence would be gladly requested both by herself and nieces."

"It must be, madam; it cannot well be otherwise," replied Dunwoodie, with a hesitation that but ill agreed with his former declarations; "she shall be sent for express this very night." And then, as if willing to change the subject, he approached Captain Wharton, and continued, mildly—"Henry Wharton, to me honour is dearer than life; but in your hands I know it can safely be confided; remain here unwatched, until we leave the county, which will not be for some days to come."

The distance in the manner of the English officer vanished, and taking the offered hand of the other, he replied with warmth—"Your generous confidence, Peyton, will not be abused, even though the gibbet on which your Washington hung André be ready for my own execution."

"Henry, Henry Wharton," said Dunwoodie reproachfully, "you little know the man who leads our armies, or you would have spared him that reproach; but duty calls me without. I leave you where I could wish to stay myself, and where you cannot be wholly unhappy."

In passing Frances, she received another of those smiling looks of affection she so much prized, and for a season the impression made by his appearance after the battle was forgotten.

Among the veterans that had been impelled by the times to abandon the quiet of age for the service of their country, was Colonel Singleton. He was a native of Georgia, and had been for the earlier years of his life a soldier by profession. When the struggle for liberty commenced he offered his services to his

country, and from respect to his character, they had been accepted. His years and health had, however, prevented his discharging the active duties of the field, and he had been kept in command of different posts of trust, where his country might receive the benefits of his vigilance and fidelity without inconvenience to himself. For the last year he had been intrusted with the passes to the Highlands, and was now quartered, with his daughter, but a short day's march above the valley where Dunwoodie had met his enemy. His only other child was the wounded officer we have mentioned. Thither, then, the Major prepared to despatch a messenger with the unhappy news of the Captain's situation, and charged with such an invitation from the ladies as, he did not doubt, would speedily bring the ardent sister to the couch of her brother.

This duty performed, though with an unwillingness that only could make his former anxiety more perplexing, Dunwoodie proceeded to the field where his troops had again halted. The remnant of the English were already to be seen, over the tops of the trees, marching on the heights towards their boats in compact order, and with great watchfulness. The detachment of the dragoons under Lawton were a short distance on their flank, eagerly awaiting a favourable moment to strike a blow. In this manner both parties were soon lost to the view.

A short distance above the Locusts was a small hamlet, where several roads intersected each other, and from which, consequently, access was easy to the surrounding country. It was a favourite halting place of the horse, and frequently held by the light parties of the American army during their excursions below. Dunwoodie had been the first to discover its advantages, and as it was necessary for him to remain in the county until further orders from above, it cannot be supposed he overlooked them now. To this place the troops were directed to retire, carrying with them their wounded; parties were already employed in the sad duty of interring the dead. In making these arrangements, a new object of embarrassment presented itself to our young soldier. In moving to and fro the field, he was struck with the appearance of Colonel Wellmere, seated by himself, brooding over his misfortunes, uninterrupted by any thing but the passing civilities of the American officers. His anxiety on behalf of Singleton had hitherto banished the recollection of his captive from the mind of Dunwoodie, and he now approached him with apologies for his neglect. The Englishman received his courtesies with coolness and complained of being injured, by what he affected to think was the accidental stumbling of his horse. Dunwoodie, who had seen one of his own men ride him down, and doubtless with very little ceremony, slightly smiled, as he offered him surgical

assistance. This could only be procured at the cottage, and thither they both proceeded.

“Colonel Wellmere,” cried young Wharton in astonishment, as they entered, “has the fortune of war been thus cruel to you also?—but you are welcome to the house of my father, although I could wish the introduction to have taken place under more happy circumstances.”

Mr. Wharton received this new guest with the guarded caution that distinguished his manner, and Dunwoodie left the room to seek the bedside of his friend. Everything here looked propitious, and he acquainted the surgeon that another patient waited his skill in the room below. The sound of the word was enough to set the doctor in motion, and seizing his implements of office, he went in quest of this new applicant for his notice. At the door of the parlour he was met by the ladies, who were retiring. Miss Peyton detained him for a moment, to inquire into the welfare of Captain Singleton, before she suffered him to proceed. Frances smiled with something of her natural archness of manner, as she contemplated the grotesque appearance of the bald-headed practitioner; but Sarah was too much agitated, with the surprise of the unexpected interview with the British Colonel, to notice his attire. It has already been intimated that Colonel Wellmere was an old acquaintance of the family. Sarah had been so long absent from the city, that she had in some measure been banished from the remembrance of the gentleman, but the recollections of Sarah were more vivid. There is a period in the life of every woman, when she may be said to be predisposed to love; it is at the happy age when infancy is lost in opening maturity—when the guileless heart beats with the joyous anticipations of life which the truth can never realize, and when the imagination forms images of perfection that are copied after its own unsullied visions; it was at this age that Sarah left the city, and she had brought with her a picture of futurity, faintly impressed, it is true, but which gained durability from her solitude, and in which Wellmere had been placed in the foreground. The surprise of the meeting had in some measure overpowered her, and after receiving the salutations of the Colonel, she had risen, in compliance with a signal from her observant aunt, to withdraw.

“Then, sir,” observed Miss Peyton, after listening to the surgeon’s account of his young patient, “we may be flattered with the expectation that he will recover.”

“’Tis certain, madam,” returned the doctor, endeavouring, out of respect to the ladies, to replace his wig, “’tis certain, with care and good nursing.”

“In those he shall not be wanting,” said the spinster mildly. “Every thing we have he can command, and Major Dunwoodie has despatched an express for his sister.”

"His sister," echoed the practitioner, with a look of particular meaning: "if the Major has sent for her, she will come."

"Her brother's danger would induce her, one would imagine.

"No doubt, madam," continued the doctor, laconically, bowing low and giving room to the ladies to pass. The words and the manner were not lost on the younger sister, in whose presence the name of Dunwoodie was never mentioned unheeded.

"Sir," cried Dr. Sitgreaves, on entering the parlour addressing himself to the only coat of scarlet in the room, "I am advised you are in want of my aid. God send 'tis not Captain Lawton with whom you came in contact, in which case I may be too late."

"There must be some mistake, sir," said Wellmere, haughtily; "it was a surgeon that Major Dunwoodie was to send me, and not an old woman."

"'Tis Dr. Sitgreaves," said Henry Wharton, quickly, though with great difficulty suppressing a laugh; "the multitude of his engagements, to-day, has prevented his usual attention to his attire."

"Your pardon, sir," added Wellmere, but very ungraciously, proceeding to lay aside his coat, and exhibit what he called a wounded arm.

"If, sir," said the surgeon, drily, "the degrees of Edinburgh—walking your London hospitals—amputating some hundreds of limbs—operating on the human frame in every shape that is warranted by the lights of science, a clear conscience, and the commission of the Continental Congress, can make a surgeon, then I am one."

"Your pardon, sir," repeated the Colonel stiffly. "Captain Wharton has accounted for my error."

"For which I thank Captain Wharton," said the surgeon, proceeding coolly to arrange his amputating instruments with a formality that made the Colonel's blood run cold. "Where are you hurt, sir? What, is it then this scratch in the shoulder? In what manner might you have received this wound, sir?"

"From the sword of a rebel dragoon," said the Colonel, with emphasis.

"Never," exclaimed the surgeon as positively. "Even the gentle George Singleton would not have breathed on you so harmlessly." He took a piece of sticking-plaster from his pocket, and applied it to the part. "There, sir, that will answer your purpose, and I am certain it is all that is required of me."

"What do you take to be my purpose then, sir?" said the Colonel, fiercely.

"To report yourself wounded in your despatches," replied the doctor, with great steadiness; "and you may say that an old woman dressed your hurts, for if one did not, one easily might!"

"Very extraordinary language," muttered the Englishman.

Here Captain Wharton interfered, and by explaining the mistake of Colonel Wellmere to proceed from his irritated mind and pain of body, he in part succeeded in mollifying the insulted practitioner, who consented to look further into the hurts of the other. They were chiefly bruises from his fall, to which Sitgreaves made some hasty applications, and withdrew.

The horse, having taken their required refreshment, prepared to fall back to their intended position, and it became incumbent on Dunwoodie to arrange the disposal of his prisoners. Sitgreaves he determined to leave in the cottage of Mr. Wharton in attendance on Captain Singleton. Henry came to him with a request that Colonel Wellmere might also be left behind, under his parole, until the troops marched higher into the country. To this the Major cheerfully assented, and as all the rest of the prisoners were of the vulgar herd, they were speedily collected, and under the care of a strong guard ordered to the interior. The dragoons soon after marched, and the guides, separating in small parties, accompanied by patrols from the horse, spread themselves across the country, in such a manner as to make a chain of sentinels from the waters of the Sound to the Hudson.

Dunwoodie himself had lingered in front of the cottage, after he paid his parting compliments for the time, with an unwillingness to return, that he thought proceeded from solicitude for his wounded friends. The heart which has not become callous, soon sickens with the glory that has been purchased with a waste of human life. Peyton Dunwoodie, left to himself, and no longer excited by the visions which youthful ardour had kept before him throughout the day, began to feel there were other ties than those which bound the soldier within the rigid rules of honour. He did not waver in his duty, yet he felt how strong was the temptation. His blood had ceased to flow with the impulse created by the battle. The stern expression of his eye gradually gave place to a look of softness; and his reflections on the victory brought with them no satisfaction that compensated for the sacrifices by which it had been purchased. While turning his last lingering gaze on the Locusts, he remembered only that it contained all that he most valued. The friend of his youth was a prisoner, under circumstances that endangered both life and honour. The gentle companion of his toils, who could throw around the rude enjoyments of a soldier the graceful mildness of peace, lay a bleeding victim to his success. The image of the maid, who had held, during the day, a disputed sovereignty in his bosom, again rose to his view with a loveliness that banished her rival, glory, from his mind.

The last lagging trooper of the corps had already disappeared

behind the northern hill, and the Major unwillingly turned his horse in the same direction. Frances, impelled by a restless inquietude, now timidly ventured on the piazza of the cottage. The day had been mild and clear, and the sun was shining brightly in a cloudless sky. The tumult, which so lately disturbed the valley, was succeeded by the stillness of death, and the fair scene before her looked as if it had never been marred by the passions of men. One solitary cloud, the collected smoke of the contest, hung over the field; and this was gradually dispersing, as if no vestige of its origin was worthy to hover above the peaceful graves of its victims. All the conflicting feelings, all the tumultuous circumstances of the eventful day, for a moment, appeared to the maid like the deceptions of a troubled vision. She turned, and caught a glimpse of the retreating figure of him who had been so conspicuous an actor in the scene, and the illusion vanished. Frances recognised her lover, and with the truth, came other recollections that drove her to the room, with a heart as sad as that which Dunwoodie himself bore from the valley.

## CHAPTER IX.

“A moment gazed adown the dale,  
 A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,  
 A moment listen'd to the cry  
 That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;  
 Then, as the headmost foe appear'd,  
 With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,  
 And, stretching forward free and far,  
 Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.”—*Walter Scott.*

THE party under Captain Lawton had watched the retiring foe to his boats with the most unremitting vigilance, without finding any fit opening for a charge. The experienced successor to Colonel Wellmere in command, knew too well the power of his enemy to leave the uneven surface of the heights, until compelled to descend to the level of the water. Before he attempted this hazardous movement, he threw his men into a compact square, with its outer edges bristling with bayonets. In this position, the impatient trooper well understood that brave men could never be assailed by cavalry with success, and he was reluctantly obliged to hover near them, without seeing any opportunity of stopping their slow, but steady march to the beach. A small schooner had been their convoy from the city, and lay with her guns bearing on the place of embarkation. Against this combination of force and discipline, Lawton had sufficient prudence to see it would be folly to contend, and the English were suffered to embark without further molestation. The dragoons lingered on the shore till the last moment, and then reluctantly commenced their own retreat back to the main body of the corps.



The gathering mists of the evening had begun to darken the valley, as the detachment of Lawton made its re-appearance at the southern extremity. The march of the troops was slow, and their line extended, for the benefit of ease in their progress. In the front rode the Captain, side by side with his senior subaltern, apparently engaged together in close conference, while the rear was brought up by a young cornet, humming an air, and thinking of the sweets of a straw bed after the fatigues of a hard day's duty.

"Then it struck you too?" said the Captain; "the instant I placed my eyes on her, I remembered the face; it is one not easily forgotten; by my faith, Tom, the girl does no discredit to the Major's taste."

"She would do honour to the corps," replied the Lieutenant, with some warmth; "those blue eyes might easily win a man to gentler employments than this trade of ours. In sober truth, I can easily imagine that such a girl might tempt even me to quit the broadsword and saddle, for a darning-needle and pillion."

"Mutiny, sir, mutiny," cried the other, laughing; "what, you, Tom Mason, dare to rival the gay, admired, and, withal, rich Major Dunwoodie in his love! You, a Lieutenant of Cavalry, with but one horse, and he none of the best! whose Captain is as tough as a pepperage log, and has as many lives as a cat!"

"Faith," said the subaltern, smiling in his turn, "the log may yet be split, and Grimalkin lose his lives, if you often charge as madly as you did this morning. What think you of many raps from such a beetle as laid you on your back to-day?"

"Ah! don't mention it, my good Tom; the thought makes my head ache," replied the other, shrugging up his shoulders; "it's what I call forestalling night."

"The night of death?"

"No, sir, the night that follows day. I saw myriads of stars, things which should hide their faces in the presence of the lordly sun. I do think nothing but this thick cap saved me to you a little longer, maugre the cat's lives."

"I have much reason to be obliged to the cap," said Mason, dryly; "that or the skull must have had a comfortable portion of thickness, I admit."

"Come, come, Tom, you are a licensed joker, so I'll not feign anger with you," returned the Captain, good-humouredly; "but Singleton's Lieutenant, I am fearful, will fare better than yourself for this day's service."

"I believe both of us will be spared the pain of receiving promotion purchased by the death of a comrade and friend," observed Mason, kindly; "it was reported that Sitgreaves said he would live."

"From my soul I hope so," exclaimed Lawton; "for a beardless face, that boy carries the stoutest heart I have ever met with.

It surprises me, however, that as we both fell at the same instant, the men behaved so well."

"For the compliment, I might thank you," cried the Lieutenant, with a laugh: "but my modesty forbids; I did my best to stop them, but without success."

"Stop them," roared the Captain; "would you stop men in the middle of a charge?"

"I thought they were going the wrong way," answered the subaltern.

"Ah!" said the other, more mildly, "our fall drove them to the right about."

"It was either your fall, or apprehensions of their own," returned the waggish subaltern; "until the Major rallied us, we were in admirable disorder."

"Dunwoodie!" exclaimed the astonished Lawton; "why the Major was on the crupper of the Dutchman."

"Ah! but he managed to get off the crupper of the Dutchman," continued Mason. "He came in at half speed with the other two troops, and riding between us and the enemy, with that imperative way he has when roused, brought us in line in the twinkling of an eye. Then it was," added the Lieutenant, with animation, "that we sent John Bull to the bushes. Oh! it was a sweet charge—heads and tails, until we were upon them."

"The devil!" cried the Captain, "what a sight I missed."

"You slept through it all," said Mason, laconically.

"Yes," returned the other, with a sigh; "it was all lost to me and poor George Singleton. But, Tom, what will George's sister say to this fair-haired maiden, in yonder white building?"

"Hang herself in her garters," said the subaltern. "I owe a proper respect to my superiors, but two such angels are more than justly falls to the share of one man, unless he be a Turk or a Hindoo."

"Yes, yes," said the Captain, quickly, "the Major is ever preaching morality to the youngsters, but he is a sly fellow in the main. Do you observe how fond he is of the cross roads above this valley? Now, if I were to halt the troops twice in the same place, you would all swear there was a petticoat in the wind."

"You are well known to the corps," returned the sententious subaltern.

"Well, Tom, your slanderous propensity is incurable—but," stretching forward his body in the direction he was gazing, as if to aid him in distinguishing objects through the darkness, "what animal is moving through the field on our right?"

"'Tis a man," said Mason, looking intently at the suspicious object.

"By his hump 'tis a dromedary," added the Captain, still eyeing

it keenly. Wheeling his horse suddenly from the highway, he exclaimed: "Harvey Birch—take him, dead or alive."

Mason, and a few of the leading dragoons only, understood the sudden cry, but it was heard throughout the line. A dozen of the men, with the Lieutenant at their head, followed the impetuous Lawton, and their speed threatened the pursued with a sudden termination to the race.

Birch prudently kept his position on the rock, where he had been seen by the passing glance of Henry Wharton, until evening had begun to shroud the surrounding objects in darkness. From this height he had seen all the events of the day as they had occurred. He had watched, with a beating heart, the departure of the troops under Dunwoodie, and with difficulty had curbed his impatience until the obscurity of night should render his moving free from danger. He had not, however, completed a fourth of his way to his own residence, when his quick ear distinguished the tread of the approaching horse. Trusting to the increasing darkness, he, notwithstanding, determined to persevere. By crouching and moving quickly along the surface of the ground, he hoped yet to escape unnoticed. Captain Lawton was too much engrossed with the foregoing conversation to suffer his eyes to indulge in their usual wandering; and the pedler, perceiving by the voices that the enemy he most feared had passed him, yielded to his impatience, and stood erect, in order to make greater progress. The moment his body arose above the shadow of the ground it was seen, and the chase commenced. For a single instant Birch remained helpless, with his blood curdling in his veins at the imminence of his danger, and his legs refusing their natural, and what was now so necessary, office. But it was for a moment only. Casting his pack where he stood, and instinctively tightening the belt he wore, the pedler betook himself to flight. He knew that by bringing himself into a line with his pursuers and the wood, his form would be lost to the sight. This he soon effected, and he was straining every nerve to gain the wood itself, when several horsemen rode by him but a short distance on his left, and cut him off from this place of refuge. The pedler threw himself on the ground as they came near him, and was in this manner passed unseen. But delay, now, became too dangerous for him to remain in that position. He accordingly arose, and still keeping in the shadow of the wood, along the skirts of which he heard voices crying to each other to be watchful, he ran with incredible speed in a parallel line, but in an opposite direction, to the march of the dragoons.

The confusion of the chase had been heard by the whole of the men, though none distinctly understood the order of the hasty Lawton but those who followed. The remainder were lost in

doubt as to the duty that was required of them; and the aforesaid cornet was making eager inquiries of the trooper near him, on the subject, when a man, at a short distance in his rear, crossed the road in a single bound. At the same instant, the stentorian voice of Captain Lawton rang through the valley, shouting in a manner that told the truth at once to his men.

“Harvey Birch—take him dead or alive.”

Fifty pistols lighted the scene instantly, and the bullets whistled in every direction around the head of the devoted pedler. A feeling of despair seized his heart, and he exclaimed bitterly—“Hunted like a beast of the forest.” He felt life and its accompaniments to be a burden, and was about to yield himself to his enemies. Nature, however, prevailed; he feared, that if taken, his life would not be honoured with the forms of a trial, but that most probably the morning sun would witness his ignominious execution; for he had already been condemned to that fate, and only escaped it by stratagem. These considerations, with the approaching footsteps of his pursuers, roused him to new exertions, and he again fled before them. A fragment of a wall, that had withstood the ravages made by war, in the adjoining fences of wood, fortunately crossed his path. He hardly had time to throw his exhausted limbs over this barrier, before twenty of his enemies reached its opposite side. Their horses refused to take the leap in the dark, and amid the confusion of the rearing chargers, and the execrations of their riders, Birch was enabled to gain a sight of the base of the hill, on whose summit was a place of perfect security against the approach of any foe. The heart of the pedler now beat high with the confidence of his revived hopes, when the voice of Captain Lawton again rang in his ears, shouting to his men to give him room. The order was promptly obeyed, and the fearless trooper came at the wall at the top of his horse's speed, plunged the rowels in his charger, and flew over the obstacle like lightning, and in safety. The triumphant hurrahs of the men, and the thundering tread of the horse, now too plainly assured the pedler of the emergency of his danger. He was nearly exhausted, and his fate no longer seemed doubtful.

“Stop, or die,” said the trooper, in the suppressed tones of inveterate determination.

Harvey stole a fearful glance over his shoulder, and saw, within a bound of him, the man he most dreaded. By the light of the stars he beheld the uplifted arm and threatening sabre. Fear, exhaustion, and despair, seized on his heart, and the intended victim suddenly fell at the feet of the dragoon. The horse of Lawton suddenly struck the prostrate pedler, and both steed and rider came together violently to the earth. As quick as thought

Birch was on his feet again, and with the sword of the discomfited dragoon in his hand. Vengeance seems but too natural to human passions. There are but few who have not felt the seductive pleasure of making our injuries recoil on the supposed authors; and yet there are some who know how much sweeter it is to return good for evil. All the wrongs of the pedler shone on his brain with a dazzling brightness. For a moment the demon within him prevailed, and Birch brandished the powerful weapon in the air; in the next it fell harmless on the reviving but helpless trooper; and the pedler vanished up the side of the friendly rock.

"Help Captain Lawton there," cried Mason, as he rode up, followed by a dozen of his men, "and some of you dismount with me, and search these rocks; the villain lies here concealed."

"Hold," roared the discomfited Captain, raising himself with difficulty on his feet; "if one of you dismount, he dies; Tom, my good fellow, you will help me to straddle Roanoake again."

The astonished subaltern complied in silence, while the wondering dragoons remained as fixed in their saddles, as if they composed part of the animals they rode.

"You are much hurt, I fear," said Mason, with something of condolence in his manner, as they re-entered the high-way, and biting off the end of a segar for a want of a better quality of tobacco.

"Something so, I do believe," replied the Captain, catching his breath, and speaking with difficulty; "I wish our bone-setter was at hand, to examine into the state of my ribs."

"Sitgreaves is left in attendance on Captain Singleton, at the house of Mr. Wharton," said Mason in reply.

"Then there I halt for the night, Tom," replied the other quickly; "these rude times must abridge ceremony; besides you may remember the old gentleman professed a great regard for the corps. Oh! I can never think of passing so good a friend without calling."

"And I will lead the troop to the four corners," said the Lieutenant; "if we all halt there, we shall breed a famine in the land."

"A condition I never desired to be placed in," added Lawton. "The idea of that graceful spinster's buckwheat cakes is highly comfortable in the perspective."

"Oh! you won't die if you can think of eating," cried Mason, with a laugh.

"I should surely die if I could not," observed the Captain, gravely.

"Captain Lawton," said the orderly of his troops, riding to the side of his commanding officer, "we are now passing the house of the pedler spy; is it your pleasure that we burn it?"

“No!” roared the Captain, in a voice that startled the disappointed sergeant; “are you an incendiary? would you burn the house in cold blood? let but a spark approach it, and the hand that carries it will never light another.”

“Zounds!” exclaimed the sleepy cornet in the rear, as he was nodding on his horse, “there is life in the Captain notwithstanding his tumble.”

Lawton and Mason rode on in silence, the latter ruminating on the wonderful change produced in his commander by his fall, when they arrived opposite to the gate which was before the residence of Mr. Wharton. The troop continued its march, but the Captain and his Lieutenant dismounted, and, followed by the servant of the former, proceeded slowly to the door of the cottage.

Colonel Wellmere had already sought a retreat for his mortified feelings in his own room; Mr. Wharton and his son were closeted by themselves; and the ladies were administering the refreshments of the tea-table to the surgeon of the dragoons, who had seen one of his patients in his bed, and the other happily enjoying the comforts of a sweet sleep. A few natural inquiries from Miss Peyton had opened the soul of the doctor, who knew every individual of her extensive family connexion in Virginia, and who even thought it impossible that he had not seen the lady herself. The amiable spinster smiled, as she felt it to be improbable that she should ever have met her new acquaintance before, and not remember his singularities. It, however, greatly relieved the embarrassment of their situation, and something like a discourse was maintained between them; the nieces were only listeners, nor could the aunt be said to be much more.

“As I was observing, Miss Peyton, it was nothing but the noxious vapours of the low lands that made the plantation of your brother an unfit residence for man; but quadrupeds were—”

“Bless me, what’s that?” said Miss Peyton, turning pale at the report of the pistols fired at Birch.

“It sounds prodigiously like the concussion on the atmosphere, made by the explosion of fire arms,” said the precise surgeon, very coolly, and sipping his tea with great indifference. “I should imagine it to be the troop of Captain Lawton returning, did I not know that the Captain never uses the pistols, and that he dreadfully abuses the sabre.”

“Merciful providence!” exclaimed the agitated maiden, “he would not injure one with it certainly.”

“Injure!” repeated the other quickly; “it is certain death, madam; the most random blows imaginable; all that I can say to him will have no effect.”

“But Captain Lawton is the officer we saw this morning, and is surely your friend,” said Frances, hastily, observing her aunt to be dreadfully alarmed.

"I find no fault with his want of friendship," returned the doctor; "the man is well enough if he would learn to cut scientifically and give me some chance with the wounded. All trades, madam, ought to be allowed to live; but what becomes of a surgeon, if his patients are dead before he sees them?"

The doctor continued haranguing on the probability and improbability of its being the returning troop, until a loud knock at the front door gave new alarm to the ladies. Instinctively laying his hand on a small saw, that had been his companion the whole day, in the vain expectation of an amputation, the surgeon coolly assured the ladies that he would avert any danger, and proceeded in person to answer the summons.

"Captain Lawton!" exclaimed the surgeon, as he beheld the trooper leaning on the arm of his subaltern, and with difficulty crossing the threshold.

"Ah! my dear bone-setter, is it you?" returned the other good-humouredly; "you are here very fortunately to inspect my carcass; but do lay aside that rascally saw."

A few words from Mason explained to the surgeon the nature and manner of his Captain's hurts, and Miss Peyton cheerfully accorded the required accommodations. While the room intended for the trooper was getting in a state of preparation, and the doctor was giving certain portentous orders, the Captain was invited to rest himself in the parlour. On the table was a dish of more substantial food than ordinarily adorned the afternoon's repast, and it soon caught the attention of the dragoons. Miss Peyton, recollecting they had probably made their only meal that day at her table, kindly invited them to close it with another. The offer required no pressing, and in a few minutes the two were comfortably seated, and engaged in an employment that was only interrupted by an occasional wry face from the Captain, as he moved his body in evident pain. These interruptions, however, interfered but little with the principal business in hand; and the Captain had got happily through this important duty, before the surgeon returned to announce all things as ready for his accommodation in the room above stairs.

"What, eating!" cried the astonished physician; "Captain Lawton, do you wish to die?"

"I have no particular wish that way," said the trooper, rising, and bowing a polite good night to the ladies, "and therefore, have been providing the materials necessary to preserve life within me."

The surgeon muttered his dissatisfaction while he followed Mason and his Captain from the apartment.

Every house in America had at that day what was emphatically called its best room, and this had been allotted, by the unseen influence of Sarah, to Colonel Wellmere.—The down counter-

pane, which a clear frosty night would render extremely grateful over bruised limbs, decked the English officer's bed. A massive silver tankard, richly embossed with the Wharton arms, held the beverage he was to drink during the night; while beautiful vessels of china performed the same office for the two American Captains. Sarah was certainly unconscious of the silent preference she had been giving to the English officer, and it is equally certain that but for his hurts, bed, tankard, and everything but the beverage, would have been matters of indifference to Captain Lawton, half of whose nights were spent in his clothes, and not a few of them in the saddle. After taking possession of what was a small but comfortable room, Dr. Sitgreaves proceeded to inquire into the state of his injuries. He had begun to pass his hand over the body of his patient, when the latter cried impatiently—"Sitgreaves, do lay that rascally saw aside; the sight of it makes my blood cold."

"Captain Lawton," rejoined the surgeon, "I think, for a man who has so often exposed life and limb, you are unaccountably afraid of what is a very useful instrument."

"Heaven keep me from its use," said the trooper with a shrug.

"Surely you would not despise the lights of science, nor refuse surgical aid, because this saw might be necessary?" asked the incorrigible operator.

"I would."

"You would?"

"Yes, you never shall joint me like a quarter of beef, while I have life to defend myself," cried the resolute dragoon; "but I grow sleepy; are any of my ribs broken?"

"No."

"Any of my bones?"

"No."

"Tom, I'll thank you for that pitcher." As he ended his draught, he very deliberately turned his back on his companions, and good-naturedly cried—"Good night, Mason; good night, Galen."

Captain Lawton entertained a profound respect for the surgical abilities of his comrade, but was very sceptical on the subject of administering internally for the ailings of the human frame. With a full stomach, stout heart, and a clear conscience, he often maintained, that a man might bid defiance to the world and its vicissitudes. Nature provided him with the second, and, to say the truth, he strove manfully himself, to keep up the other two requisites in his creed of worldly prosperity. It was a favourite maxim with him, that the last thing death assailed was the eyes, and next to the last, the jaws. This he interpreted in a clear expression of the intention of nature, that every man might regu-



late, by his own volition, whatever was to be admitted into the sanctuary of his mouth; consequently, if the guest proved unpalatable, he had no one to blame but himself. The surgeon, who was well acquainted with these views of his patient, beheld him, as he cavalierly turned his back on Mason and himself, with a commiserating attempt; replaced in their leathern repository the phials he had exhibited, with a species of care that was allied to veneration; gave the saw, as he concluded, a whirl of triumph, and departed, without condescending to notice the compliment of the trooper, to give some of his care to the guest in the best bedroom. Mason, finding, by the breathing of the Captain, that his own good night would be unheard, hastened to pay his respects to the ladies—mounted, and followed the troop at the top of his horse's speed.

## CHAPTER X.

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,  
E'en in our ashes, live their wonted fires.—*Gray.*

THE possessions of Mr. Wharton extended some distance on each side of the house in which he dwelt, and most of his land was unoccupied. A few scattering dwellings were to be seen in different parts of his domains, but they were fast falling to decay, and were untenanted. The proximity of the country to the contending armies had nearly banished the pursuits of agriculture from the land. It was useless for the husbandmen to devote his time, and the labour of his hands, to obtain overflowing garners, that the first foraging party would empty. None tilled the earth with any other view than to provide the scanty means of subsistence, except those who were placed so near to one of the adverse parties as to be safe from the inroads of the light troops of the other. To these the war offered a golden harvest, more especially to such as enjoyed the benefits of an access to the Royal army. Mr. Wharton did not require the use of his lands for the purposes of subsistence, and willingly adopted the guarded practice of the day, and limited his attention to such articles as were soon to be consumed within his own walls, or could be easily secreted from the prying looks of the foragers. In consequence, the ground on which the action was fought, had not a single inhabited building, besides the one belonging to the father of Harvey Birch. This stood between the places where the cavalry had met, and the charge had been made on the party of Wellmere.

To Katy Haynes, it had been a day fruitful in incidents to furnish an inexhaustible theme to her after life. The prudent house-keeper had kept her political feelings in a state of rigid neutra-

lity ; her own friends had espoused the cause of the country, but the maiden never lost sight of the moment when she herself was to be espoused to Harvey Birch. She did not wish to fetter the bonds of Hymen with any clogs than those with which nature had already so amply provided them. Katy could always see enough to embitter the marriage bed, without calling in the aid of political contention ; and yet, at times, the prying spinster had her doubts of which side she should be, to escape this dreadful evil. There was so much of practised deception in the conduct of the pedler, that the housekeeper frequently arrested her own words when most wishing to manifest her sympathy. His lengthened absences from home had commenced immediately after the hostile armies had made their appearance in the county ; previously to that event, his returns had been regular and frequent.

The battle of the Plains had taught the cautious Washington the advantages possessed by his enemy, in organization, arms, and discipline. These were difficulties to be mastered by his own vigilance and care. Drawing off his troops to the heights, in the northern part of the county, he bid defiance to the attacks of the royal army, and Sir William Howe fell back to the enjoyments of his barren conquests, a deserted city, and the adjacent islands. Never afterwards did the opposing armies make the trial for success within the limits of West Chester ; yet hardly a day passed, that the partisans did not make their inroads ; or a sun rise, that the inhabitants were spared the relation of the excesses that the preceding darkness had served to conceal. Most of the movements of the pedler through the county were made at the hours which others allotted to repose. The evening sun would frequently leave him at one extremity of the district, and the morning find him at the other. His pack was his never-failing companion, and there were those who closely studied him in his moments of traffic, who thought his only purpose was the accumulation of gold. He would be often seen near the Highlands with a body bending under the weight it carried ; and again near the Harlaem river, travelling, with lighter steps, with his face towards the setting sun. But these glances at him were uncertain and fleeting. The intermediate time no eye could penetrate. For months he disappeared, and no traces of his course were known.

Strong parties held the heights of Harlaem, and the northern end of Manhattan Island was bristled with the bayonets of the English sentinels, yet the pedler glided among them unnoticed and uninjured. His approaches to the American lines were also frequent ; but generally so conducted as to baffle pursuit. Many a sentinel, placed in the gorges of the mountains, spoke of a strange figure that had been seen gliding by them in the mists

of the evening. The stories reached the ears of the officers, and, as we have related, in two instances, the trader fell into the hands of the Americans. The first time he escaped from Lawton, shortly after his arrest; but the second he was condemned to die. On the morning of his intended execution, the cage was opened, but the bird had flown. This extraordinary escape had been made from the custody of a favourite officer of Washington, and sentinels who had been thought worthy to guard the person of the Commander-in-chief. Bribery and treason could not approach the characters of men so well esteemed, and the opinion gained ground among the common soldiery, that the pedler had dealings with the dark one. Katy however, always repelled this opinion with indignation; for within the recesses of her own bosom, the housekeeper, in ruminating on the events, concluded that the evil spirit did not pay in gold. Nor, continues the wary spinster in her cogitations, does Washington; paper and promises were all that the leader of the American troops could dispense to his servants, until after the receipt of supplies from France; and even then, although the scrutinizing eyes of Katy never let any opportunity of examining into the deer-skin purse pass unimproved, she was never able to detect the image of Louis, intruding into the presence of the well known countenance of George III.

The house of Harvey had been watched at different times by the Americans, with a view to his arrest, but never with success; the reputed spy possessed a secret means of intelligence, that invariably defeated their schemes. Once, when a strong body of the Continental army held the Four Corners for a whole summer, orders had been received from Washington himself, never to leave the door of Harvey Birch unwatched; the command was rigidly obeyed, and during this long period the pedler was unseen; the detachment was withdrawn, and the next night Birch re-entered his dwelling. The father of Harvey had been greatly molested, in consequence of the suspicious character of the son. But, notwithstanding the most minute scrutiny into the conduct of the old man, no fact could be substantiated against him to his injury, and his property was too small to keep alive the zeal of professed patriots; its confiscation and purchase would not reward them for their trouble. Age and sorrow were now about to spare him from further molestation, for the lamp of life had begun to be drained of its oil. The separation of the father and son had been painful, but in obedience to what both thought a duty. The old man had kept his situation a secret from the neighbourhood, in order that he might have the company of his child in his last moments. The confusion of the past day, and his increasing dread that Harvey might be too late, helped to hasten the event

he would fain arrest for yet a little while. As night set in, his illness increased to such a degree, that the dismayed housekeeper had sent a truant boy, who had been shut up with them for the day rather than trust himself in the presence of the combatants, to the Locusts, in quest of a companion to cheer her desolate situation. Cæsar was the only one who could be spared, and, loaded with eatables and cordials by the kind-hearted Miss Peyton, the black had been despatched on his duty. The dying man was past the use of such articles, and his chief anxiety seemed to centre in a meeting with his absent child.

The noise of the chase had been heard by the group in the house, but its cause not understood; and as both the black and Katy were apprised of the detachment of American horse being below them, with its discontinuance all apprehension from this disturbance ceased. They heard the dragoons, as they moved slowly by the building, but in compliance with the prudent injunction of the black, the housekeeper forbore to indulge her curiosity by taking a view of the pageant. The old man had closed his eyes, and his attendants supposed him to be asleep. The house contained two large rooms, and as many small ones. One of the former served for kitchen and parlour; in the other lay the father of Birch; of the latter, one was the sanctuary of the vestal, and the other contained the provisions for subsistence. A huge chimney of stone rose in the centre of the building, serving, of itself, for a partition between the larger rooms; and fire-places of corresponding dimensions were in each apartment. A bright fire was burning in that of the common room, and within the very jambs of its moustrous jaws sat Cæsar and Katy, at the time of which we write. The African was impressing his caution on the housekeeper to suppress an idle curiosity that might prove dangerous.

"Best nebber tempt a Satan," said Cæsar, rolling up his eyes significantly, till the whites glistened by the glare of the fire; "I like to lose an ear, only for carrying a little bit of a letter; but I wish Harvey get back."

"It is very disregardful in him to be away at such times," said Katy, imposingly. "Suppose now his father wanted to make his last will in the testament, who is there to do such a thing for him? Harvey is a very wasteful and a very disregardful man."

"Perhaps he make him afore," said the black inquiringly.

"It would not be a wonderment if he had," rejoined the housekeeper; "he is whole days looking into the Bible."

"Then he read a good book," said the black, solemnly. "Miss Fanny read him to Dinah berry often."

"Yes," continued the inquisitive spinster; "but he would not be for ever studying it, if it didn't hold something more as common."

She rose from her seat, and stealing softly to a chest of drawers in the room where lay the sick, took from it a large Bible, heavily bound and secured with strong clasps of brass, with which she returned to the expecting African. The volume was opened, and she proceeded instantly to the inquiry. Katy was far from an expert scholar, and to Cæsar the characters were absolutely strangers. For some time the housekeeper was occupied with finding out the word Matthew, which she at last saw in large Roman letters crowning one of the pages, and instantly announced her discovery to the attentive Cæsar.

"Berry well, now look him all through," said the black, peeping over the damsel's shoulder, as he held a long, lank candle of yellow tallow in his hand, in such a manner as to throw its feeble light on the volume.

"Yes, but I must begin with the book," replied the other, turning the leaves carefully back, until, moving two at once, she lighted upon a page covered with the labours of a pen. "Here," said the housekeeper with impatience, and shaking with the eagerness of expectation; "here is the very words themselves; now I would give the world to know who he has left them big silver shoe buckles to."

"Read 'em," said Cæsar, laconically.

"And the black walnut drawers; for Harvey could never want them."

"Why no want 'em as well as he fader?" asked the black, dryly.

"And the six silver table spoons; for Harvey always uses the iron."

"I guess he say," continued the African, pointing significantly to the writing, and listening eagerly, as the other just opened the store of the elder Birch's wealth.

Thus repeatedly advised, and impelled by her own curiosity, Katy commenced her task. Anxious to come to the part which most interested herself, she dipped at once into the centre of the subject.

"*Chester Birch, born September 1st, 1755;*" read the spinster, with great deliberation.

"Well," cried the impatient Cæsar, "what he give him?"

"*Abigail Birch, born July 12th, 1757;*" continued the housekeeper, in the same tone.

"I guess he give her a spoons," interrupted the black.

"*June 1st, 1760. On this awful day, the judgment of an offended God lighted on my house*"—a heavy groan from the adjoining room made the spinster instinctively close the book, and Cæsar, for a moment, shook with fear. Neither possessed sufficient resolution to go and examine the condition of the sufferer, but his heavy breathing continued as usual. Katy dared not,

however, re-open the Bible, and carefully securing its clasps, it was laid on the table in silence. Cæsar took his chair again, and after looking timidly round the room remarked—"I thought he be bont to go."

"No," said Katy solemnly, "he will live till the tide is out, or the first cock crows in the morning."

"Poor man!" continued the black, nestling still farther into the chimney corner; "I hope he lay quiet after he die."

"'Twould be no astonishment to me if he did'nt," returned Katy, glancing her eyes round the room, and speaking in an under voice; "for they say an unquiet life makes an uneasy grave."

"Johnny Birch a berry good man," said the black, quite positively.

"Ah! Cæsar," said the housekeeper in the same voice, "he is good, only, who does good—can you tell me, Cæsar, why honestly gotten gold should be hidden in the bowels of the earth?"

"If he know where he be, why don't he dig him up?" asked the black, promptly.

"There may be reasons not comprehensible to you," said Katy, moving her chair so that her clothes covered the charmed stone, underneath which lay the secret treasures of the pedler, unable to refrain speaking of that which she would have been very unwilling to reveal; "but a rough outside often holds a smooth inside." Cæsar stared around the building, unable to fathom the hidden meaning of the damsel, when his roving eyes suddenly became fixed, and his teeth chattered with affright. The change in the countenance of the black was instantly perceived by Katy, and turning her face, she saw the pedler himself, standing within the door of the room.

"Is he alive?" asked Birch, tremulously, and seemingly afraid to receive an answer to his own question.

"Surely," said the maiden, rising hastily, and officiously offering her chair to the pedler, "he must live till day or the tide is down."

Disregarding all but her assurance, the pedler stole gently to the room of his dying parent. The tie which bound this father and son together was one of no ordinary kind. In the wide world they were all to each other. Had Katy but read a few lines further in the record, she would have seen the sad tale of their misfortunes. At one blow competence and kindred had been swept from before them, and from that day to the present hour, persecution and distress had followed their wandering steps. Approaching the bedside, Harvey leaned his body forward, and said, in a voice nearly choked by his feelings—"Father, do you know me?"

The parent slowly opened his eyes, and a smile of satisfaction passed over his pallid features, leaving behind it the impression of death in still greater force, by the contrast. The pedler gave a restorative he had brought with him to the parched lips of the

sick man, and for a few minutes new vigour seemed to be imparted to his frame. He spoke, but slowly and with difficulty. Curiosity kept Kate silent; awe had the same effect on Cæsar; and Harvey seemed hardly to breathe, as he listened to the language of the departing spirit.

"My son," said the father in a hollow voice, "God is as merciful as he is just; if I threw the cup of salvation from my lips when a youth, he graciously offers it to me in mine age. He chastiseth to purify, and I go to join the spirits of our lost family. In a little while, my child, you will be alone. I know you too well not to foresee that you will be a lone pilgrim through life. The bruised reed may endure, but it will never rise. You have that within you, Harvey, that will guide you aright; persevere as you have begun, for the duties of life are never to be neglected—and"

—A noise in the adjoining room interrupted the dying man, and the impatient pedler hastened to learn the cause, followed by Katy and the black. The first glance of his eye on the figure in the doorway told the trader but too well both his errand, and the fate that probably awaited himself. The intruder was a man still young in years, but his lineaments bespoke a mind long agitated by evil passions. His dress was of the meanest materials, and so ragged and unseemly as to give him the appearance of studied poverty. His hair was prematurely whitened, and his sunken, lowering eye avoided the bold, forward look of innocence. There was a restlessness in his movements, and an agitation in his manner, that proceeded from the workings of the foul spirit within him, and which was not less offensive to others than distressing to himself. This man was a well-known leader of one of those gangs of marauders who infested the county with a semblance of patriotism, and were guilty of every grade of offence, from simple theft up to murder. Behind him stood several other figures clad in a similar manner, but whose countenances expressed nothing more than the callous indifference of brutal insensibility. They were all well armed with muskets and bayonets, and provided with the usual implements of foot soldiers. Harvey knew resistance to be vain, and quietly submitted to their directions. In the twinkling of an eye both he and Cæsar were stripped of their decent garments, and made to exchange clothes with two of the filthiest of the band. They were then placed in separate corners of the room, and, under the muzzles of the muskets, required faithfully to answer such interrogatories as were put to them.

"Where is your pack?" was the first question to the pedler.

"Hear me," said Birch, trembling with agitation; "in the next room is my father, now in the agonies of death; let me go to him, receive his blessing, and close his eyes, and you shall have all—ay, all."

“Answer me as I put the questions, or this musket shall send you to keep the old driveller company; where is your pack?”

“I will tell you nothing, unless you let me go to my father,” said the pedler, resolutely.

His persecutor raised his arm with a malicious sneer, and was about to execute his threat, when one of his companions checked him and cried—“What would you do? you surely forget the reward. Tell us where are your goods, and you shall go to your father.”

Birch complied instantly, and a man was despatched in quest of the booty; he soon returned, throwing the bundle on the floor, swearing it was as light as feathers.

“Ay,” cried the leader, “there must be gold somewhere for what it did contain; give us your gold, Mr. Birch; we know you have it; you will not take continental, not you.”

“You break your faith,” said Harvey, sullenly.

“Give us your gold,” exclaimed the other, furiously, pricking the pedler with his bayonet until the blood followed his pushes in streams. At this instant a slight movement was heard in the adjoining room, and Harvey cried imploringly—“Let me—let me go to my father, and you shall have all.”

“I swear you shall go then,” said the skinner.

“Here, take the trash,” cried Birch, as he threw aside the purse, which he had contrived to conceal, notwithstanding the change in his garments.

The robber raised it from the floor with a hellish laugh, as he said coolly—“Ay, but it shall be to your father in heaven.”

“Monster!” exclaimed Birch, “have you no feeling, no faith, no honesty?”

“Why, to hear him, one would think there was not a rope around his neck already,” said the other malignantly. “There is no necessity for your being uneasy, Mr. Birch; if the old man gets a few hours’ start of you in the journey, you will be sure to follow him before noon to-morrow.”

This unfeeling communication had no effect on the pedler, who listened with gasping breath to every sound from the room of his parent, until he heard his own name spoken in the hollow, sepulchral tones of death. Birch could endure no more, but shrieking out—“Father, hush—father, I come—I come;” he darted by his keeper, and was the next moment pinned to the wall by the bayonet of another. Fortunately his quick motion had caused him to escape a thrust aimed at his life, and it was by his clothes only that he was confined.

“No, Mr. Birch,” said the skinner, “we know you too well for a slippery rascal to trust you out of sight—your gold, your gold.”

“You have it,” said the pedler, writhing with the agony of his situation.



"Ay, we have the purse; but you have more purses—King George is a prompt paymaster, and you have done him many a piece of good service. Where is your hoard? without it you will never see your father."

"Remove the stone underneath the woman," cried the pedler, eagerly—"remove the stone."

"He raves, he raves," said Katy, instinctively moving her position to another stone than the one on which she had been standing. In a moment it was torn from its bed, and nothing but earth was seen under it.

"He raves; you have driven him from his right mind," continued the trembling spinster; "would any man in his senses think of keeping gold under a hearth-stone?"

"Peace, babbling fool," cried Harvey. "Lift the corner stone, and you will find what will make you rich, and me a beggar."

"And then you will be despicable," said the house-keeper, bitterly. "A pedler without goods and without money is sure to be despicable."

"There will be enough left to pay for his halter," cried the skinner, as he opened upon a store of English guineas. These were quickly transferred to a bag, notwithstanding the declarations of the spinster, that her dues were unsatisfied, and that, of right, ten of the guineas should be her property.

Delighted with a prize that greatly exceeded their expectations, the band prepared to depart, intending to take the pedler with them, in order to give him up to some of the American troops above, and to claim the reward offered for his apprehension. Everything was ready, and they were about to lift Birch in their arms, for he refused to move an inch, when the figure entered the room that appalled the group: around his body was thrown the sheet of the bed from which he had just risen, and his fixed eye and haggard face gave him the appearance of a being from another world. Even Katy and Cæsar thought it was the spirit of the elder Birch, and they both fled the house, followed by the alarmed skimmers.

The excitement, which had given the sick man strength, soon vanished, and the pedler, lifting him in his arms, re-conveyed him to his bed. The re-action of the system which followed hastened to close the scene.

The glazed eye of the father was fixed upon the son; his lips moved, but his voice was unheard. Harvey bent down, and, with his parting breath, received the dying benediction of his parent. A life of privation, of care, and of wrongs, embittered most of the future hours of the pedler. But under no sufferings, in no misfortunes, the subject of poverty and biting obloquy, did the remembrance of that blessing ever leave him; it constantly

gleamed over the images of the past, shedding a holy radiance around his saddest hours of despondency; it cheered the prospect of the future with the prayers of a pious spirit for his well-being; and it brought assurance to his soul, of having discharged faithfully and truly the sacred offices of filial love.

The retreat of Cæsar and the spinster had been too precipitate to admit of much calculation; yet had the former instinctively separated himself from the skimmers. After fleeing a short distance they paused from fatigue, and the maiden commenced in a solemn voice—"Oh! Cæsar, 'twas dreadful to walk before he had been laid in his grave; but it must have been the money that disturbed him; they say Captain Kidd walks where he buried gold in the old war."

"I neber tink Johnny Birch had such big eye," said the African, his teeth yet chattering with the fright.

"I'm sure 'twould be a botherment to a living soul, to lose so much money, and all for nothing," continued Katy, disregarding the other's remark. "Harvey will be nothing but a despicable, poverty-stricken wretch. I wonder who he thinks would marry him now."

"Maybe a spooke take away Harvey too," observed Cæsar, moving still nearer to the side of the maiden. But a new idea had seized the imagination of the spinster; she thought it not improbable that the prize had been forsaken in the confusion of the retreat; and, after deliberating and reasoning for some time with Cæsar, they both determined to venture back, and ascertain this important fact, and, if possible, learn what had been the fate of the pedler. Much time was spent in cautiously approaching the dreaded spot and as the spinster had sagaciously placed herself in the line of the retreat of the skimmers, every stone was examined in the progress, to see if it was not the abandoned gold. But, although the suddenness of the alarm, and the cry of Cæsar, had impelled the freebooters to so hasty a retreat, they grasped the hoard with an instinctive hold that death itself would not have loosened. Perceiving everything to be quiet within, Katy at length mustered resolution enough to enter the dwelling, where she found the pedler with a heavy heart performing the last sad offices for the dead. A few words sufficed to explain to Katy the nature of her mistake; but Cæsar continued till his dying day to astonish the sable inmates of the kitchen with learned dissertations on *spookes*, and to relate how direful was the appearance of Johnny Birch.

The danger to himself compelled the pedler to abridge even the short period that American custom leaves the deceased with us; and, aided by the black and Katy, his painful task was soon ended. Cæsar volunteered to walk a couple of miles with orders to a carpenter, and the body, being habited in its ordinary attire,

was left, with a sheet laid over it with great decency, to await the return of the messenger.

The skimmers had fled precipitately to the wood, which was but a short distance from the house of Birch; and once safely sheltered within its shades, they halted, and mustered their panic-stricken forces.

"What in the name of fury seized on your coward hearts?" cried the dissatisfied leader, drawing his breath heavily.

"The same question might be asked yourself," returned one of the band, sullenly.

"From your fright, I thought a party of De Lancey's men were upon us. Oh! you are brave gentleman at a race," continued the leader, bitterly.

"We follow our Captain."

"Then follow me back and let us secure the scoundrel, and receive the reward."

"Yes; and by the time we reach the house, that black rascal will have the mad Virginian upon us; by my soul, I would rather meet fifty Cow-boys, than that single man."

"Fool," cried the enraged leader, "don't you know Dunwoodie's horse are at the Corners, full two miles from here?"

"I care not where the dragoons are, but I will swear that I saw Captain Lawton enter the house of old Wharton, while I lay watching an opportunity of getting the British Colonel's horse from the stable."

"And if he does come; won't a bullet silence a dragoon from the south as well as one from old England?"

"Ay, but I don't choose a hornet's nest about my ears, raise the skin of one of that corps, and you will never see another peaceable night's foraging again."

"Well," muttered the leader, as they retired deeper into the wood, "this sottish pedler will stay to see the old devil buried, and though we mustn't touch him at the funeral, he'll wait to look after the movables, and to-morrow night shall wind up his concerns."

With this threat they withdrew to one of their usual places of resort, until darkness should again give them an opportunity of marauding on the community, without danger of detection.

## CHAPTER XI.

O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day,  
Most lamentable day! most woeful day  
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!  
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!  
Never was seen so black a day as this:  
O woeful day! O woeful day!—*Shakspeare.*

THE family at the Locusts had slept or watched through all the

disturbances of the cottage of Birch, in perfect ignorance of their occurrence. The attacks of the skimmers were always made with so much privacy as to exclude the sufferers, not only from succour, but frequently, through a dread of future depredations, from the commiseration of their neighbours also. The cares of their additional duties had drawn the ladies from their pillows at an hour somewhat earlier than usual, and Captain Lawton, notwithstanding the sufferings of his body, had risen in compliance with a rule he never departed from, of sleeping but six hours at a time. This was one of the few points in which the care of the human frame was involved, where the trooper and the surgeon of horse were ever known to agree. The doctor had watched, during the night, by the side of the bed of Captain Singleton, without once closing his eyes. Occasionally he would pay a visit to the wounded Englishman, who, being more hurt in the spirit than in the flesh, tolerated the interruptions to his repose with a very ill grace; and once, for an instant, he ventured to steal softly to the bed of his obstinate comrade, and was nearly succeeding in obtaining a feel of his pulse, when a terrible oath, sworn by the trooper in a dream, startled the prudent surgeon, and warned him of a trite saying in the corps, "that Captain Lawton always slept with one eye open." This group had assembled in one of the parlours as the sun made its appearance over the eastern hill, and dispersed the columns of fog which had enveloped the low land.

Miss Peyton was looking from a window in the direction of the tenement of the pedler, and was expressing a kind anxiety after the welfare of the sick it was supposed to contain, when the person of Katy suddenly emerged from the dense covering of an earthly cloud, whose mists were scattering before the cheering rays of the sun, and was seen making hasty steps towards the Locusts. There was that in the air of the housekeeper, which bespoke distress of an unusual nature, and the kind-hearted mistress of the Locusts opened the door of the room, with the benevolent intention of soothing a grief that seemed so overwhelming. A nearer view of the disturbed features of the visitor, confirmed Miss Peyton in her belief, and with the shock that gentle feelings ever experience at a sudden and endless separation from even the meanest of their associates, she said hastily—"What, Katy, is he gone?"

"No, ma'am," replied the disturbed damsel with great bitterness, "he is not yet gone, but he may go as soon as he pleases now, for the mischief is all done. I do verily believe, Miss Peyton, they haven't so much as left him money enough to buy him another suit of clothes to cover his nakedness, and what he has on are none of the best, I can tell you."

“How!” exclaimed the astonished spinster, “could any one have the heart to plunder a man in such distress?”

“Hearts!” repeated Katy, catching her breath; “men like them have no bowels at all. Plunder and distress indeed! Why ma’am, there were in the iron pot, in plain sight, fifty-four guineas of gold, besides what lay underneath, which I couldn’t count without handling; and I didn’t like to touch it, for they say, that another’s gold is apt to stick—so judging from that in sight, there wasn’t less than two hundred guineas, besides what was in the deer-skin purse. But Harvey is little better now than a beggar, and don’t you think a beggar very despicable, Miss Peyton?”

“Poverty is to be pitied, and not despised,” said the lady in reply, still unable to comprehend the extent of the misfortune that had befallen her neighbour during the night. “But how is the old man; and does this loss you speak of affect him much?”

The countenance of Katy changed instantly, from the natural expression of concern to the set form of melancholy, as she answered—“He is happily removed from the cares of the world; the chinking of the money made him get out of his bed, and the poor soul found the shock too great for him. He died about two hours and ten minutes before the cock crowed, as near as we can say:”—she was interrupted by the physician, who, approaching, inquired, with much interest, the nature of his disorder. Glancing her eye over the figure of this new acquaintance, Katy, after instinctively adjusting her dress, replied—“’Twas the troubles of the times, and the loss of property, that brought him down; he wasted from day to day, and all my care and anxiety were lost; for now, Harvey is no better than a beggar, and who is there to pay me for what I have done?”

“God will reward you for all the good you have done,” said Miss Peyton, mildly.

“Yes,” interrupted the spinster, hastily, and with an air of reverence that was instantly succeeded by an expression that denoted more of worldly care; “but then I left my wages for three years past in the hands of Harvey, and how am I to get them? My brothers told me again and again to ask for my money, but I always thought accounts between relations were easily settled.”

“Were you related then to Birch?” asked Miss Peyton, observing her to pause.

“Why,” returned the housekeeper, hesitating a little, “I thought we were as good as so. I wonder if I have no claim on the house and garden, though they say now it is Harvey’s, it will surely be confiscated;” turning to Lawton, who had been sitting in one posture, with his piercing eyes lowering at her through his thick brows, in silence, “perhaps this gentleman knows—he

seems to have an interest in my story"—"Madam" said the trooper, bowing very low, "both you and the tale are extremely interesting"—Katy smiled involuntarily—"but my humble knowledge is limited to the setting of a squadron in the field, and using it when there. I beg leave to refer you to Dr. Archibald Sitgreaves, a gentleman of universal attainments, and unbounded philanthropy."

The surgeon drew up in proud disdain, and employed himself in whistling a low air, as he looked over some phials on a table; but the housekeeper, turning to him with an inclination of her head, continued—"I suppose, sir, a woman has no power in her husband's property, unless they be actually married?"

It was a maxim with Dr. Sitgreaves, that no species of knowledge was to be despised, and consequently he was an empiric in everything but his profession. At first, indignation at the irony of his comrade kept him silent; but suddenly changing his purpose, he answered the maiden, with a smile—"I judge not. If death has anticipated your nuptials, I am fearful you have no remedy against his stern decrees."

To Katy this sounded well, although she understood nothing of its meaning, but "death," and "nuptials." To this part of his speech, then she directed her reply.

"I did think he only waited the death of the old gentleman before he married," said the housekeeper, looking on the carpet; "but now he is nothing more than despicable, or what's the same thing, a pedler without house, pack, or money. It might be hard for a man to get a wife at all in such a predicament—don't you think it would, Miss Peyton?"

"I seldom trouble myself with such things," said the lady, gravely, busying herself in preparation for the morning's repast.

During this dialogue, Captain Lawton had been studying the countenance and manner of the housekeeper, with a most ludicrous gravity; and fearful the conversation would cease, he inquired, with an appearance of great interest—"Then you think it was age and debility that removed the old gentleman at last?"

"And these troublesome times," returned the spinster promptly; "trouble is a heavy pull down to a sick bed; but I suppose his time had come, and when that happens, it matters but little what doctor's stuff we take."

"Let me set you right in that particular," interrupted the surgeon gravely; "we must all die it is true, but it is permitted us to use the lights of science, in arresting dangers as they occur, until—"

"We can die secundum artem," said the trooper dryly.

To this observation the physician did not deign to make any reply; but deeming it necessary, in order to support his dignity,

that the conversation should continue, he added—"Perhaps, in this instance, judicious treatment might have prolonged the life of the patient; who administered to the case?"

"No one yet," said the housekeeper with quickness; "I expect he has made his last will in the testament."

The surgeon disregarded the smile of the ladies, and pursued his inquiries by saying—"It is doubtless wise to be ever prepared for death. But under whose care was the sick man during his indisposition?"

"Under mine," answered Katy, with an air of a little importance; "and care thrown away I may well call it; for Harvey is quite too despicable to think any more nor that."

There was a mutual ignorance of each other's meaning, between the surgeon of horse and the loquacious maiden, but it made very little interruption in their communications; both took a good deal for granted, and Sitgreaves pursued his question by asking—"And how did you treat him?"

"Why kindly, you may be certain," said Katy with spirit, and rather tartly.

"The doctor means medically, madam," observed Captain Lawton, with a face that would have honoured the funeral of the deceased.

"I doctor'd him mostly with yarbs," said the housekeeper, smiling at her consciousness of error.

"With simples," returned the surgeon; "they are safer in the hands of the unlettered than more powerful remedies; but why had you no regular attendant?"

"I'm sure Harvey has suffered enough already from having so much concern with the rig'lars, without having one to wait on his father," replied the housekeeper; "he has lost his all, and made himself a vagabond through the land, and I have reason to rue the day I ever crossed the threshold of his house."

"Dr. Sitgreaves does not mean a rig'lars soldier, but a regular physician, madam," said the trooper, without moving a muscle.

"Oh!" cried the maiden, again correcting herself, with a smile, "for the best of all reasons; there was none to be had, so I took care of him myself. If there had been a doctor at hand, I am sure we would gladly have had him; for my part, I am clear for doctoring, though Harvey says I am killing myself with medicines, but I am sure it will make but little difference to him, whether I live or die."

"Therein you show your sense," said the surgeon, approaching to where the spinster sat, holding the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet to the genial heat of a fine fire, making the most of comfort amid all her troubles, "you appear to be a sensible, discreet woman, and some who have had opportunities of

acquiring more correct views might envy you your respect for knowledge and the lights of science."

Although the housekeeper did not altogether comprehend its meaning, she knew it was a compliment, and as such was highly pleased with the surgeon's observation; with increased ambition, therefore, she cried, "it was always said of me, that I wanted nothing but opportunity to make quite a physician myself; so long as before I came to live with Harvey's father, they called me the bitch doctor."

"More true than civil, I dare say," returned the surgeon, losing sight of the woman's character in his admiration of her respect for the healing art. "In the absence of more enlightened counsellors, the experience of a discreet matron is frequently of great efficacy in checking the progress of disease in the human system; under such circumstances, madam, it is dreadful to have to contend with ignorance and obstinacy."

"Bad enough, as I well know from experience," cried Katy in triumph; "Harvey is as obstinate about such things as a dumb beast; one would think the care I took with his bed-ridden father, might learn him better than to despise good nursing. But some day he may know what it is to want a careful woman in his house, though now I am sure he is too despicable himself to have a house."

"Indeed, I can easily comprehend the mortification you must have felt in having one so self-willed to deal with," returned the surgeon, glancing his eyes reproachfully at his comrade; "but you should rise superior to such opinions, and pity the ignorance by which they are engendered."

The housekeeper hesitated a moment, at a loss to comprehend all that the surgeon expressed, yet she felt it was both complimentary and kind; therefore, suppressing her natural flow of language a little, she replied—"I tell Harvey his conduct is often despicable, and last night he made my words good; but the opinion of such unbelievers is not very consequential; yet it is dreadful to think how he behaves at times; now, when he threw away the needle"—

"What!" said the surgeon, interrupting her, "does he affect to despise the needle? But it is my lot to meet with men, daily, who are equally perverse, and who show a still more culpable disrespect for the information that flows from the lights of science."

The doctor turned his face towards Captain Lawton while speaking, but the elevation of the head prevented his eyes from resting on the grave countenance maintained by the trooper. Katy listened with the most profound attention, and added—"Then Harvey is a disbeliever in the tides."

"Not believe in the tides!" repeated the healer of bodies in



astonishment ; “ does the man distrust his senses ; but perhaps it is the influence of the moon that he doubts ? ”

“ That he does,” exclaimed Katy, shaking with eager delight at meeting with a man of learning, who could support her in her favourite opinions. “ If you was to hear him talk, you would think he didn’t believe there were such a thing as a moon at all.”

“ It is the misfortune of ignorance and incredulity, madam, that they increase themselves,” said the doctor, gravely. “ The mind once rejecting useful information insensibly leans to superstition, and to conclusions, on the order of nature, that are not less prejudicial to the cause of truth, than they are at variance with the first principles of human knowledge.”

The spinster was too much awe-struck to venture an undigested reply to this speech, and the surgeon, after pausing a moment in a kind of philosophical disdain, continued—“ That any man in his senses can doubt of the flux of the tides is more than I could have thought possible ; yet obstinacy is a dangerous inmate to harbour, and may lead us into an error, however gross.”

“ You think then they have an effect on the flux,” said the houskeeper inquiringly.

Miss Peyton rose with a slight smile, and beckoned to her nieces to give her their assistance in the adjoining pantry, while for a moment the dark visage of the attentive Lawton was lighted by an animation that vanished by an effort, as powerful, and as sudden, as the one that drew it into being.

After reflecting whether he rightly understood the meaning of the other, the surgeon, making due allowance for the love of learning, acting upon a want of education, replied—“ The moon, you mean ; many philosophers have doubted how far it affects the tides ; but I think it is wilfully rejecting the lights of science, not to believe it causes both the flux and reflux.”

As reflux was a disorder the spinster was not acquainted with, she thought it prudent to be silent for a time ; yet burning with curiosity to know the meaning of certain portentous lights that the other so often alluded to, she ventured to ask—“ If them lights he spoke of were what was called northern lights in these parts ? ”

In charity to her ignorance, the surgeon would have entered into an elaborate explanation of his meaning, had he not been interrupted by the mirth of Lawton. The trooper had listened so far with great composure ; but now he laughed until his aching bones reminded him of his fall, and the tears rolled over his cheeks in larger drops than had ever been seen there before. At length the offended physician seized an opportunity to say—“ To you, Captain Lawton, it may be a source of triumph, that an uneducated woman should make a mistake in a subject, on which

men of science have long been at variance ; but yet you find this respectable matron does not reject the lights—the lights—does not reject the use of proper instruments in repairing injuries sustained by the human frame. You may possibly remember, sir, her allusion to the use of the needle ?”

“Ay,” cried the delighted trooper, “to mend the pedler’s breeches.”

Katy drew up in evident displeasure at this allusion to such familiarity between herself and the nether garments of the trader, but, prompt to vindicate her character for more lofty acquirements, said—“’Twas not a common use that I put that needle to—but one of much greater virtue.”

“Explain yourself, madam,” said the surgeon impatiently, “that this gentleman may see how little reason he has for exultation.”

Thus solicited, Katy paused to collect sufficient eloquence with which to garnish her narrative. The substance of which was that a child who had been placed by the guardians of the poor in the keeping of Harvey, had, in the absence of its master, injured itself badly in the foot by a large needle. The offending instrument had been carefully greased, wrapped in woollen, and placed in a certain charmed nook of the chimney ; while the foot, from a fear of weakening the incantation, was left in a state of nature. The arrival of the pedler had altered the whole of this admirable arrangement, and the consequences were expressed by Katy, as she concluded her narrative, by saying—“’Twas no wonder the hoy died of a lock-jaw.”

Dr. Sitgreave looked out of the window in admiration of the brilliant morning ; striving all he could to avoid the basilisk eyes of his comrade, but in vain. He was impelled, by a feeling that he could not conquer, to look Captain Lawton in the face. The trooper had arranged every muscle of his countenance in perfect accordance with due sympathy for the fate of the poor child ; but the exultation of his eyes cut the astounded man of science to the quick ; he muttered something concerning the condition of his patients, and retreated with precipitation.

Miss Peyton entered into the situation of things at the house of the pedler, with all the interest of her excellent feelings ; she listened patiently while Katy recounted, more particularly, the circumstances of the past night as they occurred. The spinster did not forget to dwell on the magnitude of the pecuniary loss sustained by Harvey, and in no manner spared her invectives, at his betraying a secret which might so easily have been kept.

“For, Miss Peyton,” continued the housekeeper, after a pause of a moment to take breath, “I would have given up life before I would have given up that secret. At the most, they could only

have killed him, and now a body may say, that they have slain for this world both soul and body ; or what's the same thing, they have made him a despicable vagabond. I wonder who he thinks would be his wife, or who would keep his house. For my part, my good name is too precious to be living with a lone man ; though, for the matter of that, he is never there. I am resolved to tell him this day, that stay there, a single woman I will not an hour, after the funeral ; and marry him I don't think I will ; unless he becomes steadier, and more of a homebody."

The mild mistress of the Locusts suffered the exuberance of the housekeeper's animation to expend itself, and then, by one or two judicious questions, that denoted a more intimate knowledge of the windings of the human heart in matters of Cupid, than might fairly be supposed to belong to a spinster, she extracted enough from Katy to discover the improbability of Harvey's ever presuming to offer himself, with his broken fortunes, to the acceptance of Miss Katherine Haynes. She, therefore, mentioned her own want of assistance in the present state of her household, and expressed a wish that Katy would change her residence to the Locusts, in case the pedler had not further use for her services. After a few preliminary conditions on the part of the wary housekeeper, she concluded the arrangement, and making a few more piteous lamentations on the weight of her own losses, the stupidity of Harvey, united with some curiosity to know the future fate of the pedler, Katy withdrew to make certain preparations for the approaching funeral, which was to take place that day.

During the interview between the maidens, Lawton, through delicacy, had withdrawn. Anxiety took him to the room of Captain Singleton. The character of this youth, it has already been shown, endeared him in a peculiar manner to every officer of the corps. The singularly mild deportment of the young dragoon had, on so many occasions, been proved not to proceed from want of manly resolution, that his almost feminine softness of manner and appearance had failed to bring him into disrepute, even among a band of partisan warriors.

To the Major he was as dear as a brother, and his easy submission to the directions of his surgeon had made him a marked favourite with Dr. Sitgreaves. The rough usage this corps often received in their daring attacks, had brought each of its officers in succession, under the temporary keeping of its surgeon. To Captain Singleton the man of science had decreed the palm, on such occasions, and Captain Lawton he had fairly black-balled. He frequently declared, with unconquerable simplicity and earnestness of manner, to his assembled comrades, that it gave him more pleasure to see the former brought in wounded than any

officer in the squadron, and that the latter afforded him the least ; a compliment and condemnation that was received by the first of the parties with a quiet smile of good nature, and by the last with a grave bow of thanks. On the present occasion, the mortified surgeon and exulting trooper met in the room of Captain Singleton, as a place where they could act on common ground. Some time was occupied in joint attentions to the comfort of the wounded officer, and the doctor retired to an apartment prepared for his own accommodation ; here, within a few minutes, he was surprised by the entrance of Lawton. The triumph of the trooper had been so complete, that he felt he could afford to be generous, and commencing by voluntarily throwing aside his coat, he cried carelessly—"Come, Sitgreaves, administer a little of the aid of the lights of science to my body, if you please."

The surgeon was beginning to feel this a subject that was intolerable, but venturing his first glance towards his comrade, he saw with surprise the preparations he had made, and an air of sincerity about him, that was unusual to his manner when making such a request. Changing his intended burst of resentment to a tone of civil inquiry, he said—"Does Captain Lawton want anything at my hands?"

"Look for yourself, my dear sir," said the trooper, mildly ; "here seem to be most of the colours of the rainbow, on this shoulder of mine."

"Indeed you have reason for saying so," said the other, handling the part with great tenderness and consummate skill ; "but happily nothing is broken. It is wonderful how well you escaped."

"Oh ! I have been a tumbler from my youth, and I am past minding a few falls from a horse ; but, Sitgreaves," he added, with affection, and pointing to a scar on his body, "do you remember this bit of work?"

"Perfectly well, Jack," replied the doctor with a smile ; "it was bravely obtained, and neatly extracted ; but don't you think I had better apply an oil to these bruises?"

"Certainly," said Lawton, with unexpected condescension.

"Now, my dear boy," cried the doctor, exultingly, as he busied himself in applying the remedy to the hurts, "do you not think it would have been better to have done all this last night?"

"Quite probable," returned the other, complacently.

"Yes, Jack, but if you had let me perform the operation of phlebotomy when I first saw you, it would have been of infinite service."

"No phlebotomy," said the other, positively.

"It is now too late," replied the dejected surgeon ; "but a dose of oil would carry off the humours famously."

To this the Captain made no reply, but grated his teeth, in a

way that showed the fortress of his mouth was not to be assailed without a resolute resistance, and the experienced physician changed the subject by saying—"It is a pity, John, that you did not catch the rascal, after the danger and trouble you incurred."

The Captain of dragoons made no reply; and while placing some bandages on the wounded shoulder, the surgeon continued—"If I have any wish at all to destroy human life, it is to have the pleasure of seeing that traitor hung."

"I thought your business was to cure and not to slay," said the trooper, dryly.

"Ay! but he has caused us such heavy losses by his information, that I sometimes feel a very unphilosophical temper towards that spy."

"You should not encourage such feelings of animosity to any of your fellow creatures," returned Lawton, in a tone that caused the operator to drop a pin he was arranging in the bandages from his hand. He looked the patient in the face to remove all doubts of his identity, and finding, however, it was his old comrade, Captain John Lawton, who had spoken, he rallied his astonished faculties, and proceeded by saying:—"Your doctrine is just, and in general I subscribe to it. But, John, my dear fellow, is the bandage easy?"

"Quite."

"Yes, I agree with you as a whole; but as matter is infinitely divisible, so no case exists without an exception. Lawton, don't you—do you—feel easy?"

"Very."

"It is not only cruel to the sufferer, but sometimes unjust to others, to take human life, where a less punishment would answer the purpose. Now, Jack, if you were only—move your arm a little—if you were only—I hope you feel easier, my dear friend?"

"Much."

"If, my dear John, you will teach your men to cut with more discretion, it would answer you the same purpose—and give me great pleasure."

The doctor drew a heavy sigh, as he was enabled to get rid of what was nearest to his heart; and the dragoon coolly replaced his coat, saying with great deliberation as he retired—"I know no troop that cut more judiciously; they generally shave from the crown to the jaw."

The disappointed operator collected his instruments, and, with a heavy heart, proceeded to pay a visit to the room of Colonel Wellmere.

## CHAPTER XII.

“This fairy form contains a soul as mighty  
 As that which lives within a giant’s frame ;  
 These slender limbs, that tremble like the aspen  
 At summer evening’s sigh, uphold a spirit,  
 Which, rous’d, can tower to the height of heaven,  
 And light those shining windows of the face  
 With much of heaven’s own radiance.”—*Duo.*

THE number and character of her guests, had greatly added to the cares of Miss Jeannette Peyton. The morning found them all restored, in some measure, to their former ease of body, with the exception of the youthful captain of dragoons, who had been so deeply regretted by Dunwoodie. The wound of this officer was severe, though the surgeon persevered in saying, that it was without danger. His comrade, we have shown, had deserted his couch ; and Henry Wharton awoke from a sleep that had been undisturbed by anything but a dream of suffering amputation under the hands of a surgical novice. As it proved, however, to be nothing but a dream, the youth found himself much refreshed by his slumbers, and Dr. Sitgreaves removed all further apprehensions, by confidently pronouncing that he would be a well man within a fortnight.

During all this time Colonel Wellmere did not make his appearance ; he breakfasted in his own room, and, notwithstanding certain significant smiles of the man of science, declared himself too much injured to rise from his bed. Leaving him, therefore, endeavouring to conceal his chagrin in the solitude of his chamber, the surgeon proceeded to the more grateful task of sitting an hour by the bedside of George Singleton. A slight flush was on the face of the patient as the doctor entered the room, and he advanced promptly, and laid his fingers on the pulse of the youth, beckoning him to be silent, while he filled the vacuum in the discourse, by saying—“Growing symptoms of a febrile pulse—no, no, my dear George, you must remain quiet and dumb ; though your eyes look better, and your skin has even a moisture.”

“Nay, my dear Sitgreaves,” said the youth, taking his hand, “you see there is no fever about me : look, is there any of Jack Lawton’s hoarfrost on my tongue ?”

“No, indeed,” said the surgeon, clapping a spoon in the mouth of the other, forcing it open, and looking down his throat as if he was disposed to visit his interior in person ; “your tongue is well, and your pulse begins to lower again. Ah ! the bleeding did you good. Phlebotomy is a sovereign specific for southern constitutions. But that mad-cap Lawton obstinately refused to be bled for a fall he had from his horse last night. Why, George, your

case is becoming singular," continued the doctor, instinctively throwing aside his wig; "your pulse even and soft, your skin moist, but your eye fiery, and cheek flushed. Oh! I must examine more closely into these symptoms."

"Softly, my good friend, softly," said the youth, falling back on his pillow, and losing some of that colour which alarmed his companion; "I believe, in extracting the ball, you did for me all that is required. I am free from pain, and only weak, I do assure you."

"Captain Singleton," said the surgeon, with heat, it is presumptuous in you to pretend to tell your medical attendant when you are free from pain; if it be not to enable us to decide in such matters, what avail the lights of science? For shame, George, for shame; even that perverse fellow, John Lawton, could not behave with more obstinacy."

His patient smiled, as he gently repulsed his physician in an attempt to undo the bandages, and, with a returning glow to his cheeks, inquired—"Do, Archibald," a term of endearment that seldom failed to soften the operator's heart, "tell me what spirit from heaven has been gliding around my apartment, while I lay pretending to sleep, but a few minutes before you entered."

"If any one interferes with my patients," cried the doctor, hastily, "I will teach them, spirit or no spirit, what it is to meddle with another man's concerns."

"Tut—my dear fellow," replied the wounded man with a faint smile, "there was no interference made, nor any intended; see," exhibiting the bandages, "everything is as you left it—but it glided about the room with the grace of a fairy, and the tenderness of an angel."

The surgeon, having satisfied himself that everything was as he had left it, very deliberately resumed his seat, and replaced his wig, as he inquired, with a brevity that would have honoured Lieutenant Mason—"Had it petticoats, George?"

"I saw nothing but its heavenly eyes—its bloom—its majestic step—its grace;" replied the young man, with rather more ardour than his surgeon thought consistent with his debilitated condition, and he laid his hand on his mouth, to stop him, saying himself—"It must have been Miss Jeanette Peyton—a lady of fine accomplishments, with—with—hem—with something of the kind of step you speak of—a very complacent eye; and as to the bloom, I dare say offices of charity can summon as fine a colour to her cheeks, as glows in the faces of her more youthful nieces."

"Nieces;" said the invalid; has she nieces then? Oh! the angel I saw may be a daughter, a sister, or a niece, but never an aunt."

"Hush, George, hush, your talking has brought your pulse up

again; you must observe quiet, and prepare for a meeting with your own sister, who will be here within an hour."

"What, Isabella! and who sent for her?"

"The Major," said the surgeon, dryly.

"Kind, considerate Dunwoodie," murmured the exhausted youth, sinking again on his pillow, where the commands of his attendant compelled him to continue in silence.

Even Captain Lawton had been received with many and courteous inquiries after the state of his health, from all the members of the family, when he made his morning entrance; but an invisible spirit presided over the comforts of the English Colonel. Sarah had shrunk with retiring delicacy from entering the room; yet she knew the position of every glass, and had, with her own hands, supplied the contents of every bowl, that stood on his well-furnished table.

At the time of which we write we were a divided people, and Sarah thought it was no more than her right to cherish the institutions of that country to which she had yet clung as the land of her forefathers; but there were other, and more cogent reasons, for the silent preference she was giving to the Englishman. His image had first filled the void in her youthful fancy, and it was an image that was distinguished by many of those attractions that can enchain a female heart. It is true, he wanted the graceful and lofty stature of Peyton Dunwoodie, his commanding brow, his speaking eye, and his clear and comprehensive diction; but his skin was fair, his cheeks coloured, and his teeth no less white than those which shone in the fascinating smile of the young Virginian. Sarah had moved about the house during the morning, casting frequent and longing glances at the door of Wellmere's apartment, anxious to learn the condition of his wounds, and yet ashamed to inquire; conscious interest kept her tongue tied, until her sister, with the frankness of innocence, had put the desired question to Dr. Sitgreaves.

"Colonel Wellmere," said the operator, gravely, "is in what I call a state of free-will, madam. He is ill, or he is well, as he pleases; his case, young lady, exceeds my art to heal; and I take it Sir Henry Clinton is the best adviser he can apply to; though Major Dunwoodie has made the communication with his leech rather difficult."

Francis smiled archly, but averted her face to do so, while Sarah moved haughtily, and with the stately grace of an offended Juno, from the apartment. Her own room, however, afforded her but little to relieve her thoughts, and in passing through the long gallery that communicated with each of the chambers of the building, she noticed the door of Singleton's room to be open. The wounded youth seemed sleeping, and was alone. Sarah had



ventured lightly into the apartment, and busied herself for a few minutes in arranging the tables, and nourishment provided for the patient, hardly conscious of what she was doing, and possibly dreaming that it was done for another. The natural bloom of her cheek was heightened by the insinuation of the surgeon; nor was the lustre of her eyes in any degree diminished from the same cause. The sound of the approaching footsteps of Sitgreaves had hastened her retreat through another door, and down a private stairway, to the side of her sister. Together they sought the fresh air on the piazza of the cottage, and they pursued their walk, arm in arm, holding the following dialogue—"There is something disagreeable about this surgeon Dunwoodie has honoured us with," said Sarah, "that causes me to wish him away, most heartily."

Frances fixed her laughing eyes on her sister, who, meeting their playful glance as they turned in their walk, blushed yet deeper than before, as she added hastily; "but I forget, he is one of this renowned corps of Virginians, and as such must be spoken of reverently."

"As respectfully as you please, my dear sister," returned Frances, mildly; "there is but little danger of your exceeding the truth."

"Not in your opinion," said the elder, with a little warmth; "but I think Mr. Dunwoodie has taken a liberty that exceeds the rights of consanguinity; he has made our father's house an hospital."

"We ought to be grateful," replied the younger sister in a low voice, "that none of the patients it contains are dearer to us."

"Your brother is one," said Sarah, laconically.

"True, true," interrupted Frances, hastily, and blushing to the eyes; "but he leaves his room, and thinks his wound lightly purchased by the pleasure of being with his friends. If," she added with a tremulous lip, "this dreadful suspicion that is affixed to his visit were removed, I could feel his wound as nothing."

"You now have the fruits of rebellion brought home to you," said Sarah, moving across the piazza with something more than her ordinary stateliness; a brother wounded and a prisoner, and perhaps a victim; your father distressed, his privacy interrupted, and not improbably his estates torn from him on account of his loyalty to his king."

Frances continued her walk in silence. While facing the northern entrance to the vale, her eyes were uniformly fastened on the point where the road was suddenly lost by the intervention of a hill; and at each turn, as she lost sight of the spot, she lingered until an impatient movement of her sister quickened her pace to an even motion with that of the other. At length a single horse chaise was seen making its way carefully among the stones which

lay scattered over the country road that wound through the valley, and approached the cottage. Frances lost her brilliancy of colour as the vehicle gradually drew nearer, and when she was enabled to see a female form in it, by the side of a liveried black, who held the reins, her limbs shook with an agitation that compelled her to lean on Sarah for support. In a few minutes the travellers approached the gate, and it was thrown open by a dragoon who had followed the carriage, and who had been the messenger despatched by Dunwoodie to the father of Captain Singleton. Miss Peyton advanced to receive their guest, and the sisters united in giving her the kindest welcome; still Frances could with difficulty withdraw her truant eyes from reading the countenance of the visitor. She was young, of a light and fragile form, yet of exquisite proportions; but it was in her eye that her greatest charm existed; it was a large, full, black, piercing, and at times a little wild. Her hair was luxuriant, and without the powder it was then the fashion to wear, but shone in its own glossy, raven blackness. A few of its locks had fallen on her cheek, giving its chilling whiteness by the contrast a yet more deadly character. Dr. Sitgreaves supported her from the chaise, and when she gained the floor of the piazza, she turned her expressive eye on the face of the practitioner in silence; but it spoke all that she wished to say—"Your brother is out of danger, and wishes to see you, Miss Singleton," said the surgeon, in reply to her look.

For an instant the lady clasped her hands with energy, rolled her dark eyes to heaven, while a slight flush, like the last reflecting tinge of the setting sun, beamed on her features, and she gave vent to her feelings in a flood of tears. Frances had stood contemplating the action and face of Isabella with a kind of uneasy admiration, but she now sprang to her side with the ardour of a sister, and kindly drawing her arm within her own, led the way to a retired room. The movement was so ingenuous, so considerate, and so delicate, that even Miss Peyton withheld her interference, following the youthful pair with only her eyes and a smile of complacency. The feeling was communicated to all the spectators, and they dispersed in pursuit of their usual avocations. Isabella yielded to the gentle influence of Frances without resistance, and, having gained the room where the latter conducted her, wept in silence on the shoulder of the observant and soothing maid, until Frances thought her tears exceeded the emotion natural to the occasion. The sobs of Miss Singleton for a time were violent and uncontrollable, until, with an evident exertion, she yielded to a kind observation of her companion, and succeeded in suppressing her tears. Raising her face to the eyes of Frances, she rose, while a smile of beautiful radiance

passed over the features, made a hasty apology for the excess of her emotion, and desired to be conducted to the room of her brother.

The meeting between the brother and sister was warm, but, by an effort on the part of the lady, more composed than her previous agitation had given reason to expect. Isabella found her brother looking better, and in less danger than her sensitive imagination had led her to suppose, and her spirits rose in proportion; from despondency, she passed to something like gayety; her beautiful eyes sparkled with renovated brilliancy, and her face was lighted with smiles so fascinating, that Frances, who, in compliance with her earnest entreaties, had accompanied her to the sick chamber, sat gazing on a countenance that possessed such wonderful variability, as if impelled by a charm that was beyond her control. The youth had thrown an earnest look at Frances as soon as his sister raised herself from his arms, and perhaps it was the first glance at the lovely lineaments of our heroine, when the gazer turned his eyes from the view in disappointment; pausing a moment, during which the wandering eyes of Singleton were bent on the open door of the room, he said, as he took the hand of his sister affectionately—"And where is Dunwoodie, Isabella? he is never weary of kind actions. After a day of such service as that of yesterday, he has spent the night in bringing me a nurse, whose presence alone is able to raise me from the couch."

The expression of the lady's countenance changed instantly; her eye roved round the apartment with a character of wildness that repelled the anxious Frances, who studied her movements with intensity of interest, as forcibly as the moment before it had attracted her; while the sister answered with trembling emotion—"Dunwoodie! is he then not here? with me he has not been: I thought to have met him by the side of my brother's bed."

"He has duties that require his presence elsewhere; yes, these English are said to be out by the way of the Hudson, and give the light troops but little rest," said the brother, musing; "surely nothing else could have kept him so long from a wounded friend. But, Isabella, the meeting has been too much for you; you tremble like an aspen."

Isabella made no reply, but stretched forth her hand towards the table which held the nourishment of the Captain, and the attentive Frances comprehended her wishes in a moment; a glass of water in some measure revived the sister, who, smiling faintly, was enabled to say—"Doubtless it is his duty. 'Twas said above, a royal party was moving on the river; though I passed the troops but a short two miles from the spot." The latter part of the sentence was hardly audible, and spoken more in the manner of a soliloquy than as if intended for the ears of her companions.

“On the march, Isabella?” eagerly inquired her brother.

“No, dismounted, and seemingly at rest,” was the reply in the same abstracted manner as before.

The wondering brother turned his gaze on the countenance of his sister, who sat with her full, black eye bent on the carpet in unconscious absence, but found no explanation. His look was changed to the face of Frances, who, startling with the earnestness of his expression, arose, and hastily inquired if he would have any assistance.

“If, madam, you can pardon the rudeness,” said the wounded officer, making a feeble effort to raise his body, “I would request to have Captain Lawton’s company for a moment.”

Frances hastened instantly to communicate his wish to that gentleman, and, impelled by an anxious interest she could not control, returned again to her seat by the side of Miss Singleton.

“Lawton,” said the youth impatiently, as the trooper entered, “hear you from the Major?”

The eye of the sister was now bent on the face of the trooper, who made his salutations to the lady with the ease of a gentleman, blended with the frankness of a soldier, and answered—“His man has been here twice to inquire how we fared in the Lazaretto.”

“And why not himself?” said the other quickly.

“Ah! that is a question the Major can answer best himself,” returned the dragoon, dryly; “you know the red coats are abroad, and Dunwoodie commands in the county; these English must be looked to.”

“True,” said Singleton slowly, as if struck with the other’s reason; “but how is it that you are idle, when there is work to do?”

“My sword arm is not in the best condition, and Roanoke has a dreadful shambling gait this morning,” said the trooper, with a shrug: “besides, there is another reason I could mention, if it were not that Miss Wharton would never forgive me.”

“Speak, I beg, sir, without dread of my displeasure,” said Frances, withdrawing her eyes from the countenance of Miss Singleton, and returning the good-humoured smile of the trooper, with the natural archness of her own lovely face.

“The odours of your kitchen, then,” cried Lawton bluntly, “forbid me quitting the domains, until I qualify myself to speak with more certainty concerning the fatness of the land.”

“Oh! aunt Jeanette is exerting herself to do credit to my father’s hospitality,” said the laughing maid, “and I am a truant from her labours, as I shall be a stranger to her favour, unless I proffer my assistance.”

After making a proper apology to the stranger, Frances with-

drew to seek her aunt, musing deeply on the character and extreme sensibility of the new acquaintance chance had brought to the cottage.

The wounded officer followed her with his eyes, as her lovely figure moved, with infantile grace, through the door of his apartment, and, as she vanished from his view, he observed—"Such an aunt and niece are seldom to be met with Jack; this seems a fairy, but the aunt is angelic."

"Ah! George, you are doing well, I see," said the trooper; "your enthusiasm holds its own."

"I should be ungrateful as well as insensible, did I not bear testimony to the loveliness of Miss Peyton."

"A good motherly lady," said the dragoon, dryly; "but as to love, you know that is a matter of taste. I think a few years younger, with deference to the sex," bowing to Miss Singleton, "would accord better with my fancy."

"She must be under twenty," said the other quickly.

"Oh, doubtless, about nineteen," said Lawton, with extreme gravity; "yet she looks a trifle older."

"You have mistaken an elder sister for the aunt," said Isabella, laying her fair hand on the mouth of the invalid; "but you must be silent! your feelings are beginning to affect your frame."

The entrance of Dr. Sitgreaves, who, in some alarm, noticed the increase of feverish symptoms in his patient, enforced this mandate; and the trooper withdrew to pay a visit of condolence to Roanoke, who had been an equal sufferer with himself in their last night's summerset. To his great joy, his man pronounced the steed to be equally convalescent with the master; and Lawton found that by dint of rubbing the animal's limbs several hours without ceasing, he was enabled to place his feet in what he called systematic motion. Orders were accordingly given to be in readiness to prepare to rejoin the troop at the Four Corners, so soon as the Captain had shared in the bounty of the approaching banquet. In the mean time, Henry Wharton had entered the apartment of Wellmere, and, by his sympathetic feelings on account of a defeat in which they had been alike unfortunate, succeeded greatly in restoring the Colonel to his own good graces; who was consequently enabled to rise, and to prepare to meet a rival of whom he had spoken so lightly, and, as the result had proved, with so little reason. Wharton knew their misfortune, as it was termed by both, was owing to the other's rashness; but he forbore to speak of anything except the unfortunate accident which had deprived the English of their leader, and their consequent defeat.

"In short, Mr. Wharton," said the Colonel, putting one leg out of bed; "it may be called a combination of untoward events;

your own ungovernable horse prevented my orders from being carried to the Major, in season to flank the rebels."

"Very true," replied the Captain, kicking a slipper towards the bed; "had we succeeded in getting a few good fires upon them in flank, we should have sent these brave Virginians to the right about."

"Ay! and that in double quick time," cried the Colonel, with considerable animation, making the other leg follow its companion; "then it was necessary to rout the guides, you know, and the movement gave them the best possible opportunity to charge."

"Yes," said the other, sending the second slipper after the first, "and this Major Dunwoodie never overlooks an advantage."

"I think if we had the thing to do over again," continued the Colonel, raising himself on his feet, "we might alter the case very materially, though the chief thing the rebels have now to boast of is my capture; they were repulsed, you saw, in their attempt to drive us from the wood."

"At least they would have been, had they made an attack," said the Captain, throwing his clothes within reach of the Colonel.

"Ah! why that, you know, is the same thing," returned Wellmere, dressing himself; "to assume such an attitude as to intimidate your enemy is the chief art of war."

"Doubtless," said the Captain, entering himself a little into the proud feelings of a soldier; "then, you may remember, in one charge they were completely routed."

"True—true," cried the Colonel, with animation; "had I been there to have improved that advantage, we might have turned the table completely on the Yankees;" while saying which, he completed his toilette, and was prepared to make his appearance, fully restored to his own good opinion, and fairly persuaded that his capture was owing to casualties, absolutely without the controul of man.

The knowledge that Colonel Wellmere was to be a partaker in the feast, in no degree diminished the preparations which were already making for that important event; and Sarah, after receiving the compliments of the gentleman, and making, with blushing cheeks, many kind inquiries after the state of his wounds, proceeded in person to lend her aid in embellishing that which would now be of additional interest.

### CHAPTER XIII.

"I will stand to and feed,  
Although my last: no matter, since I feel  
The best is past:—Brother, my Lord the Duke,  
Stand to, and do as we—"—*Tempest.*

THE savour of preparation, which had been noticed by Captain

Lawton, began to increase vastly within the walls of the cottage—certain sweet-smelling odours, that rose from the subterranean territories of Cæsar, gave to the trooper the most pleasing assurance, that his olfactory nerves, which on such occasions were as acute as his eyes on others, had faithfully performed their duty ; and for the benefit of enjoying the passing sweets as they arose, the dragoon so placed himself at a window of the building, that not a vapour, charged with the spices of the east, could exhale on its passage to the clouds, without first giving its incense, by way of tribute, to his nose. Lawton, however, by no means indulged himself in this comfortable arrangement, without first making such preparations to do meet honour to the feast, as his scanty wardrobe would allow. The uniform of his corps was always a passport to the proudest tables, and this, though somewhat tarnished by faithful service and unceremonious usage, was properly brushed and decked out for the occasion. His head, which nature had marked with the blackness of a crow, now shone with the spotless whiteness of the dove ; and his hand, that so well became, by its bony and gigantic frame, the sabre it wielded so indiscreetly, peered from beneath a ruffle, with something like maiden delicacy. The improvements of the dragoon went no farther, excepting that his boots shone with more than holiday splendour, and his spurs glittered in the rays of the sun, like worthy offspring of the hills of Potosi.

Cæsar moved through the apartments with a face charged with an importance vastly exceeding that which had accompanied him in his melancholy task of the morning. The black had early returned from the message on which he had been despatched by the pedler, and, obedient to the commands of his mistress, promptly appeared to give his services where his allegiance was due ; so serious, indeed, was his duty now becoming, that it was only by odd moments he was enabled to impart to his sable brother, who had been sent in attendance on Miss Singleton to the Locusts, any portion of the wonderful incidents of the momentous night he had so lately passed through. By ingeniously using, however, such moments as might be fairly thought his own, Cæsar communicated so many of the heads of his tale as served to open the eyes of his visitor to a width, that justly entitled them to the significant appellation of saucer. Indeed, to such a state of amazement had the gusto for the marvellous conducted the sable worthies, that Miss Peyton found it necessary to interpose her authority, in order to postpone the residue of the history to a more befitting opportunity.

“ Ah ! Miss Jinnett,” said Cæsar, shaking his head, and looking all that he expressed, “ ’twas awful to see Johnny Birch walk on a feet when he lie dead.”

This concluded the conversation for the present, though the black promised himself, and actually put in execution his intention of having, many a good gossip on the solemn subject hereafter.

The ghost thus happily laid, the department of Miss Peyton throve with additional success, and by the time the afternoon's sun had travelled a two hours' journey from the meridian, the formal procession from the kitchen to the parlour commenced under the auspices of Cæsar, who led the van, supporting a turkey on the palms of his withered hands, with the dexterity of a balance master.

Next followed the servant of Captain Lawton, bearing, as he marched stiffly, and walking wide, as if allowing room for his steed, a ham of true Virginian flavour; being a present from the spinner's wealthy brother in Accomac. The supporter of this savoury dish kept his eye on his trust with military precision, and by the time he reached his destination, it might be difficult to say which contained the most juice, his mouth or the Accomac bacon.

Third in the line was to be seen the valet of Colonel Wellmere, who carried in either hand chickens fricasseed, and oyster patties.

After him marched the attendant of Dr. Sitgreaves, who had instinctively seized an enormous tureen, as most resembling matters he understood, and followed on in place, until the steams of the soup so completely bedimmed the spectacles he wore as a badge of office, that on arriving at the scene of action, he was compelled to deposit his freight on the floor, until, by removing the glasses, he could see his way through the piles of reserved china and plate-warmers in safety.

Next followed another trooper, whose duty it was to attend on Captain Singleton; and, as if apportioning his appetite to the feeble state of his master, he had contented himself with conveying a pair of ducks, roasted, until their tempting fragrance began to make him repent his demolishing so lately a breakfast that had been provided for his master's sister, with another prepared for himself.

The white boy, who belonged to the house, brought up the rear, groaning under the load of sundry dishes of vegetables, that the cook, by way of climax, had unwittingly heaped on him.

But this was far from all of the preparations for that day's feast. Cæsar had no sooner deposited his bird, which but the week before had been flying amongst the highlands of Dutchess, little dreaming of so soon heading such a goodly assemblage, than he turned mechanically on his heel, and took up his line of march again for the kitchen. In this evolution the black was imitated by his companions in succession, and another procession to the parlour followed in the same order. By this admirable arrangement, whole flocks of pigeons, certain bebies of quails, shoals of



flat-fish, bass, and sundry wood-cock, found their way into the presence of the company above stairs.

A third attack brought suitable quantities of potatoes, onions, beets, cold-slaw, rice, and all the other minutiae of a goodly dinner; and for a time, this completed the preparations. The board now fairly groaned with American profusion, and Cæsar, glancing his eye over the show with a most approving conscience, after moving every dish that had not been placed on the table with his own hands, proceeded to acquaint the mistress of the revels, that his task was happily accomplished.

Some half hour before the martial array we have just recorded took place, all the ladies had disappeared, much in the same unaccountable manner that swallows flee the approach of winter. But the spring time of their return had arrived, and the whole party were collected in an apartment, that, in consequence of its containing no side-table, and being furnished with a chintz coverlet settee, was termed a withdrawing room.

The kind-hearted spinster had deemed the occasion worthy, not only of extraordinary preparations in the culinary department, but had seen proper to deck her own person in garments suited to the guests whom it was now her happiness to entertain.

On her head Miss Peyton wore a cap of exquisite lawn, which was ornamented in front with a broad border of lace, that spread from the face in such a manner as to admit of a display of artificial flowers, clustered in a tasteful group on the summit of her fine forehead. The colour of her hair was lost in the profusion of powder with which it was covered; but a slight curling of the extremities in some degree relieved the formality of its starched arrangement, and gave a look of feminine softness to the features. Her dress was a rich, heavy silk, of violet colour, cut low around the bust, with a stomacher of the same material, that fitted close to the figure, and exhibited the form, from the shoulders to the waist, in its true proportions: below, the dress was full, and sufficiently showed that parsimony in attire was not a foible of the day. A small hoop displayed the beauty of the fabric to advantage, and aided in giving majesty to the figure. The tall stature of the spinster was heightened by shoes of the same material with the dress, whose heels added more than an inch to the liberality of nature. The sleeves were short, and close to the limb, until they fell off at the elbows in large ruffles, that hung in rich profusion from the arm when extended; and duplicates and triplicates of lawn, trimmed with Dresden lace, lent their aid in giving delicacy to a hand and arm that yet retained their whiteness and symmetry. A treble row of large pearls closely encircled her throat, and a handkerchief of lace partially concealed that part of the person that the silk had left exposed, but which the experience of

forty years had warned Miss Peyton should now be veiled. Thus attired, and standing erect with the lofty grace that distinguished the manners of that day, the spinster would have looked into atoms a bevy of modern belles.

The taste of Sarah had kept even pace with the decorations of her aunt; and a dress, differing in no respect from the one just described, but in material and tints, exhibited her imposing form to equal advantage. The satin of her robe was of a pale blush colour. Twenty years did not, however, require the skreen that was prudent in forty, and nothing but an envious border of exquisite lace hid, in some measure, what the satin left exposed to the view. The upper part of the bust, and fine fall of the shoulders, were blazing in all their native beauty; and, like the aunt, the throat was ornamented by a treble row of pearls, to correspond with which, were rings of the same jewel in the ears. The head was without a cap, and the hair drawn up from the countenance so as to give to the eye all the loveliness of a forehead as polished as marble and as white as snow. A few straggling curls fell gracefully in the neck, and a bouquet of artificial flowers was also placed, like a coronet, over her commanding brow.

Miss Singleton had yielded her brother to the advice of Dr. Sitgreaves, who had succeeded in getting his patient in a deep sleep, after quieting certain feverish symptoms that followed the agitation of the interview related. The sister was persuaded, by the observant mistress of the mansion, to make one of the party, and sat by the side of Sarah; differing but little in appearance from that lady, except in refusing the use of powder on her raven locks, and that her unusually high forehead, and large and brilliant eyes, gave an expression of thoughtfulness to the features, that was possibly heightened by the paleness of her cheek.

Last and least, but not the most unlovely, in this display of female charms, was the youngest daughter of Mr. Wharton. Frances, we have already mentioned, left the city before she had attained to the age of fashionable womanhood. A few adventurous spirits were already beginning to make inroads in the barriers which custom had so long drawn around the comforts of the fair sex; and the maid had so far ventured in imitation, as to trust her beauty to the height which nature had given her. This was but little, but that little was a master-piece. Frances several times had determined, in the course of the morning, to bestow more than usual pains in the decoration of her person. Each time in succession, as she formed this resolution, she spent a few minutes in looking earnestly towards the north, and then she as invariably changed it.

At the appointed hour, the maid appeared in the drawing-room, clothed in a vestment of pale blue silk, of a cut and fashion much

like that worn by her sister. Her hair was left to the wild curls of nature, its exuberance being confined to the crown of her head by a long low comb, made of light tortoise-shell; a colour barely distinguishable in the golden hue of her tresses. Her dress was without a plait or a wrinkle, and fitted the form with an exactitude that might lead one to imagine, that the arch girl more than suspected the beauties it displayed. A tucker of rich Dresden lace softened the contour of the figure. Her head was without ornament; but around her throat was a necklace of gold, clasped in front with a rich cornelian.

Dr. Sitgreaves was a mineralogist, among his other qualities, and during the day he ventured a remark on the beauty of the stone; and for a long time the simple operator was at a loss to conjecture what there was in the observation to call the blood so tumultuously to the face of the maiden. His surprise might haply have continued to the hour of his death, had not Lawton kindly intimated that it was indignation at his overlooking the object on which the bauble reposed. The gloves of kid which concealed the hands and part of the arm, leaving enough of the latter in sight, however, to proclaim its fair proportions, indicated that there was no one present to tempt the flattering, and perhaps unconscious display of womanly power. Once, and once only, as they moved towards the repast prepared with so much judgment and skill by Cæsar, did Lawton see a foot thrust itself from beneath the folds of her robe, and exhibit its little beauties encased in a slipper of blue silk, clasped close to the shape by a buckle of brilliants. The trooper caught himself sighing as he thought, though it was good for nothing in the stirrup, how enchantingly it would grace a minuet.

As the black appeared on the threshold of the room, making a low reverence, which has been interpreted for some centuries into "dinner waits," Mr. Wharton, clad in a dress of drab, and loaded with enormous buttons, advanced formally to Miss Singleton, and bending his powdered head to near the level of the hand he extended, received hers in return.

Dr. Sitgreaves offered the same homage to Miss Peyton, and met with equal favour; the lady first pausing, with stately grace, to draw on her gloves.

Colonel Wellmere was honoured with a smile from Sarah, while performing a similar duty; and Frances gave the ends of her taper fingers to Captain Lawton, with a manner that said so much to the corps, and so little to the man. Much time, and some trouble, was expended before the whole party were, to the great joy of Cæsar, comfortably arranged around the table with proper attention to all points of etiquette and precedence. The black well knew the viands were getting cold, and felt his honour concerned in the event.

For the first ten minutes, all but the Captain of the dragoons found themselves in a situation much to their liking; but he felt himself a little soured at the multiplicity of the questions and offers of the host, which were meant to be conducive to his enjoyments, but which in truth had an exactly contrary effect. The Captain could not eat and give answers in a breath, and the demands of the latter somewhat interfered with the execution of the former. Next came the drinking with the ladies; but as the wine was excellent, and the glasses of very ample size, the trooper bore this interruption with consummate good nature. Nay, so fearful was he of giving offence, and omitting any of the nicer points of punctilio, that having commenced this courtesy with the lady who sat next him, he persevered until not one of his fair companions could, with justice, reproach him with partiality in this particular.

His long abstemiousness from anything like generous wine might plead the excuse of Captain Lawton, especially when exposed to so strong a temptation as was now before him. Mr. Wharton had been one of a set of politicians in New York, whose principal exploits, before the war, had been to assemble, and pass sage opinions on the signs of the times, under the inspiration of certain liquor made from a grape that grew on the south side of the Island of Madeira, and which found its way into the colonies of North America through the medium of the West Indies, sojourning awhile in the Western Archipelago, by way of trying the virtues of the climate. A large supply of this cordial had been drawn from his storehouse in the city, and some of it now sparkled in a bottle before the Captain, blushing luxuriantly in the rays of the sun, which were passing obliquely through it. If the meat and vegetables had made their entrance with perfect order and propriety, their exeunt was effected with far less. The point was to clear the board something after the fabled tale of the harpies, and by dint of scrambling, tossing, breaking, and spilling, the overflowing remnants of the repast vanished from the room. And now another series of processions commenced, by virtue of which a goodly display of pastry, with its usual accompaniments, garnished the table.

Mr. Wharton poured out a glass of wine for the lady who sat on his right hand, and pushing the bottle to a guest, said, with a low bow—"We are to be honoured with a toast from Miss Singleton."

Although there was nothing more in this movement than occurred every day on such occasions, yet the lady trembled, coloured, and grew pale again, seemingly endeavouring to rally her thoughts, until by her agitation she had excited the interest of the whole party; when, by an effort, and in a manner as if she had strived in vain to think of another, Isabella said faintly—"Major Dunwoodie."

The health was drunk cheerfully by all but Colonel Wellmere, who wet his lips, and drew figures on the table with some of the liquor he had spilt; and Frances thought deeply on the manner of doing, what, in itself, would have excited no suspicions.

At length Colonel Wellmere broke silence, by saying aloud to Captain Lawton—"I suppose, sir, this Mr. Dunwoodie will receive promotion in the rebel army, for the advantage my misfortune gave him over my command."

The trooper had supplied the wants of nature to his perfect satisfaction; and, perhaps, with the exception of Washington and his immediate commander, there was no mortal whose displeasure he regarded a tittle: he was free to converse or to fight; to him it mattered nought. First helping himself, therefore, to a little of his favourite bottle, he replied with admirable coolness—"Colonel Wellmere, your pardon; Major Dunwoodie owes his allegiance to the confederated states of North America, and where he owes it he pays it, and is no rebel. Promoted I hope he may be, both because he deserves it, and I am next in rank in the corps; and I know not what you call a misfortune, unless you deem meeting the Virginia horse as such."

"We will not differ about terms, sir," said the Colonel, haughtily; "I spoke as duty to my sovereign prompted; but do you not call the loss of a commander a misfortune to a party?"

"It certainly may be so," said the trooper, with great emphasis.

"Miss Peyton, will you favour us with a toast?" cried the master of the house, anxious to stop a dialogue in which he might be called on for an opinion.

The spinster bowed her head with infinite dignity, as she named "General Montrose;" and her nephew smiled as he noticed the long absent bloom stealing lightly over her fine features.

"There is no term more doubtful than that word misfortune," said the surgeon, regardless of the nice manœuvres of the host; "some deem one thing a misfortune, others its opposite: misfortune begets misfortune: life is a misfortune, for it may be the means of enduring misfortune; and death is a misfortune, as it abridges the enjoyments of life."

"It is a misfortune that our mess has no such wine as this," interrupted the trooper, and laying in a stock to supply the deficiency.

"We will pledge you a sentiment in it, sir, as it seems to suit your taste," said Mr. Wharton, still uncertain what would be the termination of all these misfortunes.

Filling to the brim, Lawton said, looking hard at the English Colonel—"A clear field, and no favour."

"I drink your toast, Captain Lawton," said the surgeon, gravely; "inasmuch as courtesy requires no less at my hands; but I wish never to see your troop nearer to an enemy than long pistol shot."

"Let me tell you, Mr. Archibald Sitgreaves," said the dragoon, hastily, "that's a damned unneighbourly wish."

The ladies bridled, and Miss Peyton made a motion to withdraw, which was instantly obeyed by her fair bevy of juniors.

The suddenness of the movement somewhat appalled the trooper, and he stammered out an apology to Frances, who stood next him, which the laughing maid received very good-naturedly, out of regard to the coat he wore, although she knew it would afford matter of triumph to her sister for a month to come.

"'Tis unneighbourly to wish a man at such a distance from his friends," said the Captain, good-humouredly, in a manner that spoke his willingness to atone; it was, however, too late, and the ladies retired with much dignity, amidst the bows and compliments of all but the chop-fallen dragoon. The discomfiture produced an utter stagnation in the thoughts of the trooper; and Mr. Wharton, making a profusion of apologies to his guests, arose, and left the room, followed by his son, and together both quitted the house. The retreat of the ladies was the signal for the appearance of the surgeon's cigar, which, being comfortably established in a corner of his mouth in a certain knowing way, caused not the slightest interruption to the following discourse—"If anything can sweeten captivity and wounds, it must be the happiness of suffering in the society of the ladies who have left us," said the Colonel, gallantly, feeling something of the kind due to the hospitality he experienced, and, perhaps, also moved by a softer sentiment.

The doctor cast a glance of silent observation on the black scarf around the neck of the Englishman, and knocking the ashes from his cigar with his little finger, in the manner of an adept, replied—"Sympathy and kindness have, doubtless, their genial influence on the human system. The connexion is intimate between the moral and physical feelings; but still, to accomplish a cure, and restore nature to the healthy tone it has lost from disease or accident, requires more than can flow from unguided sympathies. In such cases the lights"—the surgeon accidentally caught the eye of the trooper, which was fast regaining its complacency. Taking two or three hasty puffs in huge disdain, he essayed to finish the sentence—"Yes, sir, in such cases, the knowledge that flows from the—the lights"—

"You were saying, sir,"—said Colonel Wellmere, sipping his wine—

"Yes, sir," said the operator, turning his back abruptly on Lawton; "I was saying that a bread poultice would not set a broken arm."

"More is the pity," cried the trooper, venturing again to trust the sound of his own voice.

“Now, Colonel Wellmere, to you, as a man of education,” said the surgeon, with great earnestness, “I can with safety appeal.” The Colonel bowed complacently. “You must have noticed the dreadful havoc made in your ranks by the men who were led by this gentleman;” the Colonel looked grave again; “how, when blows lighted on their frames, life was invariably extinguished, beyond all hope of scientific reparation; how certain yawning wounds were inflicted, that must prove fatal to the art of the most experienced practitioner; now, sir, to you I triumphantly appeal, to know whether your detachment would not have been as effectually defeated, if the men had all lost a right arm, for instance, as if they had all lost their heads.”

“The triumph of your appeal is somewhat hasty, sir,” said Wellmere, nettled at the unfortunate conjunction of terms in the doctor’s question.

“Is the cause of liberty advanced a step by such injudicious harshness in the field?” continued the surgeon, disregarding the other’s equivocation, and bent on the favourite principle of his life.

“I am yet to learn that the cause of liberty is in any manner advanced by the services of any gentleman in the rebel army,” said the Colonel, promptly.

“Not liberty!” said the appalled operator, in astonishment; “Good God, for what then are we contending?”

“Slavery, sir; yes, even slavery,” cried the Englishman, with confidence in his infallibility; “you are putting the tyranny of a mob on the throne of a kind and lenient prince; where is the consistency of your boasted liberty?”

“Consistency,” repeated the surgeon, looking about him a little wildly, at hearing such sweeping charges against a cause he had so long thought to be holy.

“Ay, sir, your consistency. Your congress of sages have published a manifesto, wherein they set forth the equality of political rights.”

“’Tis true, and it is done most ably.”

“I say nothing of its ability; but if true, why not set your slaves at liberty?” cried Wellmere, in a tone that plainly showed he had transferred the triumph to his own standard.

Every American feels humbled at the necessity of vindicating his country from the inconsistency and injustice of this practice; his emotions are much like those of an honourable man, who is compelled to exonerate himself from a disgraceful charge, although he may know the accusation to be false. At the bottom, Sitgreaves had much good sense, and thus called on, he took up the cudgels of argument in downright earnest.

“We deem it a liberty to have a voice in the councils by which we are governed. We think it a hardship to be ruled by a

people who live at a distance of three thousand miles from us, and who cannot, and who do not, feel a single political interest in common with ourselves. I say nothing of oppression; the child was of age, and was entitled to the privileges of majority. In such cases, there is but one tribunal at which to appeal for a nation's rights—it is power; and we now make the appeal."

"Such doctrines may suit your present purposes," said Wellmere, with a sneer of contempt; "but I apprehend it is opposed to all the opinions and practices of civilized nations."

"It is in conformity with the practices of all nations," said the surgeon, returning the nod, and drinking to Lawton, who enjoyed the good sense of his comrade as much as he disliked what he called 'medical talk.' "Who would be ruled, when he can rule? the only ground to take is, that every community has a right to govern itself, so that in no manner it violates the laws of God."

"And is holding your fellow creatures in bondage, in conformity to those laws?" asked the Colonel impressively.

The surgeon took another glass, and hemming once, returned to the combat.

"Sir," said he, "slavery is of very ancient origin, and seems to have been confined to no particular religion or form of government; every nation of civilized Europe does, or has held their fellow creatures in this kind of duress."

"You will except Great Britain, sir," cried the Colonel proudly.

"No, sir," continued the surgeon, confidently, feeling that he was now carrying the war out of his own country; "I cannot except Great Britain. It was her children, her ships, and her laws, that first introduced the practice into these states; and on her institutions the judgment must fall. It is true, we continue the practice; but we must come gradually to the remedy, or create an evil greater than that which we endure at present: doubtless, as we advance, the manumission of our slaves will accompany us, until happily these fair regions will exist, without a single image of the Creator that is held in a state which disqualifies him to judge of that Creator's goodness."

It will be remembered that Doctor Sitgreaves spoke forty years ago, and Wellmere was unable to contradict his prophetic assertion.

Finding the subject exceeding his comprehension, the Englishman retired to the apartment where the ladies had assembled, and, seated by the side of Sarah and her aunt, found a more pleasing employment in relating the events of fashionable life in the metropolis, and recalling the thousand little anecdotes of their former associates. Miss Peyton was a pleased listener, as she dispensed the bounties of the tea table with precise grace; and Sarah frequently bowed her blushing countenance to the



needle-work in her lap, as her face glowed at the flattering remarks of her companion.

The dialogue we have related established a perfect truce again between the surgeon and his comrade; and the former having paid a visit to Singleton, they took their leave of the ladies, and mounted; the former to visit the wounded at the encampment, and the latter to rejoin his troop. But their movement was arrested at the gate by an appearance, which we will relate in the succeeding chapter.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

I see no more those white locks, thinly spread  
Round the bald polish of that honoured head :  
No more that meek, that suppliant look in prayer.  
Nor that pure faith that gave it force, are there :  
But he is blest, and I lament no more,  
A wise, good man, contented to be poor.—*Crabbe.*

WE have already said, that the customs of America leave the remains of the dead but a short time in the sight of the mourners; and the necessity of providing for his own safety, compelled the pedler to abridge even this brief space. In the confusion and agitation produced by the events we have recorded, the death of the elder Birch had occurred unnoticed; but a sufficient number of the immediate neighbours were hastily collected, and the ordinary rites of sepulture were paid to the deceased; it was the approach of this humble procession that arrested the movements of the trooper and his comrade. Four of the men supported the body on a rude bier; and four others walked in advance, ready to relieve their friends occasionally from their burden. The pedler walked next the coffin, and by his side moved Katy Haynes, with a most determined aspect of woe; and next to the mourners came Mr. Wharton and the English Captain. Two or three old men and women, with a few straggling boys, brought up the rear. Captain Lawton sat in his saddle, in rigid silence, until the bearers came opposite to his position, and then, for the first time, Harvey raised his eyes from the ground, and saw the enemy that he dreaded so near him. The first impulse of the pedler was certainly flight; but recovering his recollection, he fixed his eye on the coffin of his parent, and passed the dragoon with a firm step, but swelling heart. The trooper slowly lifted his cap from his head, and continued uncovered until Mr. Wharton and his son had moved by him, when, accompanied by the surgeon, he rode leisurely in the rear, maintaining inflexible silence. Cæsar emerged from the cellar kitchen of the cottage, and, with a face of settled solemnity added himself to the number of the followers of the funeral, though with an humble mien, and at a most respectable distance from the horseman; the feeling was

owing to the colour of his skin ; and the circumstance, to certain emotions of dread that prevailed in the bosom of the black, whenever Captain Lawton prevented his organs of vision from resting on more agreeable objects. Cæsar had placed around his arms, a little above the elbow, a napkin of unsullied whiteness, it being the only time since his departure from the city, that the black had an opportunity of exhibiting himself in the garniture of servile mourning. He was a great lover of propriety, and had been a little stimulated to this display, by a desire to show to his sable friend from Georgia, all the decencies of a New York funeral ; and the ebullition of his zeal went off very well, producing no other result, than a mild lecture from Miss Peyton at his return, on the fitness of things. The attendance of the black was thought well enough in itself ; but the napkin was deemed a superfluous exhibition of ceremony, at the funeral of a man who had performed all the menial offices in his own person. The grave-yard was an enclosure on the grounds of Mr. Wharton, which had been fenced with stone, and set apart for the purpose, by that gentleman, some years before. It was not, however, intended as a burial-place for any of his own family. Until the fire, which raged as the British troops took possession of New York, had laid Trinity in ashes, a goodly gilded tablet graced its walls, that spoke the virtues of his deceased parents ; and beneath a flag of marble, in one of the aisles of the church, their bones were left to moulder with becoming dignity. Captain Lawton made a movement as if he was disposed to follow the procession when it left the highway, to enter the field which contained the graves of the humble dead, but he was called to his recollection by a hint from his companion that he was taking the wrong road.

“ Of all the various methods which have been adopted by man for the disposal of his earthly remains, which do you prefer, Captain Lawton ? ” said the surgeon, with great deliberation, as they separated from the little procession : “ now, in some countries the body is exposed to be devoured by wild beasts ; in others, it is suspended in the air to exhale its substance in the manner of decomposition ; in some countries it is consumed on the funeral pile, and then, again, it is inhumed in the bowels of the earth ; every people have their own particular fashion, and to which do you give the preference ? ”

“ All are very agreeable, ” said the trooper, disregarding the harangue of the other, and followed the group they had left with his eyes ; “ which do you most admire ? ”

“ The last, as practised by ourselves, ” said the operator promptly ; “ for the other three are destructive to the opportunities for dissection ; but in the last, the coffin can lie in peaceful

decency, while the remains are made to subserve the useful purposes of science. Ah! Captain Lawton, I enjoy comparatively but few opportunities of such a nature to what I expected to meet on entering the army."

"To what may these pleasures numerically amount in a year!" said the Captain, dryly, and withdrawing his gaze from the grave-yard.

"Within a dozen upon my honour," said the surgeon, piteously; "my best picking is when the corps is detached; for when we are with the main army, there are so many boys to be satisfied, that I seldom get a good subject. Those youngsters are dreadfully wasteful, and as greedy as vultures."

"A dozen!" echoed the trooper, in surprise, "why I furnished you more than that number with my own hands."

"Ah! Jack," returned the doctor, approaching the subject with great tenderness of manner, "it is seldom I can do anything with your patients; you disfigure them woefully; believe me, John, when I tell you, as a friend, merely as a friend, that your system is all wrong; for you unnecessarily destroy life, and then you injure the body so that it is unfit for the only use that can be made of a dead man."

The trooper maintained a silence, which, he thought would be the most probable means of preserving peace between them; and the surgeon, turning his head from taking a last look at the burial, as they rode round the foot of the hill that shut the valley from their sight, continued with a kind of suppressed sigh—"A body might get a natural death from that grave-yard to-night, if there was but time and opportunity; the patient must be the father of the lady we saw this morning."

"The bitch-doctor; she with the sky-blue complexion," said the trooper, with a shrewd smile, that began to cause uneasiness to his companion; "but the lady was not the gentleman's daughter, only his medico-petticoat attendant; and the Harvey, whose name was made to rhyme with every word in her song, is the renowned pedler-spy."

"What!" cried the astonished surgeon; "he who unhorsed you?"

"No man ever unhorsed me, Doctor Sitgreaves," said the dragoon, with abundant gravity; "I fell by a mischance of Roanoke; we kissed the earth together."

"A warm embrace, from the love spots it left on your cuticle," returned the surgeon, with some of the other's archness; "but 'tis a thousand pities that you cannot find where the tattling rascal lies hid."

"He followed his father's body," said the trooper, composedly.

"What! and you let him pass!" cried the surgeon, with ex-

traordinary animation, checking his horse instantly; "let us return immediately and take him; to-morrow you have him hung, Jack, and, damn him, I'll dissect him."

"Softly, softly, my dear Archibald," said the trooper; "would you arrest a man while paying the last offices to a dead father? leave him to me, and I pledge myself he shall have justice."

The doctor muttered his dissatisfaction at any postponement of his vengeance, but was compelled to acquiesce, from a regard to his reputation for propriety, and they continued their ride to the quarters of the corps, engaged in various discussions concerning the welfare of the human body.

Birch supported the grave and collected manner, that was thought becoming in a male mourner on such occasions, and to Katy was left the part of exhibiting the tenderness of the softer sex. There are some people whose feelings are of such a nature, that they cannot weep unless it be in proper company, and the spinster was a good deal addicted to all congregational virtues; after casting her eyes round the small assemblage, the house-keeper found the countenances of the few females who were present fixed on her, in solemn expectation, and the effect was instantaneous; the maiden really wept, and gained no inconsiderable sympathy and reputation for a tender heart from the spectators. The muscles of the pedler's face were seen to move, and as the first clod of earth fell on the tenement of his father, sending up that dull, hollow sound, that speaks so eloquently the mortality of a man, his whole frame was for an instant convulsed; he bent his body down as if in pain, his fingers worked as his hands hung lifeless by his side, and there was an expression in his countenance that seemed to announce a writhing of his soul; but it was not unresisted, and it was transient: he stood erect, drew a long breath, and looked around him with an elevated face, that even seemed to smile with a consciousness of having obtained the mastery. The grave was soon filled; a rough stone, placed at either extremity, marked its position, and the turf, with a faded vegetation that was adapted to the fortunes of the deceased, covered the little hillock with the last office of seemliness. The task ended, the neighbours, who had each officiously tendered his services in performing his duty, paused, and lifting their hats, stood looking towards the mourner, who now felt himself to be really alone in the world. Removing his hat also, the pedler hesitated a moment to gather energy, and spoke—"My friends and neighbours, I thank you for assiting me to bury my dead out of my sight."

A solemn pause succeeded the brief and customary conclusion, and the group dispersed in silence, some few walking with the mourners back to their own habitation, but respectfully leaving

them at its entrance. The pedler and Katy were followed into the building by one man, however, who was well known to the surrounding country by the significant term of "speculator." Katy saw him enter with a heart that palpitated with dreadful forebodings, but Harvey civilly handed him a chair, and evidently was prepared for the visit.

The pedler went to the door, and taking a cautious glance about the valley, quickly returned, and commenced the following dialogue—"The sun has just left the top of the eastern hill; my time presses me; here is the deed for the house and lot, everything done according to law."

The stranger took the paper, and conned its contents with a deliberation that proceeded partly from his caution, partly from the unlucky circumstance of his education having been sadly neglected when a youth. The time occupied in this tedious examination was employed by Harvey in gathering together certain articles, which he intended to include in the stores that were to leave the habitation with himself. Katy had already inquired of the pedler, whether the deceased had left a will, and saw the bible placed in the bottom of a new pack, which she had made for his accommodation, with a most stoical indifference; but as the six silver spoons were laid carefully by its side, a sudden twinge of her conscience objected to such a palpable waste of property, and she broke silence by saying somewhat abruptly—"When you marry, Harvey, you may miss them spoons."

"I never shall marry," said the pedler, laconically.

"Well, if you don't, there's no occasion to be short. I'm sure no one asked you. I should like to know, though, of what use so many spoons can be to a single man: for my part, I think it's a duty for every man who is so well provided, to have a wife and family to maintain."

At the time when Katy expressed this sentiment, the fortune of women in her class of life consisted of a cow, a bed, the labours of their own hands in the shape of divers pillow cases, blankets, and sheets, and, where fortune was unusually kind, a half dozen of silver spoons. The spinster herself had obtained all the other necessaries to completing her store, by her own industry and prudence, and, it can easily be imagined, saw the articles she had long counted her own, vanish in the enormous pack with a very natural dissatisfaction, that was in no degree diminished by the declaration that had preceded the act. Harvey, however, disregarded her opinions and feelings, and continued his employment of filling the pack, which soon grew to a size something like the ordinary burden of the pedler.

"I'm rather timersome about this conveyance," said the purchaser, having at length concluded his task.

"Why so?" said Harvey quickly.

"I'm afraid it won't stand good in law; I know that two of the neighbours leave home to-morrow morning, to have the place entered for confiscation, and if I should go now, and give forty pounds, and lose it all, 'twould be a dead pull back to me."

"They can only take my right," said the pedler; "pay me two hundred dollars, and the house is yours; you are a well known whig, and you, at least, they won't trouble." As Harvey spoke, there was a strange mixture of bitterness with the care he expressed concerning the sale of his property.

"Say one hundred, and it is a bargain," returned the man, with a grin that he meant for a good-natured smile.

"A bargain!" echoed the pedler, in surprise; "I thought the bargain already made."

"Nothing is a bargain," said the purchaser, with a gratulating chuckle, "until papers are delivered, and the money paid in hand."

"You have the paper," returned the pedler, quickly.

"Ay, and will keep it, if you will excuse the money," replied the speculator, with a sneer; "come, say one hundred and fifty, and I won't be hard; here—here is just the money."

The pedler looked from the window, and saw with dismay that the evening was fast advancing, and knew well that he endangered his life by remaining in the dwelling after dark; yet he could not tolerate the idea of being defrauded in this manner, in a bargain that had already been fairly made; he hesitated—"Well," said the purchaser, rising; "mayhap you can find another man to trade with between this and morning; but if you don't your title won't be worth much afterwards."

"Take it, Harvey," said Katy, who felt it impossible to resist a tender like the one before her, all in English guineas; her voice roused the pedler, and a new idea seemed to strike him.

"I agree to the price," he said; and, turning to the spinster, placed part of the money in her hand, as he continued—"had I other means to pay you, I would have lost all, rather than have suffered myself to have been defrauded of part."

"You may lose all yet," muttered the stranger, with a sneer, as he rose and left the building.

"Yes," said Katy, following him with her eyes; "he knows your failing, Harvey; he thinks with me, now the old gentleman is gone, you will want a careful body to take care of your concerns."

The pedler was busied in arranging things for his departure, and took no notice of this insinuation, while the spinster returned again to the attack. She had lived so many years in expectation of a different result from that which now seemed likely

to occur, that the idea of separation began to give her more uneasiness than she had thought herself capable of feeling, about a man so destitute and friendless as the pedler.

"Have you another house to go to?" inquired Katy, with unusual pathos in her manner.

"Providence will provide me with a home," said Harvey, with a perceptible tremor in his voice.

"Yes," said the housekeeper; "but maybe 'twill not be to your liking."

"The poor must not be difficult," returned the pedler.

"I'm sure I'm everything but a difficult body," cried the spinster, very hastily; "but I love to see things becoming, and in their places; yet I would'nt be hard to persuade to leave this place myself. I can't say I altogether like the ways of the people."

"The valley is lovely," said the pedler, with fervour, "and the people like all the race of man: but to me it matters nothing; all places are now alike, and all faces equally strange;" as he spoke, he dropt the article he was packing from his hand, and seated himself on a chest with a look of vacant misery.

"Not so, not so," said Katy, instinctively shoving her chair nearer to the place where the pedler sat; "not so, Harvey, you must know me at least; my face cannot be strange to you certainly."

Birch turned his eyes slowly on her countenance, which exhibited more of feeling, and less of self, than he had ever seen before: he took her hand kindly, and his own features lost some of their painful expressions, as he said—"Yes, good woman, you at least are not a stranger to me; you may do me partial justice; when others revile me, possibly your feelings may lead you to say something in my defence."

"That I will; that I would!" said Katy, eagerly; "I will defend you, Harvey, to the last drop; let me hear them that dare revile you! you say true, Harvey, I am partial and just to you; what if you do like the king; I have often heard say he was at the bottom a good man; but there's no religion in the old country, for every body allows the ministers are desperate bad."

The pedler paced the floor in evident distress of mind; his eye had a look of wildness that Katy had never witnessed before, and his step was measured with a dignity that appalled the housekeeper.

"While he lived," cried Harvey, unable to smother his feelings, "there was one who read my heart; and oh! what a consolation to return from my secret marches of danger, and the insults and wrongs that I suffered, to receive his blessing and his praise; but he is gone," he continued, stopping and gazing wildly towards

the corner that used to hold the figure of his parent, "and who is there to do me justice?"

"Why, Harvey, Harvey," Katy ventured to say, imploringly; when the pedler added, as a smile stole over his haggard features—"Yes, there is one who will; who must know me before I die. Oh! it is dreadful to die, and leave such a name behind me."

"Don't talk of dying, Harvey," said the spinster, glancing her eye around the room, and pushing the wood in the fire to obtain a light from the blaze.

But the ebullition of feeling in the pedler was over; it had been excited by the events of the past day, and a vivid perception of his sufferings; it was not long that passion maintained an ascendancy over the reason of the trader, and perceiving that the night had already thrown an obscurity around the objects without doors, he hastily threw his pack over his shoulders, and taking Katy kindly by the hand, made his parting speech—"It is painful to part with even you, good woman; but the hour has come, and I must go. What is left in the house is freely yours; to me it could be of no use, and it may serve to make you more comfortable. Farewell—we meet hereafter."

"Yes, in the regions of darkness," cried a voice that caused the pedler to sink on the chest he had risen from, in despair.

"What! another pack, Mr. Birch, and so well stuffed so soon?"

"Have you not yet done evil enough?" cried the pedler, regaining his firmness, and springing on his feet with energy: "is it not enough to harass the last moments of a dying man; to impoverish me; what more would you have?"

"Your blood," said the skinner, with cool malignity.

"And for money," cried Harvey, bitterly; "like the ancient Judas, you would grow rich with the price of blood."

"Ay, and a fair price it is, my gentleman! fifty guineas—nearly the weight of that scare-crow carcass of yours—in gold."

"Here," said Katy, promptly, "here are fifteen guineas, and these drawers, and this bed are all mine; if you will give Harvey but one hour's start from the door, they shall be yours."

"One hour?" said the skinner, showing his teeth, and looking with a longing eye at the money.

"Yes, but one hour, here take the money."

"Hold," cried Harvey, "put no faith in the miscreants."

"She may do what she pleases with her faith," said the skinner, with malignant pleasure; "but I have the money in good keeping; as for you, Mr. Birch, we will bear your insolence, for the fifty guineas that are to pay for your gallows."

"Go on," said the pedler, proudly; take me to Major Dunwoodie; he, at least, may be kind, although he may be just."

"I can do better than by marching so far in such disgraceful



company," replied the other, very coolly; "this Mr. Dunwoodie has let one or two Tories go at large; but the troop of Captain Lawton is quartered some half mile nearer, and his receipt will get me the reward as soon as his Major's: how relish you the idea of supping with Captain Lawton, this evening, Mr. Birch?"

"Give me my money, or set Harvey free," cried the spinster in alarm.

"Your bribe was not enough, good woman, unless there is money in this bed;" thrusting his bayonet through the ticking, and ripping it for some distance, he took a malicious satisfaction in scattering its contents about the room.

"If," cried the housekeeper, losing sight of her personal danger, in care for her newly acquired property, "there is law in the land, I will be righted."

"The law of the neutral ground is the law of the strongest," said the skinner, with a malignant laugh; "but your tongue is not as long as my baggonet; you had, therefore, best not set them at loggerheads, or you might be the loser."

A figure stood in the shadow of the door, as if afraid to be seen in the group of skimmers, but a blaze of light, raised by some articles thrown in the fire by his persecutors, showed the pedler the face of the purchaser of his little domain; occasionally there was some whispering between this man and the skinner nearest him, that induced Harvey to suspect he had been the dupe of a contrivance in which that wretch had participated. It was, however, too late to repine, and he followed the party from the house with a firm and collected tread, as if marching to a triumph and not to a gallows. In passing through the yard, the leader of the band fell over a billet of wood, and received a momentary hurt from the fall; exasperated at the incident, the fellow sprang on his feet, and exclaimed—"The curse of heaven light on the log; the night is too dark for us to move in; throw that brand of fire in yon pile of tow, to light up the scene."

"Hold!" roared the horror-stricken speculator, "you'll fire the house."

"And see the farther," said the other, hurling the fire in the midst of the combustibles. In an instant the building was in flames; "come on, let us move towards the heights while we have light to pick our road."

"Villain!" cried the exasperated purchaser, "is this your friendship, this my reward for kidnapping the pedler?"

"'Twould be wise to move more from the light, if you mean to entertain us with abuse, or we may see too well to let a bullet miss you," cried the leader of the gang. The next instant he was as good as his threat, but happily missed the terrified speculator, and equally appalled spinster, who saw herself again re-

duced from comparative wealth to poverty, by the blow. Prudence dictated to the pair of speedy retreat, and the next morning, the only remains of the dwelling of the pedler was the huge chimney we have already mentioned.

## CHAPTER XV.

“Trifles, light as air,  
Are to the jealous confirmations strong  
As proofs from holy writ.”—*Moor of Venice*.

THE weather, which had been mild and clear since the storm, now changed with the suddenness of the American climate. Towards evening the cold blasts poured down from the mountains, and flurries of snow plainly indicated that the month of November had arrived; a season whose temperature varies from the heats of summer to the cold of winter. Frances had stood at the window of her own apartment, watching the slow progress of the funeral procession, with a melancholy that was too deep to be excited by the spectacle. There was something in the sad office which engaged the attention of her father and brother that was in unison with the feelings of the maid. As she gazed around, she saw the trees bending to the force of the whirlwinds, that swept through the valley with an impetuosity that shook even the buildings of lesser importance; and the forest, that had so lately glittered in the sun with its variegated hues, was fast losing its loveliness, as the leaves were torn from the branches, and were driving irregularly, before the eddies of the blast. A few of the southern dragoons, who were patrolling the passes which led to the encampment of the corps, could be distinguished at a distance on the heights, bending to their pommels, as they faced the keen air which had so lately traversed the great freshwater lakes, and drawing their watch coats about them in tighter folds.

Frances witnessed the disappearance of the wooden tenement of the deceased, as it was slowly lowered from the light of day, and the sight still added to the chilling dreariness of the view. Captain Singleton was sleeping under the careful watchfulness of his own man, while his sister had been persuaded to take possession of her room, for the purpose of obtaining the repose of which her last night's journeying had robbed her. The apartment of Miss Singleton communicated with the room occupied by the sisters, through a private door, as well as through the ordinary passage of the house; this door was partly open, and Frances moved towards it with the benevolent intention of ascertaining the situation of her guest, when the surprised girl saw her whom she thought to be sleeping, not only awake, but employed in a manner that banished all probability of present re-

pose. The black tresses that, during the dinner, had been drawn in close folds over the crown of the head, were now loosened, and fell in profusion over her shoulders and bosom, imparting a slight degree of wildness to her expressive countenance; the chilling white of her complexion was strongly contrasted with the brilliant glances of eyes of the deepest black, that were fixed in rooted attention on a picture she held in her hand. Frances hardly breathed, as she was enabled, by a movement of Isabella, to see that it was the figure of a man in the well known dress of the southern horse; but she gasped for breath, and instinctively laid her hand on her heart to quell its throbbings, as she thought she recognized the lineaments that were so deeply seated in her own imagination. Frances felt she was improperly prying into the sacred privacy of another, but her emotions were too powerful to permit her to speak, and she drew back to a chair, where she still retained a view of the stranger, from whose countenance she felt it to be impossible to withdraw her eyes. Isabella was too much engrossed by her own feelings to discover the trembling figure of the witness to her actions, and she pressed the inanimate image to her lips, with an enthusiasm that denoted the most intense passion. The expression of the countenance of the fair stranger was so changeable, and the transitions were so rapid, that Frances had scarcely time to distinguish the character of the emotion, before it was succeeded by another equally powerful, and equally attractive. Admiration and sorrow were, however, the preponderating passions; the latter was indicated by large drops that fell from her eyes on the picture, and which followed each other over her cheek at such intervals, as seemed to pronounce the grief too heavy to admit of the ordinary bursts of sorrow. Every movement of Isabella was marked by an enthusiasm that was peculiar to her nature, and every passion in its turn triumphed in her breast, with an undisputed sway. The fury of the wind, as it whistled round the angles of the building, was in consonance with those feelings, and she rose and moved to a window of her apartment. Her figure was now hid from the view of Frances, who was about to rise and approach her guest, when tones of a thrilling melody chained her in breathless silence to the spot. The notes were wild, and the voice not powerful, but the execution exceeded anything that Frances had ever heard, and she stood, endeavouring to stifle the sounds of her own gentle breathing, until the following song was concluded:

Cold blow the blasts o'er the tops of the mountain,  
And here is the oak on the hill,  
Slowly the vapours exhale from the fountain,  
And bright gleams the ice bordered rill;  
All nature is seeking its annual rest,  
But the slumbers of peace have deserted my breast.

Long has the storm pour'd its weight on my nation,  
 And long have her brave stood the shock ;  
 Long has our chieftain enobled his station,  
 A bulwark on liberty's rock—  
 Unlicens'd ambition relaxes its toil,  
 Yet blighted affection represses my smile.

Abroad the wild fury of winter is low'ring,  
 And leafless and drear is the tree,  
 But the vertical sun of the south appears pouring  
 Its fierce killing heats upon me—  
 Without, all the season's chill symptoms begin—  
 But the fire of passion is raging within.

Frances abandoned her whole soul to the suppressed melody of the music, though the language of the song expressed a meaning, which, united with certain events of that and the preceding day, left a sensation of uneasiness in the bosom of the warm-hearted girl, to which she had hitherto been a stranger. Isabella moved from the window as her last tones melted on the ear of her admiring listener, and, for the first time, her eye rested on the face of the pallid listener. A glow of fire lighted the countenance of both at the same instant, and the blue eye of Frances met the brilliant black one of her guest for a single moment, and both fell in abashed confusion on the carpet; they advanced, however, until they met, and had taken each other's hand, before either ventured again to look her companion in the face.

"This sudden change in the weather, and perhaps the situation of my brother, have united to make me melancholy, Miss Wharton," said Isabella, in a low tone, and in a voice that trembled as she spoke.

"'Tis thought that you have little to apprehend for your brother," said Frances, in the same embarrassed manner; "had you seen him when he was brought in by Major Dunwoodie"—

Frances paused with a feeling of conscious shame, for which she could not account, and, in raising her eyes, she saw Isabella studying her countenance, with an earnestness that again drove the blood tumultuously to her temples.

"You were speaking of Major Dunwoodie," said Isabella, faintly.

"He was with Captain Singleton."

"Do you know Dunwoodie? have you seen him often?" continued Isabella, in a voice that startled her companion. Once more Frances ventured to look her guest in the face, and again she met the piercing eyes bent on her as if to search her inmost heart. "Speak, Miss Wharton; is Major Dunwoodie known to you?"

"He is my relative," said Frances, appalled at the manner of the other.

"A relative!" echoed Miss Singleton; "in what degree?—speak, Miss Wharton, I conjure you to speak."

“Our parents were cousins,” replied Frances, in still greater confusion at the vehemence of Isabella.

“And he is to be your husband,” cried the stranger impetuously.

Frances felt her pride awakened by this direct attack upon the delicacy of her feelings, and she raised her eyes from the floor to her interrogator a little proudly, when the pale cheek and quivering lip of Isabella removed her resentment in a moment.

“It is true; my conjecture is true; speak to me, Miss Wharton; I conjure you, in mercy to my feelings, to tell me—do you love Dunwoodie?” There was a plaintive earnestness in the voice of Miss Singleton, that disarmed Frances of all resentment, and the only answer she could make, was hiding her burning face between her hands, as she sank back in a chair to conceal her confusion.

Isabella paced the floor in silence for several minutes, until she had succeeded in conquering the violence of her feelings, when she approached the place where Frances yet sat, endeavouring to exclude the eyes of her companion from reading the shame expressed in her countenance; and taking the hand of the other, she spoke with an evident effort at composure.

“Pardon me, Miss Wharton, if my ungovernable feelings have led me into impropriety; the powerful motive—the cruel reason”—she hesitated; Frances now raised her face, and the eyes of the maids once more met; they fell in each other’s arms, and laid their burning cheeks together. The embrace was long—was ardent, and sincere—but neither spoke; and on separating, Frances retired to her own room without farther explanation.

While this extraordinary scene was acting in the room of Miss Singleton, matters of great importance were agitated in the drawing-room. The disposition of the fragments of such a dinner as the one we have recorded, was the task that required no little exertion and calculation. Notwithstanding several of the small game had nestled in the pocket of Captain Lawton’s man, and even the assistant of Dr. Sitgreaves had calculated the uncertainty of his remaining long in such good quarters, still there was more left, unconsumed, than the prudent spinster knew how to dispose of to advantage. Cæsar and his mistress had, therefore, a long and confidential communication on this important business, and the consequence was, that Colonel Wellmere was left to the hospitality of Sarah Wharton. All the ordinary topics of conversation were exhausted, when the Colonel, with a little of the uneasiness that is in some degree inseparable from conscious error, touched lightly on the transactions of the preceding day.

“We little thought, Miss Wharton, when I first saw this Mr. Dunwoodie in your house in Queen-street, that he was to be the renowned warrior he has proved himself,” said Wellmere, endeavouring to smile contemptuously.

“Renowned, when we consider the enemy he overcame,” said Sarah, with consideration for her companion’s feelings. “’Twas most unfortunate, indeed, in every respect, that you met with the accident, or doubtless the arms of our prince would have triumphed in their usual manner.”

“And yet the pleasure of such society as this accident has introduced me to, would more than repay the pain of a mortified spirit and wounded body,” added the Colonel, in a manner of peculiar softness.

“I hope the latter is but trifling,” said Sarah, stooping to hide her blushes under the pretext of biting a thread from the work on her knee.

“Trifling, indeed, compared to the former,” returned the Colonel, in the same manner. “Ah! Miss Wharton, it is in such moments that we feel the full value of friendship and sympathy.”

Those who have never tried it, cannot easily imagine, what a rapid progress a warm-hearted female can make in love in the short space of half an hour, particularly where there is a predisposition to the distemper. Sarah found the conversation, when it began to touch on friendship and sympathy, too interesting to venture her voice with a reply. She, however, turned her eyes on the Colonel, and saw him gazing at her fine face with an admiration that was quite as manifest, and much more soothing, than any words could make it.

Their tête-à-tête was uninterrupted for an hour, and although nothing that would be called decided, by an experienced matron, was said by the gentleman, he uttered a thousand things that delighted his companion, who retired to her rest with a lighter heart than she had felt since the arrest of her brother by the Americans.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“And let me the canakin clink, clink;  
 And let me the canakin clink.  
 A soldier’s a man;  
 A life’s but a span;  
 Why, then, let a soldier drink.”—*Iago*.

THE position held by the corps of dragoons, we have already said, was a favourite place of halting with their commander. A cluster of some half dozen small and dilapidated buildings formed what, from the circumstance of two roads intersecting each other at right angles, was called the village of the Four Corners. As usual, one of the most imposing of these edifices had been termed, in the language of the day, “a house of entertainment for man and beast.” On a rough board, suspended from the gallows looking post that had supported the ancient sign, was, however, written

in red chalk, "*Elizabeth Flanagan, her hotel*," an ebullition of wit from some of the idle wags of the corps. The matron, whose name had thus been exalted to an office of such unexpected dignity, ordinarily discharged the duties of a female sutler, washerwoman, and, to use the language of Katy Haynes, bitch-doctor to the troops; she was the widow of a soldier who had been killed in the service, and who, like herself, was a native of a distant island, and had early tried his fortune in the colonies of North America. She constantly migrated with the troops; and it was seldom they became stationary for two days at a time, but the little cart of the bustling woman was seen driving into the encampment, loaded with such articles as she conceived would make her presence most welcome. With a celerity that seemed almost supernatural, Betty took up her ground and commenced her occupation. Sometimes the cart itself was her shop; at others, the soldiers made her a rude shelter of such materials as offered; but, on the present occasion, she had seized on a vacant building, and by dint of stuffing the dirty breeches and half-dried linen of the troopers in the broken windows, to exclude the cold, which had now become severe, she formed what she herself had pronounced to be "most illigant lodgings." The men were quartered in the adjacent barns, and the officers collected in the "Hotel Flanagan," as they facetiously called head-quarters. Betty was well known to every trooper in the corps, could call each his christian or nick-name, as best suited her fancy; and although absolutely intolerable to all whom habit had not made familiar with her virtues, was a general favourite with these partisan warriors. Her faults were, a trifling love of liquor, excessive filthiness, and a total disregard to all the decencies of language; her virtues, an unbounded love for her adopted country, perfect honesty when dealing on certain known principles with the soldiery, and great good-nature: added to these, Betty had the merit of being the inventor of that beverage which is so well known at the present hour, to all the patriots who make a winter's march between the commercial and political capitals of this great state, and which is distinguished by the name of "cock-tail." Elizabeth Flanagan was peculiarly well qualified by education and circumstances to perfect this improvement in liquors; having been literally brought up on its principal ingredient, and having acquired from her Virginian customers the use of mint, from its flavour in julep to its height of renown in the article in question. Such, then, was the mistress of the mansion, who, reckless of the cold northern blasts, showed her blooming face from the door of the building to welcome the arrival of her favourite, Captain Lawton, and his companion, her master in matters of surgery.

"Ah! by my hopes of promotion, my gentle Elizabeth, but

you are welcome," cried the trooper, as he threw himself from his saddle; "this villainous fresh water gas from the Canadas has been whistling among my bones till they ache with the cold, but the sight of your fiery countenance is as cheering as a Christmas fire."

"Now sure, Captain Jack, yee's always full of your complimentaries," replied the sutler, taking the bridle of her customer; "but hurry in for the life of you, darling; the fences hereabouts are not so strong as in the Highlands, and there's that within will warm both sowl and body."

"So you have been laying the rails under contribution, I see; well, that may do for the body," said the Captain, coolly; "but I have had a pull at a bottle of cut glass with a silver stand, and don't think I could relish your whisky for a month to come."

"If it's silver or goold that yee'r thinking of, it's but little I have, though I've a trifling bit of the continental," said Betty, with a look of much meaning; "but there's that within that's fit to be put in vissels of di'monds."

"What can she mean, Archibald?" asked Lawton, quickly; "the animal looks as if she meant more than she says."

"'Tis probably a wandering of the reasoning powers, created by the frequency of intoxicating draughts," observed the surgeon, as he deliberately threw his left leg over the pommel of his saddle, and slid down on the right side of his horse.

"Faith, my dear jewel of a doctor, but it was this side I was expicting you; the whole corps come down on this side but yeer-self," said Betty, winking at the trooper; "but I've been feeding the wounded in yeer absence, with the fat of the land."

"Barbarous stupidity!" cried the panic-stricken physician, "to feed men labouring under the excitement of fever with powerful nutriment; woman, woman, you are enough to defeat the skill of Hippocrates himself."

"Pooh!" said Betty, with infinite composure, "what a botheration yee make about a little whisky; there was but a gallon betwixt a good two dozen of them, and I gave it to the boys to make them sleep asy; sure jist as slumbering drops."

Lawton and his companion now entered the building, and the first objects which met their eyes explained the hidden meaning of Betty's comfortable declaration. A long table, made of boards torn from the side of an out-building, was stretched through the middle of the largest apartment or bar-room, and on it was a very scanty display of crockery ware. The steams of cooking arose from the adjoining kitchen, but the principal attraction was in a demijohn of fair proportions, which had been ostentatiously placed on high by Betty as the object most worthy of notice. Lawton soon learnt that it was teeming with the real amber-coloured juice



of the grape, and had been sent from the Locusts as an offering to Major Dunwoodie, from his friend Captain Wharton, of the royal army.

“And a royal gift it is,” said the grinning subaltern who made the explanation. “The Major gives us an entertainment in honour of our victory, and you see the principal expense is borne, as it should be, by the enemy. Zounds, I am thinking that after we have primed with such stuff, we could charge through Sir Henry’s head-quarters, and carry off the knight himself.”

The Captain of dragoons was in no manner displeased at the prospect of terminating so pleasantly a day that had been so agreeably commenced; he was soon surrounded by his comrades, who made many eager inquiries concerning his adventures, while the surgeon proceeded, with certain quakings of the heart, to examine into the state of his wounded. Enormous fires were crackling in the chimneys of the house, superseding the necessity of candles, by the bright light which was thrown from the blazing piles. The group within were all young men, and tried soldiers; in number they were rather more than a dozen, and their manners and conversation were a strange mixture of the bluntness of the partisan with the polish of gentlemen. Their dresses were neat, though plain; and a never failing topic amongst them was the performance and quality of their horses. Some were endeavouring to sleep on the benches which lined the walls, some were walking the apartments, and others were seated in earnest discussion on subjects connected with the business of their lives. Occasionally, as the door of the kitchen opened, the hissing sounds of the frying pans, and the inviting savour of the food, created a stagnation in all other employments; even the sleepers, at such moments, would open their eyes, and raise their heads to reconnoitre the state of the preparations. All this time Dunwoodie sat by himself, gazing at the fire, and lost in reflections which none of his officers presumed to disturb. He had made earnest inquiries of Sitgreaves on his entrance after the condition of Singleton, during which a profound and respectful silence was maintained in the room; but as soon as he had ended and resumed his seat, the usual ease and freedom prevailed.

The arrangement of the table was a matter of but little concern to Mrs. Flanagan, and Cæsar would have been sadly scandalized at witnessing the informality with which various dishes, each bearing a wonderful resemblance to the others, were placed before so many gentlemen of consideration. In taking their places at the board, the strictest attention was paid to precedence; for, notwithstanding the freedom of manners which prevailed in the corps, the points of military etiquette were at all times observed, with something approaching to religious veneration. Most of the guests had been fasting too long to be in any degree fastidious in

their appetites ; but the case was different with Captain Lawton ; he felt an unaccountable loathing at the exhibition of Betty's food, and could not refrain from making a few passing comments on the condition of the knives, and the clouded colourings of the plates. The good nature and personal affection of Betty for the offender restrained her for some time from answering to his innuendoes, until Lawton, with a yawn, ventured to admit a piece of the black meat before him into his mouth, where, either from sated appetite, or qualities inherent in the food, much time was spent in vain efforts at mastication, when he cried with some spleen—"What kind of animal might this have been when living, Mrs. Flanagan?"

"Sure, Captain, and wasn't it the old cow," replied the sutler, with an emotion, that proceeded partly from dissatisfaction at the complaints of her favourite, and partly from grief at the loss of the deceased.

"What!" roared the trooper, stopping short as he was rapidly about to swallow his morsel, "ancient Jenny!"

"The devil!" cried another, dropping his knife and fork, "she who made the campaign of the Jerseys with us."

"The very same," replied the mistress of the hotel, with a most piteous aspect of woe ; "sure, gentlemen, 'tis awful to have to eat sitch an ould friend."

"And has she sunk to this?" said Lawton, pointing with his knife to the remnants on the table.

"Nay, Captain," said Betty, with spirit, "I sould two of her quarters to some of your troop ; but divil a word did I tell the boys what an ould frind it was they had bought, for fear it might damage their appetites.

"Fury!" cried the trooper, with affected anger, "I shall have my fellows as limber as supple-jacks, on such fare ; afraid of an Englishman as a Virginian negro is of his driver."

"Well," said Lieutenant Mason, dropping his knife and fork in a kind of despair, "my jaws have more sympathy than many men's hearts. They absolutely decline making any impression on the relics of their old acquaintance."

"Try a drop of the gift," said Betty, soothingly ; pouring a large allowance of the wine into a bowl, and drinking it off as taster to the corps. "Faith, 'tis but a wishy-washy sort of stuff after all."

The ice once broken, however, a clear glass of wine was handed to Dunwoodie, who, bowing to his companions, drank the liquor in the midst of a most profound silence. For a few glasses there was much formality observed, and sundry patriotic toasts and sentiments were duly noticed by the company. The liquor, however, performed its wonted office ; and before the second sentinel at their door had been relieved, all recollection of the dinner and their cares were lost in the present festivity. Dr. Sitgreaves did

not return in season to partake of Jenny, but was in time to receive his fair proportion of Captain Wharton's present.

"A song, a song from Captain Lawton," cried two or three of the party in a breath, on observing the failure of some of the points of good fellowship in the trooper; "silence for the song of Captain Lawton."

"Gentlemen," returned Lawton, his dark eyes swimming with the bumpers he had finished, though his head was as impenetrable as a post, "I am not much of a nightingale, but under the favour of your good wishes, I consent to comply with the demand."

"Now, Jack," said Sitgreaves, nodding on his seat, "remember the air I taught you, and—stop, I have a copy of the words in my pocket."

"Forbear, forbear, good doctor," said the trooper, filling his glass with great deliberation, "I never could wheel round those hard names. Gentlemen, I will give you a humble attempt of my own."

"Silence for Captain Lawton's song," roared five or six at once, when the trooper proceeded, in a fine full tone, to sing the following words to a well known bacchanalian air, several of his comrades helping him through the chorus with a fervour that shook the crazy edifice they were in :

Now push the mug, my jolly boys,  
And live, while live we can;  
To-morrow's sun may end your joys,  
For brief's the hour of man.  
And he who bravely meets the foe,  
His lease of life can never know.  
Old mother Flanagan,  
Come and fill the can again;  
For you can fill, and we can swill,  
Good Betty Flanagan.

If love of life pervades your breast,  
Or love of ease your frame.  
Quit honour's path for peaceful rest  
And bear a coward's name;  
For soon and late, we danger know,  
And fearless on the saddle go.  
Old mother, &c.

When foreign foes invade the land,  
And wives and sweethearts call:  
In freedom's cause we'll bravely stand,  
Or will as bravely fall.  
In this fair home the fates have given,  
We'll live as lords, or live in heaven.  
Old mother, &c.

At each appeal made to herself, by the united voices of the choir, Betty invariably advanced and complied literally with the request contained in the chorus, to the infinite delight of the singers, and perhaps with no small participation in the satisfaction on her own account. The hostess was provided with beverage more suited to the high seasoning she had accustomed her palate to, than the tasteless present of Captain Wharton; by

which means Betty had managed, with tolerable facility, to keep even pace with the exhilaration of her guests. The applause received by Captain Lawton was general, with the exception of the surgeon, who rose from the bench during the first chorus, and paced the floor, in a fine flow of classical indignation. The bravos and bravissimos drowned all other noises for a short time, but as they gradually ceased, the doctor turned to the musician, and exclaimed, with manifest heat—"Captain Lawton, I marvel that a gentleman, and a gallant officer, can find no other subject for his muse, in these times of trial, than in such beastly invocations to that notorious follower of the camp, the filthy Elizabeth Flanagan. Methinks the Goddess of Liberty could furnish a more noble inspiration, and the sufferings of your country a more befitting theme."

"Heyday!" shouted the hostess, advancing upon him in a most threatening attitude, "and who is it that calls me filthy? Master squirt, Master pop-gun—" "Peace," said Dunwoodie, in a voice that was exerted but a little more than common, but which was succeeded by the stillness of death; "woman, leave the room. Dr. Sitgreaves, I call you to your seat, to wait the order of the revels."

"Proceed, proceed," said the surgeon, drawing himself up in an attitude of dignified composure; "I trust, Major Dunwoodie, I am not unacquainted with the rules of decorum, nor ignorant of the *oy*-laws of good fellowship." Betty made a hasty but somewhat devious retreat to her own dominions, being unaccustomed to dispute the orders of the commanding officer.

"Major Dunwoodie will honour us with a sentimental song," said Lawton, bowing to his leader, with the politeness of a gentleman, and the collected manner he so well knew how to assume.

The Major hesitated a moment, and then sang, with fine execution, the following words:

Some love the heats of southern suns,  
Where life's warm current madd'ning suns,  
In one quick circling stream;  
But dearer far's the mellow light  
Which trembling shines, reflected bright  
In Luna's milder beams.

Some love the tulip's gaudier dies,  
Where deep'ning blue with yellow vies,  
And gorgeous beauty glows;  
But happier he, whose bridal wreath,  
By love entwined, is found to breathe  
The sweetness of the rose.

The voice of Dunwoodie never lost its authority with his inferiors, and the applause which followed his song, though by no means so riotous as that which succeeded the effort of the Captain, was much more flattering.

"If, sir," said the doctor, after joining in the plaudits of his com-

panions, "you would but learn to unite classical allusions with your delicate imagination, you would become a pretty amateur poet."

"He who criticises ought to be able to perform," said Dunwoodie, with a smile; "I call on Dr. Sitgreaves for a specimen of the style he admires."

"Dr. Sitgreaves' song; Dr. Sitgreaves' song," echoed all at the table with delight: "a classical ode from Dr. Sitgreaves."

The surgeon made a complacent bow of acquiescence, took the remnant of his glass, and gave a few preliminary hems, that served hugely to delight three or four young cornets at the foot of the table. He then commenced singing, in a cracked voice, and to anything but a tune, the following ditty—

Hast thou ever felt Love's dart, dearest,  
Or breathed his trembling sigh—  
Thought him, afar, was ever nearest,  
Before that sparkling eye?  
Then hast thou known what 'tis to feel  
The pain that Galen could not heal.

"Hurrah!" shouted Lawton, in a burst of applause, "Archibald eclipses the muses themselves; his words flow like the sylvan stream by moonlight, and his melody is a cross breed of the nightingale and the owl."

"Captain Lawton," cried the exasperated operator, "it is one thing to despise the lights of classical learning, and another to be despised for your own ignorance." A loud summons at the door of the building created a dead halt in the uproar, and the dragoons instinctively caught up their arms, to be prepared for any intruders. The door was opened, and the skimmers entered, dragging in the pedler, bending under the load of his pack.

"Which is Captain Lawton?" said the leader of the gang, gazing around him in some little astonishment.

"He waits your pleasure," said the trooper, dryly, and with infinite composure.

"Then here I deliver to your hands a condemned traitor; this is Harvey Birch, the pedler spy."

Lawton started as he looked his old acquaintance in the face, and, turning to the skimmer with a lowering look, continued—"And who are you, sir, that speak so freely of your neighbours?" bowing to Dunwoodie, "but your pardon, sir; here is the commanding officer; to him you will please address yourself."

"No," said the man sullenly, "it is to you I deliver the pedler, and from you I claim my reward."

"Are you Harvey Birch?" said Dunwoodie, advancing with an air of authority, that instantly drove the skimmer to a corner of the room. "I am," said Birch, proudly.

"And a traitor to your country," continued the Major, with sternness; "do you know that I should be justified in ordering your execution this night?"

“’Tis not the will of God to send a soul so hastily to his presence,” said the pedler, with solemnity.

“You speak truth,” said Duuwoodie; “and a few brief hours shall be added to your life; but as your offence is most odious to a soldier, so it will be sure to meet with the soldier’s vengeance: you die to-morrow.”

“’Tis as God wills,” returned Harvey, without moving a muscle.

“I have spent many a good hour to entrap the villain,” said the skinner, advancing a little from the corner, “and I hope you will give me a certificate that will entitle us to the reward; ’twas promised to be paid in gold.”

“Major Dunwoodie,” said the officer of the day, entering the room, “the patrols report a house to be burnt, near yesterday’s battle ground.”

“’Twas the hut of the pedler,” muttered the leader of the gang; “we have not left him a shingle for shelter; I should have burnt it months ago, but I wanted his shed for a trap to catch the sly fox in.”

“You seem a most ingenious patriot,” said Lawton, with extreme gravity; “Major Dunwoodie, I second the request of this worthy gentleman, and crave the office of bestowing the reward on him and his fellows.”

“Take it,” cried the Major; “and you, miserable man, prepare for that fate which will surely await you before the setting of to-morrow’s sun.”

“Life offers but little to tempt me with,” said Harvey slowly raising his eyes, and gazing wildly at the strange faces in the apartment.

“Come worthy children of America,” said Lawton, “follow, and receive your reward.” The gang eagerly accepted this invitation, and followed the Captain towards the quarters assigned to his troop. Dunwoodie paused a moment, from reluctance to triumph over a fallen foe, and proceeded with great solemnity—“You have already been tried, Harvey Birch, and the truth has proved you to be an enemy too dangerous to the liberties of America to be suffered to live.”

“The truth!” echoed the pedler, starting, and raising himself proudly, in a manner that regarded the weight of his pack as nothing.

“Ah, the truth; you were charged with loitering near the continental army, to gain intelligence of its movements, and by communicating them to the enemy, to enable him to frustrate the intentions of Washington.”

“Will Washington say so, think you?” said Birch, with a ghastly smile.

“Doubtless he would; even the justice of Washington condemns you.”

"No, no, no," cried the pedler, in a voice, and with a manner that startled Dunwoodie: "Washington can see beyond the hollow views of pretended patriots. Has he not risked his all on the cast of the die? if a gallows is ready for me, was there not one for him also? no, no, no, no—Washington would never say, 'lead him to a gallows.'"

"Have you anything, wretched man, to urge to the Commander-in-Chief, why you should not die?" said the Major, recovering from the surprise created by the manner of the other.

Birch trembled with the violence of the emotions that were contending in his bosom; his face assumed the ghastly paleness of death, and his hand drew a box of tin from the folds of his shirt; he opened it, and its contents was a small piece of paper; his eye was for an instant fixed on it—he had already held it towards Dunwoodie, when suddenly withdrawing his hand, he exclaimed—"No—it dies with me; I know the conditions of my service, and will not purchase life with their forfeiture—it dies with me."

"Deliver that paper, and you may possibly, yet, find favour," said Dunwoodie, eagerly expecting a discovery of importance to the cause.

"It dies with me," repeated Birch, a flush passing over his pallid features, and lighting them with extraordinary brilliancy.

"Seize the traitor," cried the Major, "and wrest the secret from his hands."

The order was immediately obeyed; but the movements of the pedler were too quick; in an instant he swallowed it. The officers paused in astonishment, at the readiness and energy of the spy; but the surgeon cried eagerly—"Hold him, while I administer an emetic."

"Forbear," said Dunwoodie, beckoning him back with his hand; "if his crime is great, so will his punishment be heavy."

"Lead on," cried the pedler, dropping his pack from his shoulders, and advancing towards the door with a manner of incomprehensible dignity.

"Whither?" asked Dunwoodie, in amazement.

"To the gallows."

"No," said the Major, recoiling in horror at his own justice. "My duty requires that I order you to be executed, but surely not so hastily; take until nine to-morrow to prepare for the awful change you are to undergo."

Dunwoodie whispered his orders in the ear of a subaltern, and motioned to the pedler to withdraw. The interruption caused by this scene prevented further enjoyment around the table, and the officers dispersed to their several places of rest. In a short time the only noise to be heard was the heavy tread of the sentinel, as he paced over the frozen ground, in front of the Hotel Flanagan.

## CHAPTER XVII.

“—There are, whose changing lineaments  
Express each guileless passion of the breast;  
Where Love, and Hope, and tender-hearted Pity  
Are seen reflected, as from a mirror's face—  
But cold experience can veil these hues  
With looks, invented, shrewdly to encompass  
The cunning purposes of base deceit.”—*Duo.*

THE officer to whose keeping Dunwoodie had committed the pedler, transferred his charge to the custody of the regular sergeant of the guard. The gift of Captain Wharton had not been lost on the youthful lieutenant, and a certain dancing motion, that had unaccountably taken possession of objects before his eyes, gave him warning of the necessity of recruiting nature by sleep. After admonishing the non-commissioned guardian of Harvey to omit no watchfulness in securing the prisoner, the youth wrapped himself in his cloak, and, stretched on a bench before a fire, sought and soon found the repose he needed. A rude shed extended the whole length of the rear of the building, and from off one of its ends had been partitioned a small apartment, that was intended as a repository for many of the lesser implements of husbandry. The lawless times had, however, occasioned its being stript of everything of any value, and the searching eyes of Betty Flanagan selected this spot, on her arrival, as the storehouse for her moveables, and a withdrawing-room for her person. The spare arms and baggage of the corps had also been deposited here; and the united treasures were placed under the eye of the sentinel who paraded the shed as a guardian to the rear of the head-quarters. A second warrior, who was stationed near the house to protect the horses of the officers, could command a view of the outside of the apartment, and, as it was without window, or outlet of any kind, excepting its door, the considerate sergeant thought this the most befitting place in which to deposit his prisoner, until the moment of his execution. There were several inducements that urged Sergeant Hollister to this determination, among which was the absence of the washerwoman, who lay before the kitchen fire, dreaming that the corps were attacking a party of the enemy, and mistaking the noise that proceeded from her own nose, for the bugles of the Virginians sounding the charge. Another was, the peculiar opinions that the veteran entertained of life and death, and by which he was distinguished in the corps, as a man of most exemplary piety and holiness of life. The sergeant was more than fifty years of age, and for half that period had borne arms as a profession. The constant recurrence of sudden deaths before his eyes had produced an effect on him differing greatly from that which was the usual moral consequence of such scenes, and he had become not only the most steady, but the most trustworthy soldier in his troop.—Captain Lawton rewarded his fidelity by making him its orderly.



Followed by Birch, the sergeant proceeded in silence to the door of the intended prison, and throwing it open with one hand, held a lantern with the other to light the pedler as he entered. Seating himself on a cask that contained some of Betty's favourite beverage, the sergeant motioned to Birch to occupy another in the same manner. The lantern was placed on the floor when the dragoon, after looking his prisoner steadily in the face, observed—"You look as if you would meet death like a man, and I have brought you to a spot where you can fix things to suit yourself, and be quiet and undisturbed."

"'Tis a fearful place to prepare for the last change in," said Harvey, shuddering, and gazing round his little prison with a vacant eye.

"Why, for the matter of that," returned the veteran, "it can reckon but little in the great account where a man parades his thoughts for the last review, so that he finds them fit to pass the muster of another world. I have a small book here, which I make it a point to read a little in, whenever we are about to engage, and I find it a great strength'ner in time of need." While speaking, he took a bible from his pocket, and offered it to the acceptance of the pedler. Birch received the volume with habitual reverence, but there was an abstracted air about him, and a wandering of the eye, that induced his companion to think that alarm was getting the mastery over the pedler's feelings; accordingly he proceeded in what he conceived to be the offices of consolation.

"If there's anything that lies heavy on your mind, now is the best time to get rid of it—if you have done wrong to any one, I promise you, on the word of an honest dragoon, to lend you a helping hand to see them righted."

"There are few who have not done so," said the pedler, turning his vacant gaze once more on his companion.

"True—'tis natural to sin—but it sometimes happens, that a man does what at other times he may be sorry for. One would not wish to die with any very heavy sin on his conscience, after all."

Harvey had by this time thoroughly examined the place in which he was to pass the night, and saw no means of escape. But hope is ever the last feeling to desert the human breast, and the pedler gave the dragoon more of his attention, fixing on his sunburnt features such searching looks, that Sergeant Hollister lowered his eyes before the wild expression which he met in the gaze of his prisoner.

"I have been taught to lay the burden of my sins at the feet of my Saviour," replied the pedler.

"Why, yes—all that is well enough," returned the other; "but justice should be done while there is opportunity. There have been stirring times in this country, since the war began, and many have been deprived of their rightful goods. I oftentimes find it hard to reconcile my lawful plunder to a tender conscience."

"These hands," said the pedler, stretching forth his meagre, bony fingers, and speaking with unusual pride, "have spent years in toil, but not a moment in pilfering."

"It is well that it is so," said the honest-hearted soldier; "and no doubt you now feel it a great consolation. There are three great sins, that if a man can keep his conscience clear of, why, by the mercy of God, he may hope to pass muster with the saints in heaven: they are stealing, murdering, and desertion."

"Thank God!" said Birch with fervour, "I have never yet taken the life of a fellow creature."

"As to killing a man in lawful battle, why that is no more than doing one's duty," interrupted the sergeant, who was a close imitator of Captain Lawton in the field. "If the cause is wrong, the sin of such a deed, you know, falls on the nation, and a man receives his punishment here with the rest of the people—but murdering in cold blood stands next to desertion, as a crime, in the eye of God."

"I never was a soldier, therefore never could desert," said the pedler, resting his face on his hand in a melancholy attitude.

"Why, desertion consists of more than quitting your colours, though that is certainly the worst kind," continued the dragoon, speaking slowly, and with some emphasis; "a man may desert his country in the hour of her utmost need."

Birch buried his face in both his hands, and his whole frame shook with violent agitation; the sergeant regarded him closely, but good feelings soon got the better of his antipathies, and he continued more mildly—"But still that is a sin which I think may be forgiven, if sincerely repented of; and it matters but little when or how a man dies, so that he dies like a Christian and a man.—I recommend you to say your prayers, and then get some rest, in order that you may do both. There is no hope of your being pardoned, for Colonel Singleton has sent down the most positive orders to take your life whenever we met you. No—no—nothing can save you."

"You say the truth," cried Birch. "It is now too late—I have destroyed my only safeguard. But *He* will do my memory justice at least."

"Whatsafeguard?" asked the sergeant, with awakened curiosity.

"'Tis nothing," replied the pedler, recovering his natural manner, and lowering his face to avoid the earnest looks of his companion.

"And who is he?"

"No one," added Harvey, evidently anxious to say no more.

"Nothing and no one, can avail but little now," said the sergeant, rising to go; "lay yourself on the blanket of Mrs. Flanagan, and get a little sleep; I will call you betimes in the morning, and, from the bottom of my soul I wish I could be of some service to you, for I dislike greatly to see a man hung up like a dog."

"Then *you* might save me from this ignominious death," said

Birch, springing on his feet, and catching the dragoon by the arm—"And oh! what will I not give you in reward!"

"In what manner?" asked the sergeant, looking at him in surprise.

"Sec," said the pedler, producing several guineas from his person; "these are but as nothing to what I will give you, if you will assist me to escape."

"Was you the man whose picture is on the gold, I would not listen to such a crime," said the trooper, throwing the money on the floor with cool contempt. "Go—go—poor wretch, make your peace with God; for it is he only that can be of service to you now."

The sergeant took up the lantern, and, with some indignation in his manner, left the pedler to his sorrowful meditations on his approaching fate. Birch sunk in momentary despair on the pallet of Betty, while his guardian proceeded to give the necessary instructions to the sentinels for his safe keeping.

Hollister concluded his injunctions to the man in the shed, by saying, "your life will depend on his not escaping."

"But," said the trooper, "my orders are, to let the washerwoman pass in and out, as she pleases."

"Well, let her then, but be careful that this wily pedler does not get out in the folds of her petticoats." He then continued his walk, giving similar orders to each of the sentinels near the spot.

For some time after the departure of the sergeant, silence prevailed within the solitary prison of the pedler, until the dragoon at his door heard his loud breathings, which soon rose into the regular cadence of one in a deep sleep. The man continued walking his post, musing on the indifference to life which could allow nature its customary rest even on the threshold of the grave. Harvey Birch had, however, been a name too long held in detestation by every man in the corps, to suffer any feelings of commiseration to mingle with these reflections of the sentinel; for, notwithstanding the consideration and kindness manifested by the sergeant, there probably was not another man of his rank in the whole party, who would have discovered equal benevolence to the prisoner, who would not have imitated the veteran in rejecting the bribe, although probably from a less worthy motive. There was something of disappointed vengeance in the feelings of the man who watched the door of the room, on finding his prisoner enjoying a sleep of which he himself was deprived, and at his exhibiting such obvious indifference to the utmost penalty that military rigour could inflict, on all his treason to the cause of liberty and America. More than once he felt prompted to disturb this unwonted repose of the pedler by taunts and revilings, but the discipline he was under, and a secret sense of shame at the brutality of the act, held him in subjection.

His meditations were, however, soon interrupted by the appearance of the washerwoman, who came staggering through the

door that communicated with the kitchen, muttering execrations against the servants of the officers, who, by their waggery, had disturbed her slumbers before the fire. The sentinel understood enough of her maledictions to comprehend the case, but all his efforts to enter into conversation with the enraged woman were useless, and he suffered her to enter her room without explaining that it contained another inmate. The noise of her huge frame falling on the bed, was succeeded by a silence that was soon interrupted by the renewed respiration of the pedler, and within a few minutes Harvey continued to breathe aloud, as if no interruption had occurred. The relief arrived at this moment. The sentinel, who felt excessively nettled at the contempt of the pedler, after communicating his orders, while he was retiring, exclaimed to his successor—"You may keep yourself warm by dancing, John; the pedler spy has tuned his fiddle, you hear, and it will not be long before Betty will strike up in her turn."

The joke was followed by a general laugh from the party, who marched on in the performance of their duty. At this instant the door of the prison was opened, and Betty re-appeared, staggering back again towards her former quarters.

"Stop," said the sentinel, catching her by her clothes; "are you sure the spy is not in your pocket?"

"Can't you hear the rascal snoring in my room, you dirty black-guard?" sputtered Betty, her whole frame shaking with the violence of her rage; "and is it so yee would sarve a dacent female, that a man must be put to sleep in the room wid her, yee rapseallion."

"Pooh! what do you mind a man who's to be hung in the morning for! you see he sleeps already; to-morrow he'll take a longer nap."

"Hands off, you villain," cried the washerwoman, relinquishing a small bottle that the fellow had succeeded in wresting from her. "But I'll go to Captain Jack, and know if it's his orders to put a hang-gallows spy in my room, ay, even in my widow'd bed, you tief." "Silence, you old Jezebel," said the fellow with a laugh, taking the bottle from his mouth to breathe, "or you will wake the gentleman—would you disturb a man in his last sleep?"

"I'll awake Captain Jack, you riprobrate villain, and bring him here to see me righted; he will punish yee all, for imposing on a dacent widow body, you marauder." With these words, which only extorted a laugh from the sentinel, Betty staggered round the end of the building, and made the best of her way towards the quarters of her favourite, Captain John Lawton, for redress. Neither the officer nor the woman, however, appeared during the night, both being differently employed, and nothing further occurred to disturb the repose of the pedler, who, to the astonishment of the sentinel, continued apparently, by his breathing, to manifest, how little the gallows could affect his slumbers.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“A Daniel come to judgment! yea a Daniel!—

O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!”—*Merchant of Venice.*

THE skimmers followed Captain Lawton with alacrity towards the quarters occupied by the troop of that gentleman. The captain of dragoons had on all occasions manifested so much zeal for the cause in which he was engaged, was so regardless of personal danger when opposed to the enemy, and his stature and stern countenance contributed so much to render him terrific at such moments, that they had, in some measure, procured him a reputation distinct from the corps in which he served. His intrepidity was mistaken for ferocity, and his hasty zeal for the natural love of cruelty. On the other hand, a few acts of clemency, or more properly speaking, of discriminating justice, had, with one portion of the community, acquired for Dunwoodie the character of undue forbearance. It is seldom that either popular condemnation or applause falls where it is merited.

While in the presence of the Major, the leader of the gang had felt himself under that restraint which vice must ever experience in the company of acknowledged virtue; but having left the house, he at once conceived that he was under the protection of a congenial spirit. There was a gravity in the manner of Lawton, that deceived most of those who did not know him intimately, and it was a common saying in his troop, that “when the Captain laughed he was sure to punish.” Drawing near his conductor, therefore, the leader commenced with inward satisfaction, the following dialogue—“’Tis always well for a man to know his friends from his enemies.”

To this prefatory observation, the captain made no other reply than an assenting sound, that could not be called a word.

“I suppose that Major Dunwoodie has the good opinion of Washington?” continued the skimmer, in a low, confidential tone, that rather expressed a doubt, than asked a question.

“There are some who think so,” returned the Captain ambiguously. “Many of the friends of Congress in this county,” the man proceeded, “wish the horse was led by some other officer; for my part, if I could only be covered by a troop now and then, I could do many an important piece of service to the cause, that this capture of the pedler would be nothing to.”

“Indeed!” said the captain, drawing familiarly nigh him, and lowering his voice; “such as what?”

“For the matter of that, it could be made as profitable to the officer, as it would be to us who did it,” said the skimmer, with a look of the most significant meaning.

“But how?” asked Lawton, a little impatiently, and quickening his step to get out of the hearing of the rest of the party.

“Why, near hand to the royal lines, even under the very guns of the heights, might be good picking, if we had a force to guard us from De Lancey’s men, and to cover our retreat from being cut off by the way of King’s Bridge.”

“I thought the refugees took all that game to themselves,” said the Captain.

“They do a little at it, but are obliged to be sparing among their own people,” returned the fellow, in perfect confidence. “I have been down twice under an agreement with them; the first time they acted with honour, but the second they came upon us and drove us off, and took the plunder to themselves.”

“That was a very dishonourable act, indeed,” said Lawton; “I wonder that you associate with such rascals.”

“It is necessary to have an understanding with some of them, or we might be taken,” returned the skinner; “but a man without honour is worse than a brute. Do you think Major Dunwoodie is a man to be trusted?”

“You mean on honourable principles?” said Lawton.

“Certainly; you know Arnold was thought well of, until the royal Major was taken.”

“Why, I do not believe Dunwoodie would sell his command as Arnold wished to,” said the Captain; “neither do I think him exactly trust-worthy in a delicate business like yours.”

“That’s just my notion,” rejoined the skinner, with a self-approving manner, that showed how much he was satisfied with his own estimate of character.

By this time they had arrived at a better sort of farm-house, the very extensive out-buildings of which were in tolerable repair for the times. The barns were occupied by the men of the troop in their clothes, while their horses were arranged under the long sheds which protected the yard from the cold north wind, and were quietly eating, with their saddles on their backs, and bridles thrown on their necks, ready to be bitted at the shortest warning. Lawton excused himself for a moment to the skinner, and entered his quarters. He soon returned, holding in his hand one of the common lanterns used by the men when working on their steeds, and led the way towards the large orchard that surrounded the buildings on three sides. The gang followed the leader in silence, who suspected the object to be the facility of communicating further on this interesting topic, without the danger of being overheard. Approaching the captain, he renewed the discourse, with a view of establishing further confidence, and giving his companion a more favourable opinion of his intellects.

“Do you think the colonies will finally get the better of the king?” he inquired, with a little of the importance of a politician.

“Get the better!” echoed the captain, with impetuosity—then

checking himself, he continued, "no doubt they will. If the French will give us arms and money, we can drive the royal troops out in six months."

"Well, so I hope we will soon," said the skinner, hastily, conscious of having meditated joining the refugees for some time; "and then we shall have a free government, and we, who fight for it, will get our reward."

"Oh!" cried Lawton, "your claims will be indisputable, while all these vile tories, who live at home peaceably to take care of their farms, will be held in the contempt they merit. You have no farm, I suppose?"

"Not yet—but it will go hard if I do not find one before the peace is made."

"Right; study your own interests and you study the interests of your country; press the point of your own services, and rail at the tories, and I'll bet my spurs against a rusty nail, that you get to be a county clerk at least."

"Don't you think Paulding's party were fools in not letting the Royal Adjutant-General escape?" said the man, thrown off his guard, by the freedom of the Captain's manner.

"Fools!" cried Lawton, with a bitter laugh; "ay, fools indeed; King George would have paid them better, for he is richer. He would have made them gentlemen for their lives. But, thank God, there is a pervading spirit in the people that seems miraculous. Men who have nothing, act as if the wealth of the Indies depended on their fidelity; all are not villains like yourself, or we should have been slaves to England years ago."

"How!" exclaimed the skinner, starting back, and dropping his musket to the level of the other's breast; "am I betrayed, then—and are you my enemy?"

"Miscreant!" shouted Lawton, his sabre ringing in its steel scabbard, as he struck the musket of the fellow from his hands, "offer but again to point your gun at me, and I'll cleave you to the middle."

"And you will not pay us, then, Captain Lawton?" said the skinner, trembling, and noticing a party of mounted dragoons silently encircling the whole party.

"Oh! pay you—yes, you shall have the full measure of your reward. There is the money that Colonel Singleton sent down for the captors of the spy," throwing a bag of guineas with disdain at the other's feet. "But ground your arms, you rascals, and see that the money is truly told."

The intimidated band did as they were ordered, and while they were eagerly employed in this pleasing avocation, a few of Lawton's men privately knocked the flints from their muskets.

"Well," cried the captain, "is it right—have you the promised reward?"

"There is just the money," said the leader, "and we will now go to our homes with your permission."

"Hold!" returned Lawton, with his usual gravity; "so much to redeem our promise—now for justice; we pay you for taking a spy, but but we punish you for burning, robbing, and murdering. Seize them, my lads, and give them each the law of Moses—forty, save one." This command was given to no unwilling listeners, and in the twinkling of an eye the skimmers were stripped and fastened, by the halters of the party, to as many of the apple-trees as were necessary to furnish one to each of the gang; swords were quickly drawn, and fifty branches cut from the trees like magic: from these were selected a few of the most supple of the twigs, and a willing dragoon was soon found to wield each of these new weapons. Captain Lawton gave the word, humanely cautioning his men not to exceed the discipline prescribed by the Mosaic law, and directly the uproar of Babel commenced in the orchard. The cries of the leader were easily to be distinguished above those of his men, and the circumstance might be accounted for, by Captain Lawton's reminding his corrector that he had to deal with an officer, and he should remember and pay him unusual honour. The flagellation was executed with great neatness and despatch, and was distinguished by no irregularity, excepting that none of the disciplinarians began to count, until they had tried their whips by a dozen or more blows, by the way, as they said themselves, of finding out the proper places to strike. As soon as this summary operation was satisfactorily completed, Lawton directed his men to leave the skimmers to replace their own clothes, and to mount their horses, for they were a party who had been detailed for the purpose of patrolling lower down in the country.

"You see, my friend," said the captain to the leader of the skimmers, after he had prepared himself to depart, "I can cover you to some purpose when necessary. If we meet often, you will be covered with scars, which, if not very honourable, will, at least, be merited." The fellow made no reply, but was busy with his musket, and hastening his comrades to march; when, everything being ready, they proceeded sullenly towards some rocks, at no great distance, which were overhung by a deep wood. The moon was just rising, and the group of dragoons could easily be distinguished where they had been left. Suddenly turning, the whole gang levelled their pieces and drew the triggers. The action was noticed, and the snapping of the locks was heard by the soldiers, who returned their futile attempt with a laugh of derision, the Captain crying aloud—"Ah! rascals, I know you, and have taken away your flints."

"You should have taken away the one in my pocket too," shouted the leader, firing his gun at the next instant. The bul-



let grazed the ear of Lawton, who laughed as he shook his head, and said, "a miss was as good as a mile." One of the dragoons had noticed the preparations of the skinner—who had been left alone by the rest of his gang, as soon as they had made their abortive attempt at revenge—and was in the act of plunging his spurs in his horse as the fellow fired. The distance to the rocks was but small, yet the speed of the horse compelled the leader to abandon both money and musket to effect his escape. The soldier returned with his prizes, and offered them to the acceptance of his captain, but Lawton coolly rejected them, telling the man to retain them himself, until the skinner appeared in person to claim his property. It would have been a business of no small difficulty for any tribunal then existing in the new states, to have enforced a decree of restitution of the money, for it was shortly after most equitably distributed by the hands of Sergeant Hollister, among a troop of horse. The patrol departed, and the Captain slowly returned to his quarters, with an intention of retiring to rest. A figure moving rapidly among the trees in the direction of the wood, whither the skimmers had retired, caught his eye, and, wheeling on his heel, the cautious partisan approached it, and to his astonishment saw the washerwoman at that hour of night, and in such a place.

"What, Betty! walking in your sleep, or dreaming while awake," cried the astonished trooper; "are you not afraid of meeting with the ghost of ancient Jenny in this her favourite pasture?"

"Ah, sure, Captain Jack," returned the sutler in her native accent, and reeling in a manner that made it difficult for her to raise her head, "it's not Jenny, or her ghost, that I'm saaking, but some yarbs for the wounded. And its the vartue of the rising moon, as it jist touches them, that I want. They grow under yon rocks, and I must hasten, or the charm will lose its power."

"Fool, you are fitter for your pallet than wandering among those rocks; a fall from one of them would break your bones; besides, the skimmers have fled to those heights, and should they see you, would revenge on you a flogging they have but just now received from me. Better return, old woman, and finish your nap; we march in the morning, I hear."

Betty disregarded his advice, and continued her devious route to the hill side. For an instant, as Lawton mentioned the skimmers, she paused, but immediately resumed her course, and was soon out of sight among the trees. As the Captain entered his quarters, the sentinel at the door inquired if he had met Mrs. Flanagan, and added that she had passed there, filling the air with threats against her tormentors at the "Hotel," and inquiring for the Captain in search of redress. Lawton heard the man in astonishment—appeared struck with a new idea—walked several yards towards the orchard, and returned again; for several

minutes he paced rapidly to and fro before the door of the house, and then hastily entering it, threw himself on a bed, in his clothes, and was soon in a profound sleep. In the mean time, the gang of marauders had successfully gained the summit of the rocks, and, scattering in every direction, buried themselves in the depths of the wood. Finding, however, there was no pursuit, which would have been impracticable for horse, the leader ventured to call his band together with a whistle, and in a short time succeeded in collecting his discomfited party at a point where they had but little to apprehend from this new enemy.

“Well,” said one of the fellows, while a fire was lighting to protect them against the air, which was becoming severely cold, “there is an end to our business in West Chester. The Virginia horse will soon make the country too hot to hold us.”

“I’ll have his blood,” muttered the leader, “if I die for it the next instant.”

“Oh, you are very valiant here in the wood,” cried the other, with a savage laugh; “why did you, who boast so much of your aim, miss your man just now, at thirty yards?”

“’Twas the horseman that disturbed me, or I would have ended this Captain Lawton on the spot; besides, the cold had set me a shivering, and I had no longer a steady hand.”

“Say it was fear, and you will tell no lie,” said his comrade with a sneer. “For my part, I think I shall never be cold again; my back burns as if a thousand gridirons were laid on it, and that not very gently.”

“And you would tamely submit to such usage, and kiss the rod that beat you?”

“As for kissing the rod, it would be no easy matter, I’m thinking,” returned the other. “Yes, mine was broke into such small pieces on my own shoulders, that it would be difficult to find one big enough to kiss; but I would rather submit to losing half my skin, than to losing the whole of it, with my ears in the bargain. And such will be our fates, if we tempt this mad Virginian again. God willing, I would at any time give him enough of my hide to make a pair of jack-boots, to get out of his hands with the remainder. If you had known when you were well off, you would have stuck to Major Dunwoodie, who don’t know half so much of our evil doings.”

“Silence, you talking fool,” shouted the enraged leader: “your prating nonsense is sufficient to drive a man mad; is it not enough to be robbed and beaten, but we must be tormented with your folly?—help to get out the provisions, if any is left in the wallet, and try and stop your mouth with food.”

This injunction was obeyed, and the whole party, amidst sundry groans and contortions, excited by the disordered state of their backs, made their arrangements for a scanty meal. A large fire

of dry wood was burning in the cleft of a rock, and at length they began to recover in some measure from the confusion of their flight, and to collect their scattered senses. Their hunger being appeased, and many of their garments thrown aside, for the better opportunity of dressing their wounds, the gang began to plot measures for revenge. An hour was spent in this manner, and various expedients were proposed, but as they all depended a good deal on personal prowess for their success, and were attended by great danger, they were of course rejected. There was no possibility of approaching the troops by surprise, their vigilance being ever on the watch; and the hope of meeting Captain Lawton away from his men was equally forlorn, for the trooper was constantly engaged in his duty, and his movements were so rapid, that any opportunity of meeting with him at all must depend greatly on accident. Besides, it was by no means certain, that such an interview would result happily for themselves. The cunning of the trooper was notorious, and rough and broken as was West Chester, the fearless partisan was known to take desperate leaps, and stone walls were but slight impediments to the charges of the Southern horse. Gradually, the conversation took another direction, until the gang determined on a plan which should both revenge themselves, and at the same time offer some additional stimulus to their exertions. The whole business was accurately discussed, the time fixed, and the manner adopted; in short, nothing was wanting to the previous arrangement for this deed of villany, when they were aroused by a voice calling around—"This way, Captain Jack—here are the rascals ating by a fire—this way, and murder the tieves where they sit—quick, leave your horses, and shoot your pistols."

This terrific summons was enough to disturb the philosophy of the gang entirely, and springing on their feet, they rushed deeper into the wood, and having already agreed upon a place of rendezvous previously to their intended expedition, they dispersed towards the four quarters of the heavens. Certain sounds and different voices were heard calling to each other, but as the marauders were well trained to speed of foot, they were soon lost in the distance. It was not long before Betty Flanagan emerged from the darkness, and very coolly took possession of what the skimmers had left in their flight—these were food and divers articles of dress. The washerwoman deliberately seated herself, and made a meal with great apparent satisfaction; for an hour she sat with her head upon her hand in deep musing; then gathered together such articles of the clothes as seemed to suit her fancy, and retired into the wood, leaving the fire to throw its glimmering light on the adjacent rocks, until its last brand died away, and the place was abandoned to solitude and darkness.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"No longer then perplex thy breast—  
 When thoughts torment, the first are best;  
 'Tis mad to go, 'tis death to stay!  
 Away to Orra, haste away."—*Lapland Love Song.*

WHILE his comrades were sleeping, in perfect forgetfulness of their hardships and dangers, the slumbers of Dunwoodie were broken and unquiet. After spending a night of restlessness, he arose unrefreshed from the rude bed where he had thrown himself in his clothes, and without awaking any of the group around him, wandered into the open air in search of relief. The soft rays of the moon were just passing away in the more distinct light of the morning; the wind had fallen, and the rising mists gave the promise of another of those autumnal days, which, in this unstable climate, succeed a tempest with the rapid transitions of magic. The hour had not arrived when he intended moving from his present position; and willing to allow his warriors all the refreshment that circumstances would permit, he strolled towards the scene of the skimmers' punishment, musing upon the embarrassments of his situation, and uncertain how he should reconcile his sense of manly delicacy to his love. Added to this dilemma, was the dangerous situation of Henry Wharton. Although Dunwoodie himself placed the most implicit reliance on the Captain's purity of intention, he was by no means assured that a board of officers would be equally credulous; and independent of all feelings of private regard, he felt certain that with the execution of Henry would be destroyed all hopes of a union with his sister. He had despatched an officer the preceding evening to Colonel Singleton, who was in command in the advance posts, reporting the capture of the British Captain, and, after giving his own opinion of his innocence, requesting orders as to the manner in which he was to dispose of his prisoner. These orders might now be expected every hour, and his uneasiness increased in proportion as the moment approached when his friend might be removed from his protection. In this disturbed state of mind, the Major wandered through the orchard, and stopped in his walk by arriving at the base of those rocks which had protected the skimmers in their flight, before he was conscious whither his steps had carried him. He was about to turn, and retrace his path to his quarters, when he was startled by a voice, bidding him to—"Stand or die."

Dunwoodie turned in amazement, and beheld the figure of a man placed at a little distance above him on a shelving rock, with a musket in his hands that was levelled at himself. The light was not yet sufficiently powerful to reach the recesses of that gloomy spot, and a second look was necessary before he dis-

covered, to his astonishment, that it was the pedler who stood before him. Comprehending in an instant the danger of his situation, and disdaining to implore mercy or to retreat, had the latter been possible, the youth cried firmly—"If I am to be murdered, fire; for I will never become your prisoner."

"No, Major Dunwoodie," said Birch, lowering his musket, "it is neither my intention to capture nor to slay."

"What then would you have, mysterious being?" said Dunwoodie, hardly able to persuade himself that the form he saw was not a creature of the imagination.

"Your good opinion," answered the pedler, with emotion; "I would wish all good men to judge me with lenity."

"To you it must be indifferent what may be the judgment of men on your actions," said the Major, gazing around him in continued surprise; for you seem to be beyond the reach of their sentence."

"God spares the lives of his servants to his own time," said the pedler, solemnly: "'tis but a few hours, and I was your prisoner, and threatened with the gallows; now you are mine; but, Major Dunwoodie, you are free. There are them abroad who would treat you less kindly. Of what service would that sword be to you against my weapon and a steady hand? Take the advice of one who has never harmed you, and who never will. Do not trust yourself in the skirts of any wood, unless in company and mounted."

"And have you comrades who have assisted you to escape," said Dunwoodie, "and who are less generous than yourself?"

"No—no," cried Harvey, clasping his hands wildly and speaking with bitter melancholy; "I am alone truly—none know me but my God and *Him*."

"And who?" asked the Major, with an interest he could not control.

"None," continued the pedler, recovering his composure. "But such is not your case, Major Dunwoodie; you are young and happy; there are them that are dear to you, and such are not far away—danger is near them you love most—danger within and without; double your watchfulness—strengthen your patrols—and be silent. With your opinion of me, should I tell you more, you would suspect an ambush. But remember and guard them you love best."

The pedler discharged the musket in the air, and threw it at the feet of his astonished auditor; and when the surprise and smoke suffered Dunwoodie to look again on the rock where he had stood, the spot was vacant.

The youth was aroused from the stupor which had been created by this strange scene, by the trampling of horses, and the sound

of the bugles. A patrol was drawn to the spot by the report of the musket, and the alarm had been given to the corps. Without entering into any explanation with his men, the major returned quickly to his quarters, where he found the whole squadron under arms, in battle array, impatiently awaiting the appearance of their leader. The officer whose duty it was to superintend such matters, had directed a party to lower the sign of the Hotel Flanagan, and the post was already arranged for the execution of the spy. On hearing from the Major that the musket was discharged by himself, and was probably another dropped by the skinners, (for by this time Dunwoodie had learnt the punishment inflicted by Lawton, but chose to conceal his interview with Birch,) his officers suggested the propriety of executing their prisoner before they marched. Unable to believe that all they had seen was not a dream, Dunwoodie, followed by many of his officers, and preceded by Sergeant Hollister, went to the place which was supposed to contain this mysterious pedler.

"Well, sir," said the Major, sternly, to the sentinel who guarded the door, "I suppose you have your prisoner in safety."

"He is yet asleep," replied the man, "and makes such a noise, I could hardly hear the bugles sound the alarm."

"Open the door and bring him forth," said Dunwoodie to the sergeant.

The order was obeyed, so far as circumstances would allow; but to the amazement of the honest veteran, he found the room in no little disorder—the coat of the pedler was where his body ought to have been, and part of the wardrobe of Betty was scattered in disorder on the floor. The washerwoman herself occupied the pallet in a profound mental oblivion, in all her clothes excepting the little black bonnet, which she so constantly wore, that it was commonly thought she made it perform the double duty of both day and night cap. The noise of their entrance, and the exclamations of the party, awoke the woman, and rising, she exclaimed hastily—

"Is it the breakfast that's wanting? well, faith, yee look as if ye would ate myself—but patience a little darlings, and yee'll see sich a fry as never was."

"Fry!" echoed the sergeant, forgetful of his religious philosophy, and the presence of his officers; "we'll have you roasted, you jade—you have helped that damn'd pedler to escape."

"Jade back again in your teeth, and damn'd pedler too, Mister Sergeant," cried Betty, who was easily roused; "what have I to do with pedlers or escapes? I might have been a pedler's lady, and worn my silks, if I'd had Sawny M'Twill, instead of tagging at the heels of a parcel of dragooning rapscallions, who don't know how to trate a lone body with dacency."

“The fellow has left my bible,” said the veteran, taking the book from the floor; “in place of spending his time in reading it, to prepare for his end, like a good Christian, he has been busy in labouring to escape.”

“And who would stay and be hung like a dog?” cried Betty, beginning to comprehend the case; “’tisn’t every one that’s born to meet with sich an end—like yourself, Mister Hollister.”

“Silence!” said Dunwoodie; “this must be inquired into closely, gentlemen; there is no outlet but the door, and there he could not pass, unless the sentinel connived at his escape, or was asleep on his post—call up all the guard.”

As these men were not paraded, curiosity had already drawn them to the place, and they all, excepting one, denied that any person had passed out, and he acknowledged that Betty had gone by him, but pleaded his orders in justification.

“You lie, you tief—you lie!” shouted Betty, who had impatiently listened to the exculpation; “would yee slanderize a loue woman, by saying she walks a camp at midnight?—Here have I been slaaping the long night as swaatly as the sucking babe.”

“Here, sir,” said the sergeant, turning respectfully to Dunwoodie, “is something written in my bible that was not in it before; for having no family to record, I would never suffer any scribbling in the sacred book.”

One of the officers read aloud—“*These certify, that if suffered to get free, it is by God’s help alone, to whose divine aid I humbly recommend myself. I’m forced to take the woman’s clothes, but in her pocket is a ricompinse.—Witness my hand—Harvey Birch.*”

“What!” roared Betty in consternation, “has the tief robbed a lone woman of her all?—hang him—catch him and hang him, Major, if there’s law and justice in the land.”

“Examine your pockets,” said one of the youngsters, who was enjoying the scene, careless of the cause or its consequences.

“Ah! faith,” cried the washerwoman, producing a guinea, “but he is a jewel of a pedler; long life and brisk trade to him, say I; he is welcome to the duds—and if he is ever hung, many a bigger rogue will go free.”

Dunwoodie turned to leave the apartment, and saw Captain Lawton standing with folded arms, contemplating the scene in profound silence. His manner, so different from his usual impetuosity and zeal, struck his commander as singular; their eyes met, and they walked together for a few minutes in close conversation, when Dunwoodie returned, and dismissed the guard to their place of rendezvous. Sergeant Hollister, however, continued alone with Betty, who, having found none of her vestments disturbed but such as the guinea more than paid for, was

in high good-humour for the interview. The washerwoman had for a long time looked on the veteran with the eyes of affection, and had secretly determined within herself to remove the dangers from a lone woman, by making the sergeant the successor of her late husband. For some time the trooper had seemed to flatter her preference, and Betty, conceiving that her violence had mortified the feelings of her lover, was determined to make him all the amends in her power. Besides, rough and uncouth as she was, the washerwoman had still enough of her sex to know that the moments of reconciliation were the moments of her power. She therefore poured out a glass of her morning beverage, and handed it to her companion, as she observed—

“A few waarm words between friends are a trifle, yee must be knowing, sargeant. It was Michael Flanagan that I ever calumnated the most when I was loving him the best.”

“Michael was a good soldier and a brave man,” said the warrior, finishing the glass; “our troops were covering the flank of his regiment when he fell, and I rode over his body myself more than once during the day; poor fellow, he lay on his back, and looked as composed as if he had died a natural death after a year’s consumption.”

“Oh! Michael was a great consumer, and be sartain,” said the disconsolate widow; “two like us make dreadful inroads in the stock, sargeant. But yee’r a sober discrute man, Mister Hollister, and would be a helpmate indeed.”

“Why, Mrs. Flanagan,” said the veteran, with great solemnity, “I’ve tarried to speak on the subject that lies heavy at my heart, and will now open my mind, if you’ve leisure to listen.”

“Is it to listen?” cried the impatient woman; “and I’d listen to you, sergeant, if the officers never ate another mouthful—but take another drop, dear, and it will encourage you to speak freely.”

“I am already bold enough in so good a cause,” returned the veteran, rejecting her bounty; “but Betty, do you think it was really the Pedler-Spy that I placed in this room the last night?”

“And who should it be else, darling?”

“The evil one.”

“What, the divil?”

“Ay, even old Belzebub, disguised as the pedler, and them fellows we thought to be skinners were his imps,” said the sergeant, with a most portentous gravity in his countenance.

“Well sure, sergeant dear,” said Betty, “yee’r but little out this time, any way; for if the divil’s imps go at large in the county West Chester, sure it is the skinners themselves.”

“No, but Mrs. Flanagan,” interrupted her companion. “I mean in their incarnate spirits; the evil-one knew that there was no one we would arrest sooner than the pedler Birch, and took on his appearance to gain admission to your room.”



"And what should the devil be wanting of me?" cried Betty, tartly; "and is'n't there devils enough in the corps already, without one's coming from the bottomless pit to frighten a lone body?"

"'Twas, 'twas in mercy to you, Betty, that he was permitted to come. You see he vanished through the door in your form, which is a symbol of your fate, unless you mend your life. Oh! I noticed how he trembled when I gave him the good book. Would any Christian, think you, my dear Betty, write in a bible in this way; unless it might be the matter of births and deaths, and such like chronicles?"

The washerwoman was pleased with the softness of her lover's manner, but dreadfully scandalized at his insinuation; she, however, preserved her temper, and with the quickness of her own country's people, rejoined—

"And would the divil have paid for the clothes, think ye?—ay, and overpaid."

"Doubtless the money is base," said the sergeant, a little staggered at such an evidence of honesty in one he thought so meanly of. "He tempted me with his glittering coin, but the Lord gave me strength to resist."

"The goold looks well," said the washerwoman; "but I'll change it, any way, with Captain Jack, the day; he is niver a bit afeard of any divil of them all."

"Betty, Betty," said her companion, "do not speak so disreverently of the evil spirit; he is ever at hand, and will owe you a grudge for your language."

"Pooh! if he has any bowels at all, he won't mind a fillip or two from a poor lone woman," replied the washerwoman. "I'm sure no other Christian would."

"But the dark one has no bowels, except to devour the children of men," said the sergeant, looking around him in horror; "and it's best to make friends everywhere, for there is no telling what may happen till it comes. But, Betty, no man could have got out of this place, and passed all the sentinels without being known—take awful warning from the visit, therefore"—

Here the dialogue was interrupted by a summons to the sutler to prepare her morning's repast, and they were obliged to separate; the woman secretly hoping that the interest the sergeant manifested for her was more earthly than he imagined; and the man, bent on saving a soul from the fangs of the dark spirit that was prowling through their camp in quest of victims.

During the breakfast several expresses arrived, one of which brought intelligence of the actual force and destination of the enemy's expedition that was out on the Hudson; and another, droers to send Captain Wharton to the first post above, under the

escort of a body of dragoons. These last instructions, or rather commands, for they admitted of no departure from their letter, completed the sum of Dunwoodie's uneasiness. The despair and misery of Frances were constantly before his eyes, and fifty times he was tempted to throw himself on his horse and gallop to the Locusts, but an uncontrollable feeling of delicacy prevented him. In obedience to the commands of his superior, an officer, with a small party, was sent to the cottage to conduct Henry Wharton to the place directed, and the gentleman who was entrusted with the execution of the order was charged with a letter from Dunwoodie to his friend, containing the most cheering assurances of his safety, as well as the strongest pledges of his own unceasing exertions in his favour. Lawton was left with part of his own troop, in charge of the few wounded; and as soon as the men were refreshed, the encampment broke up, and the main body marched towards the Hudson. Dunwoodie repeated, again and again, his injunctions to Captain Lawton—dwelt upon every word that had fallen from the pedler, and canvassed, in every possible manner that his ingenuity could devise, the probable meaning of his mysterious warnings, until no excuse remained for delaying his own departure a moment longer. Suddenly recollecting, however, that no directions had been given for the disposal of Colonel Wellmere, instead of following the rear of his column, the major yielded to his passions, and turned down the road which led to the Locusts. The horse of Dunwoodie was fleet as the wind, and scarcely a minute seemed to have passed before he gained sight, from an eminence, of the lonely vale, and as he was plunging into the bottom lands that formed its surface, he caught a glimpse of Henry Wharton and his escort, at a distance, defiling through a pass which led to the posts above. This sight added to the speed of the anxious youth, who now turned the angle of the hill that opened to the valley, and came suddenly on the object of his search. Frances had followed at a distance the party which guarded her brother; and, as they vanished from her sight, she felt as if deserted by all that she most prized in this world. The unaccountable absence of Dunwoodie, with the shock of parting from Henry under such circumstances, had entirely subdued her fortitude, and she had sunk on a stone by the road side, and wept as if her heart would break. Dunwoodie sprang from his charger, throwing the reins over the neck of the animal, and in a moment was by the side of the weeping girl.

“Frances—my own Frances,” he exclaimed, “why this distress?—let not the situation of your brother create any alarm. As soon as the duty I am now on is completed, I will hasten to the feet of Washington, and beg his release. The Father of his

Country will never deny such a boon to one of his favourite pupils."

"Major Dunwoodie, for your interest on behalf of my poor brother, I thank you," said the maid, drying her eyes, and rising with dignity; "but such language, addressed to me, surely is improper."

"How! improper!" echoed her lover in amazement; "are you not mine—by the consent of your father—your aunt—your brother—nay, by your own consent, my sweet Frances?"

"I wish not, Major Dunwoodie, to interfere with the prior claims that any other lady may have to your affections," said Frances, motioning to return.

"None other, I swear by Heaven, none other but yourself has any claim on me," cried Dunwoodie, with fervour; "you alone are mistress of my inmost soul."

"You have practised so much, and so successfully, Major Dunwoodie, that it is no wonder you excel in deceiving the credulity of my sex," returned Frances, bitterly, attempting to smile which the tremulousness of her muscles smothered in its birth.

"Am I a villain, Miss Wharton, that you receive me with such language?—when have I ever deceived you, Frances? who has practised in this manner on your purity of heart?"

"Why has not Major Dunwoodie honoured the dwelling of his intended father with his presence lately? Did he forget it contained one friend on a bed of sickness, and another in deep distress? Has it escaped his memory that it held his intended wife? Or is he fearful of meeting more than one that can lay a claim to that title? Oh, Peyton—Peyton, how have I been deceived in you! with the foolish credulity of my youth, I thought you all that was brave, noble, generous, and loyal."

"Frances, I see how it is that you have deceived yourself," cried Dunwoodie, his face in a glow of fire; "you do me injustice; I swear, by all that is most dear to me, that you do me injustice."

"Swear not, Major Dunwoodie," interrupted the maiden, her fine countenance lighting up with all the lustre of womanly pride; "the time is gone by for me to credit oaths."

"Miss Wharton, would you have me a còxcomb—make me contemptible in my own eyes, by boasting, with the hope of raising myself in your estimation!"

"Flatter not yourself that the task is so easy, sir," returned Frances, moving towards the cottage; "we converse together, in private, for the last time;—but my father would gladly welcome my mother's kinsman."

"No, Miss Wharton, I cannot enter his dwelling now; I

should act in a manner unworthy of myself. You drive me from you, Frances, in despair. I am going on desperate service, and may not live to return. Should fortune prove severe to me, at least do my memory justice; remember that the last breathings of my soul will be for your happiness. So saying, he had already placed his foot in the stirrup, but his mistress turning on him a face that was pallid with emotion, and an eye that pierced his soul with its thrilling expression, arrested the action, and he paused.

"Peyton--Major Dunwoodie," she said, "can you ever forget the sacred cause in which you are enlisted? Your duty both to your God and to your country, forbids your doing anything rashly. The latter has need of your services; besides"—but her voice became choked, and she was unable to proceed.

"Besides what?" echoed the youth, springing to her side, and offering to take her hand in his own. Frances having, however, recovered herself, coldly repulsed him, and continued her walk homeward.

"Miss Wharton, is this our parting?" cried Dunwoodie, in agony; "am I a wretch, that you treat me so cruelly? You have never loved me, and wish to conceal your own fickleness by accusations against me that you will not explain."

Frances stopped short in her walk, and turned on her lover a look of so much purity and feeling, that, heart-stricken, Dunwoodie would have knelt at her feet for pardon; but, motioning him for silence, she once more spoke—

"Hear me, Major Dunwoodie, for the last time; it is a bitter knowledge when we first discover our own inferiority; but it is a truth that I have lately learnt. Against you I bring no charges—make no accusations; no, not willingly in my thoughts. Were my claims to your heart just, I am not worthy of you. It is not a feeble, timid girl, like me, that could make you happy. No, Peyton, you are formed for great and glorious actions, deeds of daring and renown, and should be united to a soul like your own; one that can rise above the weakness of her sex. I should be a weight to drag you to the dust; but with a different spirit in your companion, you might soar to the very pinnacle of earthly glory. To such an one, therefore, I resign you freely, if not cheerfully; and pray, oh! how fervently, that with such an one you may be happy."

"Lovely enthusiast," cried Dunwoodie, "you know not yourself nor me. It is a woman, mild, gentle, and dependent as yourself, that my very nature loves; deceive not yourself with visionary ideas of generosity, which will only make me miserable."

"Farewell, Major Dunwoodie," said the agitated girl, pausing for a moment to gasp for breath; "forget that you ever knew me—remember the claims of your bleeding country, and be happy."

“Happy!” repeated the youthful soldier bitterly, as he saw her light form gliding through the gate of the lawn, and disappearing behind its shrubbery; “oh! yes, I am now happy, indeed.”

Throwing himself into the saddle, he plunged his spurs into his horse, and soon overtook his squadron, which was marching slowly over the hilly roads of the county, to gain the banks of the Hudson.

But, painful as were the feelings of Dunwoodie at this unexpected termination of the interview with his mistress, they were but light compared to those which were experienced by the maiden herself. Frances had, with the keen eye of jealous love, easily detected the attachment of Isabella Singleton to Dunwoodie. Delicate and retiring herself as the fairest visions of romance had ever portrayed her sex, it never could present itself to the mind of Frances that this love had been unsought. Ardent in her own affections, and artless in their exhibition, she had early caught the eye of the youthful soldier; but it required all the manly frankness of Dunwoodie to court her favour, and the most pointed devotion to obtain his conquest. This once done, his power was durable, entire, and engrossing. But the unusual occurrences of the few preceding days, the altered mien of her lover during those events, his unwonted indifference to herself, and chiefly the romantic idolatry of Isabella, had aroused new sensations in her bosom. With a dread of her lover’s integrity, had been awakened the never-failing concomitant of the purest affection, a distrust of her own merits. In the moment of enthusiasm, the task of resigning her lover to another, who might be more worthy of him, seemed easy; but it is in vain that the imagination attempts to deceive the heart. Dunwoodie had no sooner disappeared, than our heroine felt all the misery of her situation; and if the youth found some relief in the cares of his command from his anxiety of mind, Frances was less fortunate in the performance of a duty imposed upon her by filial piety. The removal of his son had nearly destroyed the little energy of Mr. Wharton, who required all the tenderness of his remaining children to convince him that he was able to perform the ordinary functions of life.

## CHAPTER XX.

“Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces,  
Though ne’er so black, say they have angels’ faces;  
That man who hath a tongue, I say is no man,  
If with that tongue he cannot win a woman.”

*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

IN making the arrangement by which Captain Lawton had been left, with Sergeant Hollister and twelve men, as a guard over the wounded and heavy baggage of the corps, Dunwoodie had consulted not only the information which had been conveyed in the

letter of Colonel Singleton, but the supposed bruises of his comrade's body. It was in vain that Lawton had declared himself fit for any duty that man could perform, or that he had plainly intimated that his men would never follow Tom Mason to a charge with the alacrity and confidence with which they followed himself; his commander was firm, and the reluctant Captain was compelled to comply, with as good a grace as he could assume. Before parting, Dunwoodie repeated his caution to Lawton, to keep a watchful eye on the inmates of the cottage, and especially enjoined him, if any movements of a particularly suspicious nature were noticed in the neighbourhood, to break up from his present quarters, and to move down with his party, and take possession of the domains of Mr. Wharton. A vague suspicion of danger to the family had been awakened in the breast of the Major, by the language of the pedler, although he was unable to refer it to any particular source, or to understand why it was to be apprehended.

For some time after the departure of the troops, the Captain was walking to and fro, before the door of the "Hotel," inwardly cursing his fate, that condemned him to an inglorious idleness, at a moment when a meeting with the enemy might be expected, and replying to the occasional queries of Betty, who, from the interior of the building, ever and anon demanded, in a high tone of voice, an explanation of various points in the pedler's escape, which as yet she could not comprehend. At this instant he was joined by the surgeon, who had hitherto been engaged among his patients in a distant building, and was profoundly ignorant of everything that had occurred, even to the departure of the troops.

"Where are all the sentinels, John?" he inquired, as he gazed around with a look of curiosity, "and why are you here alone?"

"Off—all off, with Dunwoodie to the river. You and I are left here to take care of a few sick men and some women."

"I am glad, however," said the surgeon, "that Major Dunwoodie had consideration enough, not to move the wounded. Here, you Mrs. Elizabeth Flanagan, hasten with some food that I may appease my appetite. I have a dead body to dissect, and am in a hurry."

"And here, you Mister Doctor Archibald Sitgreaves," echoed Betty, showing her blooming countenance from a broken window of the kitchen, "you are ever a-coming too late; here is nothing to ate but the skin of Jenny, and the body yee'r mintoning."

"Woman," said the surgeon, in unger, "do you take me for a cannibal, that you address your filthy discourse to me in this manner? I bid you hasten with such food as may be proper to be received into the stomach fasting."

"And I'm sure it's for a pop-gun that I should be taking you

sooner than for a cannon-ball," said Betty, winking at the Captain; "and I tell yee that it's fasting you must be, unless yee'll let me cook yee a stake from the skin of Jenny. The boys have ate me up entirely."

Lawton now interfered to preserve the peace, and assured the surgeon that he had already despatched the proper persons in quest of food for the party. A little mollified with his explanation, the operator soon forgot his hunger, and declared his intention of proceeding to business at once.

"And where is your subject?" asked Lawton, gravely.

"The pedler," said the other, gazing on the sign-post; "you see I made Hollister put a stage so high that the neck would not be dislocated by the fall, and I intend making as handsome a skeleton of him, as there is to be found in the States of North America; the fellow has good points, and his bones are well knit. Oh! Jack, I will make a perfect beauty of him. I have long been wanting something of the sort to send to my old aunt in Virginia, who was so kind to me when a boy."

"The devil!" cried Lawton; "would you send the old woman a dead man's bones?"

"Why not?" said the surgeon: "what nobler object is there in nature than the figure of a man—and the skeleton may be called his elementary parts. But what has been done with the body?"

"Off too."

"Off!" echoed the panic-stricken operator; "and who has dared to take it away without my leave?"

"Sure jist the divil," said Betty; "and who'll be after taking yeerself away some of these times too, without asking yeer lave."

"Silence, you witch," said Lawton, with difficulty suppressing a laugh; "is this the manner in which to address an officer?"

"Who called me the filthy Elizabeth Flanagan?" cried the washerwoman, snapping her fingers contemptuously; "I can remember a frind for a year, and don't forgit an inimy for a month."

But the friendship or enmity of Mrs. Flanagan were alike indifferent to the surgeon, who could think of nothing but his loss; and Lawton was obliged to explain to his friend the apparent manner in which it had happened.

"And a lucky escape it was for yee, my jewel of a doctor," cried Betty, as the Captain concluded. "Sargeant Hollister, who saw him face to face, as it might be, says it's Beelzeboob, and no pedler, unless it may be in a small matter of lies and thefts, and sich wickedness. Now a pretty figure yee would have been in cutting up Beelzeboob, if the major had hung him. I don't think it's very asy he would have been under your knife."

Thus doubly disappointed in both his meal and his business,

Sitgreaves suddenly declared his intention of visiting the "Locusts," and inquiring into the state of Captain Singleton. Lawton was ready for the excursion, and mounting, they were soon on the road, though the surgeon was obliged to submit to a few more jokes from the washerwoman, before he could get out of hearing. For some time the two rode in silence, when Lawton, perceiving that his companion's temper was somewhat ruffled by his disappointments and Betty's attack, made an effort to restore the tranquillity of his feelings, by saying—

"That was a charming song, Archibald, that you commenced last evening, when we were interrupted by the party that brought the pedler. The allusion to Galen was extremely neat."

"I knew you would like it, Jack, when your eyes were opened to its beauties," returned the operator, suffering his muscles to relax into a smile; "but when the brain has become confused by the fumes of wine ascending from the stomach, intoxication is liable to ensue, and the faculties by no means continue qualified to discriminate, either in matters of taste or of science."

"And yet your ode partook largely of both," observed Lawton, suffering no part of him to smile but his eyes.

"Ode is by no means a proper term for the composition," said Sitgreaves, "I should rather term it a classical ballad."

"Very probably," said the trooper, "hearing only one verse, it was difficult to affix a name to it."

The surgeon involuntarily hemmed, and began to clear his throat, although by no means conscious himself to what the preparation tended. But the captain, rolling his dark eyes towards his companion, and observing him to be sitting with great uneasiness on his horse, continued—

"The air is still, and the road solitary—why not give me the remainder? I might correct the bad taste you accuse me of possessing, to hear it."

"Oh! my dear John, if I thought it would correct the errors you have imbibed, from habit and indulgence, nothing could give me more pleasure."

"Try; we are fast approaching some rocks on our left; the echo from them, I should think, must be delightful."

Thus encouraged, and somewhat impelled by the opinion that he both sung and wrote with exquisite taste, the surgeon set about complying with the request in sober earnest. After carefully removing his spectacles from his eyes, and wiping the glasses, they were replaced with the utmost accuracy and precision; his wig was adjusted to his head with mathematical symmetry, and his voice being cleared by various efforts, until at length its melody pleased the exquisite sensibility of his own ear; then, to the no small delight of the trooper, he began anew the



ditty of the preceding evening. But whether it was that his steed became enlivened by the notes of his master, or that he caught a disposition to trot from Lawton's charger, the surgeon had not concluded his second verse, before his tones vibrated in regular cadence to the rise and fall of his own body on the saddle. Notwithstanding this somewhat inharmonious interruption, Sitgreaves resolutely persevered, until he had got through the following words—

Hast thou ever felt love's dart, dearest,  
Or breathed his trembling sigh—  
Thought him, afar, was ever nearest,  
Before that sparkling eye?  
Then hast thou known what 'tis to feel  
The pain that Galen could not heal.

Hast thou ever known shame's blush, dearest,  
Or felt its thrilling smart  
Suffuse thy cheek, like marble clearest,  
As Damon read thy heart?  
Then, silly girl, thou'st blush'd to own  
A pain that Harvey e'en has known.

But for each pain of thine, dearest,  
Or smart of keen love's wound,  
For all that, foolish maid, thou fearest,  
An antidote is found.  
And mighty Hymen's art can heal  
Each wound that youthful lovers feel.

Hast thou ever—

“Hush!” interrupted the trooper; what rustling noise is that among the rocks?”

“The echo.”—

“Hast thou ever—”

“Listen,” said Lawton, stopping his horse. He had not done speaking, when a stone fell at his feet, and rolled harmlessly across the path.

“A friendly shot, that,” cried the trooper; “neither the weapon nor its force implies much ill will towards us.”

“Blows from stones seldom produce more than contusions,” said the operator, bending his gaze in every direction in vain, in quest of the hand from which the missile had been hurled; “it must be meteoric; there is no living being in sight, except ourselves.”

“It would be easy to hide a regiment behind those rocks,” returned the trooper, dismounting, and taking the stone in his hand—“Oh! here is the explanation along with the mystery.” So saying, he tore a piece of paper that had been ingeniously fastened to the small fragment of rock which had thus singularly fallen before him, and opening it, the Captain read the following words, written in no very legible hand:

“A musket bullet will go farther than a stone, and things

*more dangerous than yarbs for wounded men lie hid in the rocks of West Chester. The horse may be good, but can he mount a precipice?"*

"Thou sayest the truth, strange man," said Lawton; "courage and activity would avail but little against assassination and these rugged passes." Remounting his horse, he cried aloud—"Thanks, unknown friend: your caution will be remembered, and it shall never be forgotten that all my enemies are not merciless."

A meagre hand was extended for an instant over a rock, waving in the air, and afterwards nothing further was seen or heard in that quarter by the soldiers.

"Quite an extraordinary interruption," said the astonished operator, "and a letter of a very mysterious meaning."

"Oh! 'tis nothing but the wit of some bumpkin, who thinks to frighten two of the Virginians by an artifice of this kind," said the trooper, placing the billet in his pocket; "but let me tell you, Mr. Archibald Sitgreave you were wanting to dissect, just now, a damn'd honest fellow."

"It was the pedler—one of the most notorious spies in the enemy's service," returned the other; "and I must say, that I think it an honour to such a man to be devoted to the use of science."

"He may be a spy—he must be one," said Lawton musing; "but he has a heart above enmity, and a soul that would honour a gallant soldier."

The surgeon turned an inquiring eye on his companion as he uttered this soliloquy, while the penetrating looks of the trooper had already discovered another pile of rocks, which, jutting forward, nearly obstructed the highway that wound directly around its base.

"What the steed cannot mount, the foot of man can overcome," exclaimed the wary partizan. Throwing himself again from his saddle, and leaping a wall of stone, he began to ascend the hill at a pace which would soon give him a bird's eye view of the rocks in question, together with all their crevices. This movement was no sooner made, than Lawton caught a glimpse of the figure of a man stealing rapidly from his approach, and disappearing on the opposite side of the precipice.

"Spur, Sitgreaves,—spur," shouted the trooper, dashing over every impediment in pursuit, "and murder the villain as he flies."

The request was promptly complied with, and a few moments brought the surgeon in full view of a man armed with a musket, who was crossing the road, and evidently seeking the protection of the thick wood on its opposite side.

"Stop, my friend—stop until Captain Lawton comes up, if

you please," cried the surgeon, observing him to flee with a rapidity that baffled his horsemanship. But as if the invitation contained new terrors, the footman redoubled his efforts, nor paused even to breathe, until he had reached his goal, when, turning on his heel, he discharged his musket towards the operator, and was out of sight in an instant. To gain the highway, and throw himself in his saddle, detained Lawton but a moment, and he rode to the side of his comrade just as the figure had disappeared.

"Which way has he fled?" cried the trooper.

"John," said the surgeon, "am I not a non-combatant?"

"Whither has the rascal fled?" cried Lawton again, impatiently.

"Where you cannot follow—into that wood," returned the surgeon. "But I repeat, John, am I not a non-combatant?"

The disappointed trooper, perceiving that his enemy had escaped him, now turned his eyes, which were flashing with anger under his dark brows, upon his comrade, and gradually his muscles lost their rigid compression, his brow relaxed, and his eyes changed from their fierce expression, to the covert laughter, which so often distinguished those organs in the trooper. The surgeon sat in dignified composure on his horse; his thin body erect, and his head elevated with all the indignity of conscious injustice towards himself; his spectacles had been shaken down to the extreme end of the ample member on which they rested, and his eyes were glaring above them with the fulness of indignation.

A slight convulsive effort composed the muscles of the trooper's face, however, and he broke the silence again, by saying—

"Why did you suffer the rascal to escape?—had you but brought him within the reach of my sabre, I would have given you a substitute for the pedler."

"'Twas impossible to prevent it," said the surgeon, pointing to the bars, before which he had stopped his horse; he threw himself on the other side of this fence, and left me where you see; nor would the man in the least attend to my remonstrances, or intimation that you wished to hold discourse with him."

"No!" exclaimed Lawton, in an affected surprise; "he was truly a discourteous rascal; but why did you not leap the fence, and compel him to a halt?—you see but three of the bars are up, and Betty Flanagan could clear them on her cow."

The surgeon, for the first time, withdrew his eyes from the place where the fugitive had disappeared, and turned his countenance towards his comrade. His head, however, was not permitted to lower itself in the least, as he replied—

"I humbly conceive, Captain Lawton, that neither Mrs. Elizabeth Flanagan, nor her cow, are examples to be emulated by Doctor Archibald Sitgreaves; it would be but a sorry compliment to science, to say that a Doctor of Medicine had fractured

both his legs, by injudiciously striking them against a pair of bar-posts." While speaking, the surgeon raised the limbs in question to nearly a horizontal position, which really appeared to bid defiance to anything like a passage for himself through the defile; but the trooper, disregarding this ocular proof of the impossibility of the movement, cried hastily—

"Here was nothing to stop you, man; I could leap a platoon through, boot and thigh, without pricking with a single spur. Pshaw, I have often charged upon the bayonets of infantry over greater difficulties than this."

"You will please to remember, Captain John Lawton," said the surgeon, with a most imposing air of offended dignity, "that I am not the riding master of the regiment—nor a drill sergeant—nor a crazy cornet; no, sir—and I speak it with a due respect for the commission of the continental congress—nor an inconsiderate captain, who regards his own life as little as that of his enemies. I am only, sir, a poor humble man of letters, a mere Doctor of Medicine, an unworthy graduate of Edinburgh, and a surgeon of dragoons; nothing more I do assure you, Captain John Lawton." So saying, he turned his horse's head towards the cottage, and recommenced his ride.

"Ay! you speak the truth," muttered the dragoon; "had I but the meanest rider of my troop with me, I should have taken the scoundrel, and given at least one victim to the offended laws of my country. But, Archibald, no man can ride well who straddles in this manner like the Colossus of Rhodes. You should depend less on your stirrup, and keep your seat by the power of the knee."

"With proper deference to your experience, Captain Lawton," returned the surgeon, "I conceive myself to be no incompetent judge of muscular action, whether in the knee or any other part of the human frame. And although but humbly educated, I am not now to learn that the wider the base, the more firm is the superstructure."

"Yes, but Archibald," cried Lawton, impatiently, "would you fill a highway in this manner with one pair of legs, when half a dozen might pass together in comfort, stretching them abroad like the scythes to the ancient chariot wheels?"

The allusion to the practice of the ancients somewhat softened the indignation of the surgeon, and he replied with rather less hauteur—

"You should speak with reverence of the usages of those who have gone before us, and who, however ignorant they were in matters of science, and particularly that of surgery, yet furnished many brilliant exceptions to the superstitions of the present day. Now, sir, I have no doubt that Galen has operated on wounds

occasioned by these very scythes that you mention, although we can find no evidence of the fact in cotemporary writers. Ah! they must have given dreadful injuries, and, I doubt not, caused great uneasiness to the medical gentlemen of that day."

"There could not have been much science displayed, I think," returned the trooper, collecting himself into his usual manner; "and occasionally a body must have been left in two pieces, to puzzle the ingenuity of those gentry to unite. Yet, doubtless, they did it."

"What!" cried the operator in amazement, "unite two parts of the human body that have been severed by an edged instrument, to any of the purposes of animal life?"

"That have been rent asunder by a scythe, and are united to do military duty," said Lawton.

"'Tis impossible—quite impossible," cried the surgeon; "it is in vain, Captain Lawton, that human ingenuity endeavours to baffle the efforts of nature. Think, my dear sir, in this case you separate all the arteries—injure all of the intestines—sever all of the nerves and sinews, and, what is of more consequence, you"—

"Enough," said Lawton, waving his hand; "you have said enough, Dr. Sitgreaves, and I am convinced. Nothing shall ever tempt me willingly to submit to be divided in this irretrievable manner—a manner, I say, Dr. Sitgreaves, that puts at defiance all the arts of surgery."

"True—most true, my dear John," cried the surgeon with warmth, and forgetting his displeasure; "it removes all the pleasure of a wound, when you find it beyond the reach of science to heal."

"I should think so," said Lawton, rather dryly.

"What do you think is the greatest pleasure in life?" asked the operator, suddenly, and with all his confidence in his companion restored.

"That may be difficult to answer."

"Not at all," cried the surgeon; "it is in witnessing, or rather feeling, the ravages of disease repaired by the lights of science co-operating with nature. I once broke my little finger intentionally, in order that I might reduce the fracture and watch the cure; it was only on a small scale, you know, dear John; still I think the thrilling sensation, excited by the knitting of the bone, aided by the contemplation of the art of man thus acting in unison with nature, exceeded any other enjoyment that I have ever experienced. Oh! had it been one of the more important members, such as the leg or arm, how much greater must the pleasure have been."

"Or the neck," said the trooper; but their discourse was interrupted by the arrival at the cottage of Mr. Wharton. No

one appearing to usher them into an apartment, the Captain proceeded to the door of the parlour, where he knew visitors were commonly shown. On opening it, he paused for a moment, in admiration of the scene within. The person of Colonel Wellmere first met his eye, bending forward towards the figure of the blushing Sarah, with an earnestness of manner, that prevented the noise of Lawton's entrance from being heard by either of the parties. Certain significant signs, which were embraced at a glance by the prying gaze of the trooper, at once made him a master of their secret, and he was about to retire as silently as he had advanced, when his companion, pushing himself through the passage, abruptly entered the apartment. Advancing instantly to the chair of Wellmere, the surgeon instinctively laid hold of his arm, and exclaimed—"Bless me—a quick and irregular pulse—flushed cheek and fiery eye—strong febrile symptoms, and such as must be attended to." While speaking, the doctor, who was much addicted to practising in a summary way, had already produced his lancet, and made certain other indications of his intentions to proceed at once to business. But Colonel Wellmere, recovering from the confusion of the surprise, arose from his seat rather haughtily, and said—"Sir, it is the warmth of the room that lends me the colour, and I am already too much indebted to your skill to give you any further trouble; Miss Wharton knows that I am quite well, and I do assure you that I never felt better or happier in my life."

There was a peculiar emphasis in the latter part of this speech, that, however it might gratify the feelings of Sarah, brought the colour to her cheeks with a redoubled brilliancy; and Sitgreaves, as his eye followed the direction of those of his patient, did not fail to observe it.

"Your arm, if you please, madam," said the surgeon promptly, advancing with a bow; "anxiety and watching have done their work on your delicate frame, and there are symptoms about you that must not be neglected."

"Excuse me, sir," said Sarah, recovering herself with womanly pride: "the heat is oppressive, and I will retire and acquaint Miss Peyton with your presence."

There was but little difficulty in practising on the abstracted simplicity of the surgeon; but it was necessary for Sarah to raise her eyes to return the salutation of Lawton, as he bowed his head to nearly a level with the hand that held open the door for her passage. One look was sufficient; she was able to control her steps sufficiently to retire with dignity, but no sooner was she relieved from the presence of all observers, than she fell into a chair, and abandoned herself to a feeling of mingled shame and pleasure.

A little nettled at the contumacious deportment of the British

Colonel, Sitgreaves, after once more tendering services that were again rejected, withdrew to the chamber of young Singleton, whither Lawton had already preceded him.

## CHAPTER XXI.

“ Oh! Henry, when thou deign'st to sue,  
Can I thy suit withstand?  
When thou, lov'd youth, hast won my heart,  
Can I refuse my hand?”—*Hermit of Warkworth.*

THE graduate of Edinburgh found his patient rapidly improving in health, and entirely free from fever. His sister, with a cheek that was, if possible, paler than on her arrival, watched around his couch with vigilant care, and the ladies of the cottage had not, in the midst of their sorrows and varied emotions, forgotten to discharge the duties of hospitality. Frances felt herself impelled towards their disconsolate guest, with an interest for which she could not account, and with a force that she could not control. She had unconsciously connected the fates of Dunwoodie and Isabella in her imagination, and felt, with all the romantic ardour of a generous mind, that she was serving her former lover most, by exhibiting kindness to her he loved best. Isabella received her attentions with a kind of vacant gratitude, but neither of them indulged in any allusions to the latent source of their uneasiness. The observation of Miss Peyton seldom penetrated beyond things that were visible, and to her the situation of Henry Wharton seemed to furnish an awful excuse for the fading cheeks and tearful eyes of her niece. If Sarah manifested less of care than her sister, still the unpractised spinster was not at a loss to comprehend the reason. Love is a species of holy feeling with the virtuous of the female sex, and seems to hallow all that comes within its influence. Although Miss Peyton mourned with sincerity over the danger which threatened her nephew, still she indulged her eldest niece, with motherly kindness, in the enjoyment that chance had given to her early attachment. War, she well knew, was a dreadful enemy to love, and the moments that were thus granted to its votaries were not to be thrown away.

Several days now passed without any interruption to the usual avocations of the inhabitants of the cottage, or the party of the Four Corners. The former were supporting their fortitude with the certainty of Henry's innocence, and a strong reliance on Dunwoodie's exertions in his behalf, and the latter waiting with impatience the intelligence, that was hourly expected, of a conflict, and their orders to depart. Captain Lawton, however, waited for both these events in vain. Letters from his Major announced that the enemy, finding that the party which was to co-operate with them had been defeated, and was withdrawn,

had retired also behind the works of Fort Washington, where they continued inactive, but threatened momentarily to strike a blow in revenge for their disgrace. The trooper was enjoined to vigilance, and the latter concluded with a compliment to his honour, zeal, and undoubted bravery.

"Extremely flattering, Major Dnnwoodie," muttered the dragoon, as he threw down this epistle, and stalked across the floor of the room to quiet his impatience. "A proper guard have you selected for this service; let me see—I have to watch over the interests of a crazy, irresolute old man, who does not know whether he belongs to us or to the enemy; four women, three of whom are well enough in themselves, but who are not immensely flattered by my society; and a fourth, who, good as she is, is on the wrong side of forty; some two or three blacks; a talkative housekeeper, that does nothing but chatter about gold and despisables, and signs and omens; and poor George Singleton.—Ah! well, a comrade in suffering has a claim on a man, next to his honour in the field, and an engagement with his mistress—so I'll make the best of it."

As he concluded this soliloquy, the trooper took a seat and began to whistle, to convince himself how little he cared about the matter, when, by throwing his booted leg carelessly round, he upset the canteen that held his whole stock of brandy. The accident was soon repaired, but in replacing the wooden vessel, he observed a billet lying on the bench, on which the liquor had been placed. It was soon opened, and he read—"The moon will not rise till after midnight—a fit time for deeds of darkness." There was no mistaking the hand; it was clearly the same that had given him the timely warning against assassination, and the trooper continued, for a long time, musing on the nature of these two notices, and the motives that could induce the mysterious pedler to favour an implacable enemy in the manner that he latterly had done. That he was a spy of the enemy, Lawton knew; for the fact of his conveying intelligence to the English commander-in-chief, of a party of Americans that were exposed to the enemy, was proved most clearly against him on the trial for his life. The consequences of his treason had been avoided, it is true, by a lucky order from Washington, which withdrew the regiment a short time before the British appeared to cut it off, but still the crime was the same; perhaps, thought the partisan, he wishes to make a friend of me against the event of another capture; but, at all events, he spared my life on one occasion, and saved it on another. I will endeavour to be as generous as himself, and pray that my duty may never interfere with my feelings. Whether the danger, intimated in the present note, threatened the cottage or his own party, the Captain was uncer-



tain, but he inclined to the latter opinion, and determined to beware how he rode abroad in the dark. To a man in a peaceable country, and in times of quiet and order, the indifference with which the partisan regarded the impending danger would be inconceivable. His reflections on the subject were more for devising means to entrap his enemies than to escape their machinations. But the arrival of the surgeon, who had been to pay his daily visits to the Locusts, interrupted his meditations. Sitgreaves brought an invitation from the mistress of the mansion to Captain Lawton, desiring that the cottage might be honoured with his presence at an early hour on that evening.

“What!” cried the trooper, “then they have received a letter also.”

“I think nothing more probable,” said the operator; “there is a chaplain at the cottage from the royal army, who has come out to exchange the British wounded, and who has an order from Colonel Singleton for their delivery. But a more mad project than to remove them now was never adopted.”

“A priest, say you!—is he a hard drinker—a real camp idler—a fellow to breed a famine in a regiment?—or does he seem a man who is in earnest in his trade?”

“A very respectable and orderly gentleman, not at all given to intemperance, judging from the outward symptoms,” returned the surgeon; “and a man who really says grace in a very regular and appropriate manner.”

“And does he stay the night?”

“Certainly, he waits for his cartel; but hasten, John, we have but little time to waste. I will just step up and bleed two or three of the Englishmen who are to move in the morning in order to prevent inflammation, and be with you immediately.”

The gala suit of Captain Lawton was easily adjusted to his huge frame, and his companion being ready, they once more took their route towards the cottage. Roanoke had been as much benefited by a few days' rest as his master, and Lawton ardently wished, as he curbed his gallant steed, on passing the well-remembered rocks, that his treacherous enemy stood before him, mounted and armed as himself. But no enemy, nor any disturbance whatever, interfered with their progress, and they reached the Locusts just as the sun was throwing his setting rays on the valley and tinging the tops of the leafless trees with the colour of gold. It never required more than a single look, to acquaint the trooper with the particulars of every scene that was not uncommonly veiled, and the first survey that he took on entering the house, told him more than the observations of a day had put into the possession of Dr. Sitgreaves. Miss Peyton accosted him with a smiling welcome, that exceeded the bounds of ordinary cour-

tesy, and which evidently flowed more from feelings that were connected with the heart, than from manner. Frances glided about, tearful and agitated, while Mr. Wharton stood ready to receive them, decked in a suit of velvet, that would have been conspicuous in the gayest drawing-rooms on the continent. Colonel Wellmere was in the uniform of an officer of the household troops of his prince, and Isabella Singleton sat in the parlour, clad in the habiliments of joy, but with a countenance that belied her appearance: while her brother by her side looked, with a cheek of flitting colour, and an eye of intense interest, like anything but an invalid. As it was the third day that he had left his room, Dr. Sitgreaves, who began to stare about him in stupid wonder, forgot to reprove his patient for his imprudence. Into this scene, Captain Lawton moved with all the composure and gravity of a man whose nerves were not easily discomposed by novelties. His compliments were received as graciously as they were offered, and after exchanging a few words with the different individuals in the room, he approached to where the surgeon had withdrawn, in a kind of confused astonishment, to rally his senses to the occasion.

"John," whispered the surgeon, with awakened curiosity, "what do you think?"

"That your wig and my black head would look the better for a little of Betty Flanagan's best flour; but it is too late now, and we must fight the battle armed as you see. Why, Archibald, you and I look like militiamen, flanked by those holiday Frenchmen, who have come amongst us."

"Observe," said Sitgreaves, in increasing wonder, "here comes the army chaplain, in his full robes as a Doctor Divinitatis; what can it mean?"

"An exchange," said the trooper; "the wounded\* of Cupid are to meet and settle their accounts with the god, in the way of plighting their faith to suffer from his archery no more."

"Oh!" ejaculated the operator, laying his finger on the side of his nose, and for the first time comprehending the case.

"Yes—oh!" muttered Lawton, in imitation; when turning suddenly to his comrade, he said fiercely, but in an under tone, "Is it not a crying shame, that a sunshine hero, and an enemy, should thus be suffered to steal away one of the fairest plants that grows in our soil—a flower fit to be placed in the bosom of any man."

"You speak the truth, John; and if he be not more accommodating as a husband than as a patient, I fear me, that the lady will lead a troubled life."

"Let her," said the trooper indignantly; "she has chosen from her country's enemies, and may she meet with a foreigner's virtues in her choice."

Their further conversation was interrupted by Miss Peyton, who, advancing, acquainted them that they had been invited to grace the nuptials of her eldest niece and Colonel Wellmere. The gentlemen bowed in silence at this explanation of what they already understood, and the good spinster, with an inherent love of propriety, went on to add, that the acquaintance was of an old date, and the attachment by no means a sudden thing. To this Lawton merely bowed, but the surgeon, who loved to hold converse with the virgin, replied—"That the human mind was differently constituted in different individuals. In some, impressions are vivid and transitory; in others, more deep and lasting; indeed, there are some philosophers who pretend to trace a connexion between the physical and mental powers of the animal; but for my part, madam, I believe that the one is much influenced by habit and association, and the other subject to the laws of science."

Miss Peyton, in her turn, bowed her silent assent to this remark, and retired with dignity, to usher the intended bride into the presence of the company. The hour had arrived when American custom has decreed that the vows of wedlock must be exchanged; and Sarah, blushing with a variety of emotions, followed her aunt to the withdrawing room. Wellmere sprang to receive the hand that she extended towards him with an averted face, and, for the first time, the English Colonel appeared conscious of the important part that he was to act in the approaching ceremonies. Hitherto his air had been abstracted, and his manner uneasy; but everything, excepting the certainty of his bliss, seemed to vanish at the blaze of loveliness, that burst on his sight with the presence of his mistress. All arose from their seats, and the reverend gentleman had already opened the volume in his hand, when the absence of Frances was noticed: Miss Peyton again withdrew in search of her youngest niece, whom she found in her own apartment, and in tears.

"Come, my love, the ceremony waits but for us," said the aunt, affectionately entwining her arm in that of her niece; "endeavour to compose yourself, that proper honour may be done to the choice of your sister."

"Is he—can he be worthy of her?" cried Frances, in a burst of emotion, and throwing herself into the arms of the spinster.

"Can he be otherwise?" returned Miss Peyton; "is he not a gentleman?—a gallant soldier, though an unfortunate one? and certainly, my love, one who appears every way qualified to make any woman happy."

Frances had given vent to her feelings, and, with an effort, she collected sufficient resolution to venture to join the expecting party below. But to relieve the embarrassment of this delay, the

clergyman had put sundry questions to the bridegroom; one of which was by no means answered to his satisfaction. Wellmere was compelled to acknowledge that he was unprovided with a ring; and to perform the marriage ceremony without one, the divine pronounced to be impossible. His appeal to Mr. Wharton for the propriety of this decision, was answered affirmatively, as it would have been negatively, had the question been put in a manner to lead to such a result. The owner of the Locusts had lost the little energy he possessed, by the blow recently received through his son, and his assent to the objection of the clergyman, was as easily obtained as his consent to the premature proposals of Wellmere. In this stage of the dilemma, Miss Peyton and Frances appeared. The surgeon of dragoons approached the former, and, as he handed her to a chair, observed—"It appears, madam, that untoward circumstances have prevented Colonel Wellmere from providing all the decorations that custom, antiquity, and the canons of the church, have prescribed as indispensable to enter into the honourable state of wedlock."

Miss Peyton glanced her quiet eye at the uneasy bridegroom, and perceived him to be adorned with what she thought sufficient splendour, allowing for the time and the suddenness of the occasion, she turned her look on the speaker with a surprise that demanded an explanation.

The surgeon understood her wishes, and proceeded at once to gratify them.

"There is," he observed, "an opinion prevalent, that the heart lies on the left side of the body, and that the connexion between the members of that side, and what may be called the seat of life, is more intimate than that which exists with their opposites. But this is an error that grows out of an ignorance of the scientific arrangement of the human frame. In obedience to this opinion, the fourth finger of the left hand is thought to contain a virtue that belongs to no other of its class, and is encircled, during the solemnization of wedlock, with a cincture or ring, as if to chain that affection to the marriage state, which is best secured by the graces of the female character." While speaking, the operator laid his hand expressively on his heart, and bowed nearly to the floor as he concluded.

"I know not, sir, that I rightly understand your meaning," said Miss Peyton, with dignity, but suffering a slight vermilion to appear on a cheek that had long lost that peculiar charm of youth.

"A ring, madam—a ring is wanting for the ceremony."

The instant that the surgeon spoke explicitly, the awkwardness of their situation was comprehended. She glanced her eyes at her nieces, and in the younger she read a secret exultation

that somewhat displeased her; but the countenance of Sarah was suffused with a shame that the considerate aunt well understood. Not for the world would she violate any of the observances of female etiquette. It suggested itself to all the females of the Wharton family, at the same moment, that the wedding ring of their late mother and sister was reposing peacefully, amid the rest of her jewellery, in a secret receptacle that had been provided at an early day to secure the valuables against the predatory inroads of the marauders who roamed through the country.

Into this hidden vault, the plate, and whatever was most prized, made a nightly retreat, and there the ring in question had long lain, forgotten until at this moment. But it was the business of the bridegroom, from time immemorial, to furnish this indispensable to wedlock, and on no account would Miss Peyton do anything that exceeded the usual courtesies of her sex on this solemn occasion; certainly not until sufficient expiation for the offence had been made, by a due portion of trouble and disquiet. The spinster, therefore, retained the secret with a regard to decorum. Sarah through feeling, and Frances through both, united to dissatisfaction at the connexion. It was reserved for Dr. Sitgreaves to break the embarrassment of the party by again speaking: "If, Madam, a plain ring, that once belonged to a sister of my own"—The operator paused a moment, and hemmed once or twice; "if, Madam, a ring of that description might be admitted to this honour, I have one that could be easily produced from my quarters at the Corners, and I doubt not it would fit the finger for which it is desired. There is a strong resemblance between—hem—between my late sister and Miss Wharton, in stature and anatomical figure, and the proportions are apt to be observed throughout the whole animal economy."

A glance of Miss Peyton's eye recalled Colonel Wellmere to a sense of his duty, and springing from his chair, he assured the surgeon, that in no way could he impose heavier obligations on himself than by sending for that very ring. The operator bowed a little haughtily, and withdrew to fulfil his promise, by despatching a messenger on the errand. The spinster suffered him to retire; but unwillingness to admit a stranger into the privacy of their domestic arrangements, induced her to follow and tender the services of Cæsar, instead of Sitgreaves' man, who had been offered by Isabella for this duty; her brother, probably from bodily weakness, continued silent throughout the whole evening. Katy Haynes was accordingly directed to summon the black to the vacant parlour, and thither the spinster and surgeon repaired, to give their several instructions.

The consent to this sudden union of Sarah and Wellmere, and especially at a time when the life of a member of the family was

in such imminent jeopardy, was given from a conviction, that the unsettled state of the country would probably prevent another opportunity to the lovers of meeting, and a secret dread on the part of Mr. Wharton, that the death of his son might, by hastening his own, leave his remaining children without a protector. But, notwithstanding Miss Peyton had complied with her brother's wish to profit by the accidental visit of a divine, she had not thought it necessary to blazon the intended nuptials of her niece to the neighbourhood, had even time been allowed: she thought, therefore, that she was now communicating a profound secret to Cæsar and her housekeeper.

"Cæsar," she commenced with a smile, "you are now to learn, that your young mistress, Miss Sarah, is to be united to Colonel Wellmere this evening."

"No, no—I tink I see um afore," said Cæsar, laughing and chuckling with inward delight, as he shook his head with conscious satisfaction at his own prescience; "old black man tell when a young lady talk all alone wid a gentle'um in a parlour."

"Really, Cæsar, I find I have never given you credit for half the observation that you deserve," said the spinster, gravely; "but as you already know on what emergency your services are required, listen to the directions of this gentleman, and take care to observe them strictly."

The black turned in quiet submission to the surgeon, who commenced as follows:—"Cæsar, your mistress has already acquainted you with the important event about to be solemnized within this habitation; but a ring is wanting, and by riding to the mess-house at the Four Corners, and delivering this billet to either Sergeant Hollister, or to Mrs. Elizabeth Flanagan, it will speedily be placed in your possession. On its receipt, return hither; and fail not to use diligence in both going and returning, for my patients will shortly require my presence in the hospital, and Captain Singleton already suffers from the want of rest."

By this time the surgeon had forgotten everything but what appertained to his own duties, and rather unceremoniously left the apartment. Curiosity, or perhaps an opposite feeling, delicacy, induced Miss Peyton to glance her eye on the open billet that Sitgreaves had delivered to the black. Here she read as follows; it was addressed to his assistant.

"If the fever has left Kinder, give him nourishment. Take three ounces more of blood from Watson. Have a search made that the woman Flanagan has left none of her jugs of alcohol in the hospital. Renew the dressings of Johnson, and dismiss Smith to duty. Send the ring, which is pendant from the chain of the watch, that I left with you to time the doses, by the bearer.

"ARCHIBALD SITGREAVES, M.D., *Surgeon of Dragoons.*"

Miss Peyton yielded this singular epistle to the charge of the black, in silent wonder, and withdrew, leaving Katy and Cæsar to arrange the departure of the latter.

"Cæsar," said Katy, with imposing solemnity, "put the ring, when you get it, in your left pocket, that is nearest your heart; and by no means endeavour to try it on your finger, for it is unlucky."

"Try um on a finger," interrupted the negro, stretching forth his bony knuckles; "tink a Miss Sally's ring go on old Cæsar finger."

"'Tis not consequential whether it goes on or not," said the housekeeper; "but it is an evil omen to place a marriage ring on the finger of another after wedlock, and of course it may be dangerous before."

"I tell you, Katy," cried Cæsar a little indignantly, "I go fetch a ring and neber tink to put um on a finger."

"Go—go then, Cæsar," said Katy, suddenly recollecting divers important items in the supper that required her attention; "and hurry back again, and stop not for living soul."

With this injunction Cæsar departed, and was soon firmly fixed in the saddle. From his youth, the black, like all of his race, had been a hard rider; charged with a message of such importance, he moved at first with becoming dignity, bending under the weight of sixty winters, his African blood had lost some of its native heat. The night was dark, and the wind whistled through the vale with the chilling dreariness of the blasts of November. By the time Cæsar reached the graveyard, that had so lately received the body of the elder Birch, all the horrors of his situation began to burst on the mind of the old man, and he threw around him many a fearful glance, in momentary expectation of seeing something superhuman. There was barely light sufficient to discern a being of earthly mould emerging into the highway, and apparently from the graves of the dead. It is in vain that philosophy and reason contend with our fears and early impressions; but Cæsar had neither to offer him their frail support. He was, however, well mounted on a coach-horse of Mr. Wharton's, and clinging to the back of the animal with instinctive skill, he abandoned the rein to the pleasure of the beast. Hillocks, woods, rocks, fences, and houses, flew by him with the rapidity of lightning, and the black had just begun to think where and on what business it was, that he was riding in this headlong manner, when he reached the place where the two roads met, and the "Hotel Flanagan" stood in all its dilapidated simplicity. The sight of a cheerful fire through its windows first gave Cæsar a pledge that he had reached the habitation of man, and with it came all his dread of the bloody

Virginians;—his duty must, however, be done, and dismounting, he fastened the foaming animal to a fence, and approached the window with cautious steps, to listen and reconnoitre.

Before a blazing fire sat Sergeant Hollister and Betty Flanagan, enjoying themselves over a liberal donation from the stores of the washerwoman.

“I tell ye, Sargeant, dear,” said Betty, removing the mug from her mouth, “’tis no rasonable to think it was anything more than the pidler himself; sure now, where was the smell of sulphur, and the wings, and the tail, and the cloven foot?—besides, Sargeant, its no dacent to tell a lone female that she had Beelzeboob for a bed-fellow.”

“It matters but little, Mrs. Flanagan, provided you escape his talons and fangs hereafter,” returned the veteran following his remark by a heavy potation.

Cæsar heard enough to convince him, that danger to himself from this pair was but little to be apprehended. His teeth already began to chatter with cold and terror, and the sight of the comfort within stimulated him greatly to adventure to enter. He made his approaches with proper caution, and knocked with extreme humility at the door. The appearance of Hollister with a drawn sword, roughly demanding who was without, contributed in no degree to the restoration of his faculties; but fear itself lent him power to explain his errand.

“Advance,” said the Sergeant with a military promptness, and throwing a look of close scrutiny on the black, as he brought him to the light; “advance, and deliver your despatches:—but stop, have you the countersign?”

“I don’t tink a know what he be,” said the black, shaking in his shoes.

“Who ordered you on this duty, did you say?”

“A tall massa, with a speckacle,” returned Cæsar; “he came a doctering a Captain Singleton.”

“’Twas Doctor Sitgreaves; he never knows the countersign himself. Now, blackey, had it been Captain Lawton, he would not have sent you here, close to a sentinel, without the countersign; for you might get a pistol bullet through your head, and that would be cruel to you, for, although you be black, I am none of them who thinks niggars haven’t no souls.”

“Sure a nagur has as much sowl as a white,” said Betty; “come hither, ould man, and warm that shivering carcase of yeers by the blaze of this fire. I’m sure a Guinea nagur loves heat as much as a soldier loves his drop.”

Cæsar obeyed in silence, and a mulatto boy, who was sleeping on a bench in the room, was bidden to convey the note of the surgeon to the building where the wounded were quartered.



"Here," said the washerwoman, tendering to Cæsar a taste of the article that most delighted herself, "try a drop, smooty, 'twill warm the black sowl within your body, and be giving you spirits as you are going homeward."

"I tell you, Elizabeth," said the Sergeant, "that the souls of niggers are the same as our own; how often have I heard the good Mr. Whitfield say, that there was no distinction of colour in heaven. Therefore it is reasonable to believe, that the soul of this here black is as white as my own, or even Major Dunwoodie's."

"Be sure he be," cried Cæsar, a little tartly, who had received a wonderful stimulus by tasting the drop of Mrs. Flanagan.

"It's a good sowl that the Major is, any way," returned the washerwoman; "and a kind sowl—ay, and a brave sowl too; and yee'd say all that yeerself, Sargeant, I'm thinking."

"For the matter of that," returned the veteran, "there is one above even Washington, to judge of souls; but this I will say, that Major Dunwoodie is a gentleman who never says go, boys—but always says come, boys; and if a poor fellow is in want of a spur or a martingale, and the leather-whack is gone, there is never wanting the real silver to make up the loss, and that from his own pocket too."

"Why, then, are you here idle, when all that he holds most dear are in danger?" cried a voice with startling abruptness; "mount, mount, and follow your Captain; arm and mount, and that instantly, or you will be too late."

This unexpected interruption produced an instantaneous confusion amongst the tipplers. Cæsar fled instinctively into the fire-place, where he maintained his position in defiance of a heat that would have roasted a white man. Sergeant Hollister turned promptly on his heel, and seizing his sabre, the steel was glittering in the fire-light, in the twinkling of an eye; but perceiving the intruder to be the pedler, who stood near the open door that led to the stoop in the rear, he began to fall back towards the position of the black, with a kind of military intuition which taught him to concentrate his forces. Betty alone stood her ground by the side of the temporary table. Replenishing the mug with a large addition of the article known to the soldiery by the name of "choke dog," she held it towards the pedler. The eyes of the washerwoman had for some time been swimming with love and liquor, and turning them good-naturedly on Birch, she cried—"Faith, but yee're welcome, Mr. Pidler, or Mister Birch, or Mister Beelzeboob, or what's yeer name. Yee're an honest divil any way, and I'm hoping that you found the pitticoats convenient. Come forward, dear, and fale the fire; Sergeant Hollister won't be hurting you, for the fear of an ill turn you may be doing him hereafter—will yee, Sargeant, dear?"

"Depart, ungodly man," cried the veteran, edging still nearer to Cæsar, but lifting his legs alternately as they scorched with the heat, "depart in peace. There is none here for thy service, and you seek the woman in vain. There is a tender mercy that will save her from thy talons." The Sergeant ceased to utter aloud, but the motion of his lips continued, and a few scattering words of prayer were alone to be heard.

The brain of the washerwoman was in such a state of confusion that she did not clearly comprehend the meaning of her lover, but a new idea struck her imagination, and she broke forth—"If it's me the man saaks, where's the matter, pray; am I not a widowed body, and my own property? And you talk of tindersness, Sargeant, but it's little I see of it any way; who knows but Mr. Beelzeboob here is free to spake his mind? I'm sure it is willing to hear that I am."

"Woman," said the pedler, "be silent; and you, foolish man, mount—arm and mount, and flee to the rescue of your officer, if you are worthy of the cause in which you serve, and would not disgrace the coat that you wear." The feelings of the pedler communicated to his manner the power of eloquence, and he vanished from the sight of the bewildered trio with a rapidity that left them uncertain whither he had fled.

On hearing the voice of an old friend, Cæsar emerged from his quarters, with a skin that was glistening with moisture, and fearlessly advanced to where Betty stood in a maze of intellectual confusion.

"I wish a Harvey stop," said the black; "if he ride down a road, I should like to go 'long;—I don't tink Johnny Birch hurt a own son."

"Poor ignorant wretch!" exclaimed the veteran, recovering his voice with a long-drawn breath; "think you that figure was of flesh and blood?"

"Harvey a'nt a berry fleshy," replied the black; "but he berry clebber man."

"Pooh! Sargeant dear," exclaimed the washerwoman, "talk rason for once, and mind what the knowing one tells yee; call out the boys, and ride a bit after Captain Jack; rimimber, darling, that he told yee, the day, to be in readiness to mount at a moment's warning."

"Ay, but not at a summons from the foul fiend. Let but Captain Lawton, or Lieutenant Mason, or Cornet Skipwith say the word," cried the veteran, "and who is quicker in the saddle than I am?"

"Well, Sargeant, how often is it that yee've boasted to myself, that the corps wasn't a bit afeard to face the devil?"

"No more be we, in battle array, and by daylight; but it's fool-hardy and irreverent to tempt Satan, and on such a night as

this; listen how the wind whistles through the trees; and hark! there is the howling of evil spirits abroad."

"I see him," said Cæsar, opening his eyes to a width that might have embraced more than an ideal form.

"Where?" interrupted the Sergeant, again instinctively laying his hand on the hilt of his sabre.

"No—no," said the black, "I see a Johnny Birch come out of he grave—Johnny walk afore he buried."

"Ah! then he must have led an evil life indeed," said Hollister; "the blessed in spirit lie quiet until the general muster at the last day, but wickedness disturbs the soul in this life as well as in that which is to come."

"And what is to come of Captain Jack?" cried Betty, angrily; "is it yee orders that yee won't mind, nor a warning given? I'll jist git my cart and ride down and tell him that yee afeard of a dead man and Beelzeboob; and it isn't succour he may be expicting from yee. I wonder who'll be the orderly of the troop, the morrow, then?—his name won't be Hollister, any way."

"Nay, Betty, nay," said the Sergeant, laying his hand familiarly on her shoulder; "if there must be riding to-night, let it be by him whose duty it is to call out the men and set an example. The Lord have mercy, and send us enemies of flesh and blood."

Another glass confirmed the veteran in a resolution that was only excited by a dread of his Captain's displeasure, and he proceeded to summon the dozen men who had been left under his command. The boy arriving with the ring, Cæsar placed it carefully in the pocket of his waistcoat next his heart, and mounting, shut his eyes, seized his charger by the mane, and continued in a state of comparative insensibility, until the animal stopped at the door of the warm stable whence he had started.

The movements of the dragoons, being timed to the order of a march, were much slower, and were made with a watchfulness that was intended to guard against surprise from the evil one himself."

## CHAPTER XXII.

"Be not your tongue thy own shame's orator;  
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;  
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger."—*Comedy of Errors.*

THE situation of the party in Mr. Wharton's dwelling was sufficiently awkward, during the short hour of Cæsar's absence; for such was the astonishing rapidity displayed by his courser, that the four miles of road was gone over, and the events we have recorded had occurred, somewhat within that period of time. Of course, the gentlemen strove to make the irksome

moments fly as swiftly as possible ; but premeditated happiness is certainly of the least joyous kind. The bride and bridegroom, from a variety of reasons, are privileged to be dull, and but few of their friends seemed disposed, on the present occasion, to dishonour their example. The English Colonel exhibited a proper portion of uneasiness at this unexpected interruption to his felicity, and sat with a varying countenance by the side of Sarah, who seemed to be profiting by the delay, to gather fortitude for the solemn ceremony. In the midst of this embarrassing silence, Dr. Sitgreaves addressed himself to Miss Peyton, by whose side he had contrived to procure a chair.

“ Marriage, madam, is pronounced to be honourable in the sight of God and man : and it may be said to be reduced, in the present age, to the laws of nature and reason. The ancients, in sanctioning polygamy, lost sight of the provisions of nature, and condemned thousands to misery ; but with the increase of science have grown the wise ordinances of society, which ordain that man should be the husband of but one woman.”

Wellmere glanced a fierce expression of disgust at the surgeon, that indicated his sense of the tediousness of the other's remarks ; while the spinster, with a slight trembling at touching on forbidden subjects, replied with an extremely dignified inclination of her body—“ I had thought, sir, that we were indebted to the Christian religion for our morals on this subject.”

“ True, madam,” replied the operator ; “ it is somewhere provided in the prescriptions of the apostles, that the sexes should henceforth be on an equality in this particular. But in what degree could polygamy affect holiness of life ? Certainly it was a scientific arrangement of Paul, who was much of a scholar, and probably had frequent conferences on this important subject with Luke, whom we all know to have been bred to the practice of medicine.”

To this profound discussion the spinster made no other reply than another bend of her body, that would have struck an ordinary man dumb ; but Captain Lawton, placing the point of his sheathed sabre on the floor, folded his hands across the hilt, and leaning his chin thereon, threw singular glances, with his searching eyes, alternately from the surgeon to the bridegroom.

“ Yet this practice still prevails,” said the trooper ; “ and in those very countries where it was first abolished by the Christian code. Pray, Colonel Wellmere, in what manner is bigamy punished in England ?”

Thus addressed, the bridegroom raised his eyes to the countenance of the other, but they quickly sunk again under the prying look they encountered ; an effort banished the tremour from his lip, and restored some of the colour to his cheek, as he replied—“ Death !—as such an offence merits.”

"Death and dissection," continued the operator; "it is seldom that the law loses sight of eventual utility in a malefactor. Bigamy in a man is certainly a most heinous offence."

"More so, think you, than celibacy?" asked Lawton, a little archly.

"Even so," returned the surgeon, with undisturbed simplicity; "he who remains in a single state may devote his life to science and the extension of knowledge, if not of his species; but the wretch who profits by the constitutional tendency of the female sex to credulity and tenderness, incurs all the wickedness of a positive sin, heightened by the baseness of deception in its execution."

"Really, sir, the ladies are infinitely obliged to you, for attributing folly to them as part of their nature."

"Captain Lawton, in man the animal is more nobly formed than in woman. The nerves are endowed with less sensibility; the whole frame is less pliable and yielding; is it, therefore, surprising, that a tendency to rely on the faith of her partner is more natural to woman than to the other sex?"

Wellmere, unable at this moment to listen with any degree of patience to the dialogue, sprang from his seat and paced the floor in disorder. Pitying his situation, the reverend gentleman, who, in his robes, was patiently awaiting the return of Cæsar, changed the discourse, and a few minutes brought the black himself. The billet was handed to Dr. Sitgreaves; for Miss Peyton had expressly enjoined Cæsar, not to implicate her in any manner in the errand on which he was despatched. The note contained a summary statement of the several subjects of the surgeon's directions, and referred him to the black for the ring; it was instantly demanded, and promptly delivered. A transient look of melancholy crowded the brow of the operator, as he stood a moment, and gazed silently on the bauble; nor did he remember the place, or the occasion, while he soliloquized as follows: "Poor Anna! gay as innocence and youth could make you was thy heart, when this cincture was formed to grace thy nuptials; but ere the hour had come, God had taken yonto himself. Years have passed, my sister, but never have I forgotten the companion of my infancy!" he advanced to Sarah, and, unconscious of observation, placing the ring on her finger, continued, "she for whom it was intended has long been in her grave, and the youth who bestowed the gift soon followed her sainted spirit; take it, madam, and God grant that it may be an instrument in making you as happy as you deserve to be."

Sarah felt an unaccountable chill at her heart, as this burst of feeling escaped from the surgeon; but Wellmere offering his hand, she was led before the divine, and the ceremony began.

The first words of this imposing office produced a dead stillness in the apartment; and the minister of God proceeded to the solemn exhortation, and witnessed the plighted troth of the parties, when the investiture with the ring was to follow. It had been left, from inadvertency, and the agitation of the moment, where Sitgreaves had placed it;—a slight interruption was occasioned by the circumstance, and the clergyman was about to proceed, when a figure glided into the midst of the party, that at once put a stop to the ceremony. It was the pedler. His sunken and cowering eye no longer avoided the look of others, but glared wildly around him; and his whole frame was agitated by an exertion that had shaken even his iron nerves. But all these emotions passed away like shadows from a fleeting cloud, and assuming a look of deep humility, and habitual respect, he turned to the bridegroom, and bowing low, said—“Can Colonel Wellmere waste the precious moments here, when his wife has crossed the ocean to meet him? The nights are long, and the moon bright;—a few hours’ riding would take him to the city.”

Aghast at the suddenness of this extraordinary address, Wellmere for a moment lost the command of his faculties. To Sarah, the countenance of Birch, wild and agitated as it was, produced no terror; but the instant she recovered from the surprise of his interruption, she turned her anxious gaze on the features of the man to whom she had just pledged herself for life. They afforded the most terrible confirmation of all that the pedler affirmed; the room whirled round with her, and she fell lifeless into the arms of her aunt. There is an instinctive delicacy in women, that for a time seems to conquer all other emotions, however powerful, and through its impulse, the insensible bride was immediately conveyed from sight by her friends, and the parlour was occupied only by the wondering group of men.

The confusion of the fall of Sarah enabled the pedler to retreat with the rapidity that would have baffled pursuit, had any been attempted, and Wellmere stood with all eyes fixed on him in ominous silence.

“’Tis false—’tis false as hell!” he cried, striking his hand to his forehead. “I have ever denied her claim; nor will the laws of my country compel me to acknowledge it.”

“But will not conscience and the laws of God?” asked Lawton.

Before Wellmere could reply, Singleton, who had hitherto been supported by his servant, moved into the centre of the circle, and with cheeks glowing with animation, and eyes that flashed fire, exclaimed—“Thus is it ever with your nation, proud Englishman; your boasted honour, where is it? obligatory only among yourselves. But have a care,” striking the hilt of his sabre, “each daughter of America has a claim on the

protection of her sons, and there are none so helpless, but a countryman can be found to avenge her injuries, or redress her wrongs."

"'Tis well, sir," said Wellmere, haughtily, and retreating towards the door—"your situation protects you now: but a time may come—"

He had reached the entry, when a slight tap on his shoulder caused him to turn his head;—it was Captain Lawton, who, with a smile of peculiar meaning, beckoned to him to follow. The state of Wellmere's mind was such, that he would gladly have gone anywhere to avoid the gaze of horror and detestation that glared from every eye he met. They reached the stables before the trooper spoke, when he cried aloud—"Bring out Roanoke."

His man appeared with the steed caparisoned as when ready for its master; and Lawton, coolly throwing the bridle on the neck of the animal, took his pistols from the holsters, and continued, "You said truly, Colonel Wellmere, when you pronounced George Singleton unfit for combat; but here are weapons that have seen good service before to-day—ay, and in honourable hands, sir. These were the pistols of my father, Colonel Wellmere; he used them with credit in the wars with France, and gave them to me to fight the battles of my country with. In what better way can I serve her than in exterminating a wretch who would have blasted one of her fairest flowers?"

"This injurious treatment shall meet with its reward," cried the Englishman, seizing the offered weapon eagerly; "and the blood lie on the head of him who sought it."

"Amen!" said Lawton; "but hold a moment, sir. You are now free, and the passports of Washington are in your pocket; I give you the fire; if I fall there is a steed that will outstrip pursuit; and I would advise you to retreat without much delay, for even Archibald Sitgreaves would fight in such a cause—nor will the guard above be very apt to give quarter."

"Are you ready?" asked Wellmere, gnashing his teeth with rage.

"Stand forward, Tom, with the lights;—fire!"

Wellmere fired, and the bullion flew from the epaulette of the trooper, in fifty pieces.

"Now, then, the turn is mine," said Lawton, deliberately, and levelling his pistol.

"And mine!" shouted a voice, as the weapon was struck from his hand; "can you find nothing to do but to shoot at a man, as if he was a turkey at a Christmas match? By all the devils in hell, 'tis the mad Virginian—fall on, my boys, and take him; this is a prize not hoped for."

Unarmed, and surprised as he was, Lawton's presence of

mind did not desert him ; he felt that he was in the hands of those from whom he was to expect no mercy ; and as four of the skinners fell upon him at once, he used his gigantic strength to the utmost. Three of the band grasped him by the neck and arms, with an intent to clog his efforts, and pinion him with ropes. The first of these he threw from him with a violence that sent him against the building, where he lay for a moment stunned with the blow. But the fourth seized his legs, and unable to contend with such odds, the trooper came to the earth, bringing with him both of his assailants. The struggle on the ground was short, but terrific ;—curses, and the most dreadful imprecations were uttered by the skinners, who in vain called on three more of their band, who were gazing on the combat in nerveless horror, to assist in securing their prize. A difficulty of breathing, from one of the combatants, was heard, accompanied by the stifled moanings of a strangled man ; and directly one of the group arose on his feet, shaking himself free from the wild grasp of the others. Both Wellmere and the servant of Lawton had fled ; the former to the stables and the latter to give the alarm—and all was darkness. The figure that stood erect sprang into the saddle of the unheeded charger ; sparks of fire, from the armed feet of the horse, gave light enough to discover the trooper dashing like the wind towards the highway.

“ By hell he’s off ! ” cried the leader, hoarse with rage and exhaustion ; “ fire !—bring him down—fire, I say, or you’ll be too late.”

The order was obeyed, and one moment of awful suspense followed, in the vain hope of hearing the huge frame of Lawton tumbling from his steed.

“ He’d never fall if you had killed him,” muttered one ; “ I’ve known them Virginians sit their horses with two or three balls through them ; ay, even after they were dead.”

A freshening of the blast wafted the tread of a horse down the valley, which, by its speed, gave assurance of a rider governing its motion.

“ Them trained horses always stop when the rider falls,” observed one of the gang.

“ Then,” cried the leader, striking his musket on the ground in a rage, “ the fellow is safe ! ”—to your business at once. A short half hour will bring down that canting serjeant and the guard upon us. ’Tis lucky if the guns don’t turn them out. Quick, to your posts, and fire the house in the chambers ; smoking ruins are good to cover evil deeds.”

“ What is to be done with this lump of earth ? ” cried another, pushing the body that yet lay insensible, where the grasp of Lawton had deprived it of animation ; “ a little rubbing would bring him to.”



“ Let him lie,” said the leader fiercely ; “ had he been half a man, that dragooning rascal would have been in my power ;— enter the house, I say, and fire the chambers. We can’t go amiss here ;—there is plate and money enough to make you all gentlemen—yes, and revenge too.”

The idea of silver in any way was not to be resisted ; and, leaving their companion, who began to show faint signs of life, they rushed tumultuously towards the dwelling. Wellmere availed himself of the opportunity, and, stealing from the stable with his own charger, was able to gain the highway unnoticed. For an instant he hesitated, whether to ride towards the point where he knew the guard was stationed, and endeavour to rescue the family, or, profiting by his liberty, and the exchange that had been effected by the divine, to seek the royal army. Shame, and the consciousness of guilt, determined him to take the latter course, and he rode towards New York, stung with the reflection of his own baseness, and harassed with the apprehension of meeting with an enraged woman, that he had married during his late visit to England, but whose claims, so soon as his passion was sated, he had resolved never willingly to admit. In the tumult and agitation of the moment, the retreat of Lawton and Wellmere was but little noticed ; the condition of Mr. Wharton, and the exhaustion that succeeded the excitement of George Singleton, demanding the care and consolation of both the surgeon and the divine. The report of fire-arms first aroused the family to the sense of a new danger, and but a minute elapsed before the leader, and one more of the gang, entered the room.

“ Surrender ! you servants of King George,” shouted the leader, presenting his musket to the breast of Sitgreaves, “ or I will let a little of your tory blood from your veins.”

“ Gently—gently, my friend,” said the surgeon ; “ you are doubtless more expert in inflicting wounds, than in healing them ; the weapon that you hold so indiscreetly is extremely dangerous to animal life.”

“ Yield, then, or take its contents,” exclaimed the other.

“ Why and wherefore should I yield ?—I am a practitioner of medicine, and a non-combatant. The articles of capitulation must be arranged with Captain John Lawton, though yielding, I believe, is not a subject on which you will find him particularly complying.”

The fellow had by this time taken such a survey of the group, as convinced him that little danger was to be apprehended from resistance, and, eager to seize his share of the plunder, he dropped his musket, and was soon busy, with the assistance of one of his men, in arranging divers articles of plate in bags, so that it would be in the most convenient situation to accompany them in their

retreat. The cottage now presented a most singular spectacle;—the ladies were gathered around Sarah, who yet continued insensible, in one of the rooms that had escaped the notice of the marauders. Mr. Wharton sat in a state of perfect imbecility, listening to, but not profiting by, the words of comfort that fell from the lips of the clergyman, who soon became too much terrified with the scene to offer them. Singleton was lying on a sofa, shaking with debility, and inattentive to surrounding objects; while the surgeon was administering restoratives, and looking at the dressings, with a coolness that mocked the tumult. Cæsar, and the attendant of Captain Singleton, had retreated to the wood in the rear of the cottage, and Katy Haynes was flying about the building, busily employed in forming a bundle of valuables, from which, with the most scrupulous honesty, she rejected every article that was not really and truly her own.

But to return to the party at the Four Corners. When the veteran had got his men mounted and under arms, a restless desire to participate in the glory and dangers of the expedition, came over the washerwoman. Whether she was impelled to the undertaking by a dread of remaining alone, or a wish to hasten in person to the relief of her favourite, we will not venture to assert; but, as Hollister was unwillingly giving the orders to wheel and march, the voice of Betty was heard, exclaiming—“Stop a bit, Sargeant dear, till two of the boys git out the cart, and I’ll jist ride wid yee; ’tis like there’ll be wounded, and it will be mighty convanient to bring them home in.”

Although inwardly much pleased with any cause of delay to a service that he so little relished, Hollister affected some displeasure at the detention, and replied—“Nothing but a cannon ball can take one of my lads from his charger, and it’s not very likely that we shall have as fair fighting as cannon and musketry, in a business of the evil one’s inventing; so, Elizabeth, you may go if you will, but the cart will not be wanting.”

“Now, Sargeant dear, you lie, any way,” said Betty, who was somewhat unduly governed by her potations; “and wasn’t Captain Singleton shot off his horse but tin days gone by? ay, and Captain Jack himself too; and didn’t he lie on the ground, face uppermost, and back downwards, looking grim? and didn’t the boys tink him dead, and turn and lave the rig’lars the day?”

“You lie back again,” cried the Sargeant, fiercely; “and so does any one who says that we didn’t gain the day.”

“For a bit or so—only I mane for a bit or so,” said the washerwoman; “but Major Dunwoodie turned you, and so you lick’d the rig’lars. But the Captain it was that fell, and I’m thinking that there’s no better rider going; so, Sargeant, it’s the cart that will be convanient. Here, two of you, jist hitch the mare to the

tills, and it's no whiskey that yee'll be wanting the morrow ; and put the piece of Jinny's hide under the pad ; the baste is never the better for the rough ways of the county West Chester." The consent of the Sergeant being obtained, the equipage of Mrs. Flanagan was soon in readiness to receive its burden.

"As it is quite uncertain whether we shall be attacked in front or rear," said Hollister, "five of you shall march in advance, and the remainder shall cover our retreat towards the barrack, should we be pressed. 'Tis an awful moment to a man of little learning, Elizabeth, to command in such a service ; for my part, I wish devoutly that one of the officers were here ; but my trust is in the Lord."

"Pooh ! man, away wid yee," said the washerwoman, who had got herself comfortably seated ; "the divil a bit of an inimy is there near. March on hurry-scurry, and lit the mare trot, or it's but little that Captain Jack will thank yee for the help."

"Although unlearned in matters of communicating with spirits, or laying the dead, Mrs. Flanagan," said the veteran, "I have not served through the old war, and five years in this, not to know how to guard the baggage. Doesn't Washington always cover the baggage ? I am not to be told my duty by a camp follower. Fall in as you are ordered, and dress."

"Well, march any way," cried the impatient washerwoman ; "the black is there already, and it's tardy the Captain will think yee."

"Are you sure that it was really a black man that brought the order ?" said the Sergeant, dropping in between the platoons, where he could converse with Betty, and was equally at hand to lead either way.

"Nay," said the washerwoman, "and I'm sure of nothing, dear. But why don't the boys prick their horses, and jog a trot ? the mare is mighty unasy, and it's no warm in this cursed valley, riding as much like a funeral party as old rags is to continental."

"Fairly and softly, ay, and prudently, Mrs. Flanagan," said the veteran ; "it's not rashness that makes the good officer. If it is a spirit that we have to encounter, it's more than likely that he'll make his attack by surprise ; horses are not very powerful in the dark, and I have a character to lose, good woman."

"Caractur," echoed Betty, "and isn't it caractur, and life too, that Captain Jack has to lose ?"

"Halt !" cried the Sergeant ; "what is that lurking near the foot of the rock, on the left ?"

"Sure, it's nothing," said the uneasy washerwoman, "unless it be the matter of Captain Jack's sowl that's come to haunt yee, for not being brisker on the march."

"Betty, 'tis foolishness to talk in such a way. Advance, one

of you, and reconnoitre the spot—draw swords!—rear rank, close to the front!”

“Pshaw! shouted Betty, “is it a big fool or a big coward that ye are? jist wheel from the road, boys, and I’ll shove the mare down upon it in the twinkling of an eye—and it’s no ghost that I fear.”

By this time one of the men had returned, and declared there was nothing to prevent their advancing, and the party continued their march, but with great deliberation and caution.

“Courage and prudence are the jewels of a soldier, Mrs. Flanagan,” said the Sergeant; “and without the one, the other may be said to be good for nothing.”

“Prudence without courage,” cried the other, “is it *that* you mane?—and it’s so that I’m thinking myself, Sargeant. This baste pulls tight on the reins, nny way.”

“Be patient, good woman—hark! what is that?” said Hollister, pricking up his ears at the report of Wellmere’s pistol; “I’ll swear ’tis a pistol, and one from our regiment.—Hark! rear rank close to the front!—Mrs. Flanagan, I must leave you.” So saying, having recovered all his faculties, by hearing a martial sound that he understood, he placed himself at the head of his men with an air of military pride, that the darkness prevented the washerwoman from beholding. A volley of musketry now rattled in the night wind, and the Sergeant exclaimed—“March! quick time!”

“The next instant the trampling of a horse was heard coming up the road, at a rate that announced a matter of life or death; and Hollister again halted his party, and rode at a short distance in front himself to meet the rider.

“Stand!—who goes there?” shouted Hollister, in the full tones of manly resolution.”

“Ha! Hollister, is it you?” cried Lawton, “ever ready and at your post; but where is the guard?”

“At hand, sir, and ready to follow you through thick and thin,” said the veteran, relieved at once from his responsibility, and now eager to be led against his enemy.

“’Tis well,” said the trooper, riding up to his men; and, speaking a few words of encouragement, he led them down the valley at a rate but little less rapid than his approach. The miserable horse of the sutler was soon distanced, and Betty, thus thrown out in the chase, turned to the side of the road, and observed—“There—it’s no difficult to tell that Captain Jack is wid’em, any way; and it’s the funeral that’s soon over now; and away they go like so many nagur boys to a husking frolic;—well, I’ll jist hitch the mare to this bit of a fence, and walk down and see the sport, a-foot—it’s no reasonable to expose the baste to be hurted.”

Led on by Lawton, the men followed, destitute alike of fear and reflection. Whether it was a party of the refugees, or a detachment from the royal army, that they were to assail, they were profoundly ignorant; but they knew that the officer in advance was distinguished for courage and personal prowess, and these are virtues that are sure to captivate the thoughtless soldiery. On arriving near the gate of the Locusts, the trooper halted his party, and made his arrangements for the assault. Dismounting, he ordered eight of his men to follow his example, and turning to Hollister, said—"Stand you here, and guard the horses; but if any thing attempts to pass, stop it or cut it down, and—" The flames at this moment burst through the dormant windows and cedar roof of the cottage, and a bright light glared on the darkness of the night. "On," shouted the trooper, "on—give quarter when you have done justice."

There was a startling fierceness in the voice of the trooper that reached to the heart, even amid the horrors of the cottage. The leader of the skinners dropped his plunder, and, for a moment, stood in nerveless dread; then rushing to a window, he threw up the sash;—at this instant Lawton entered, sabre in hand, into the apartment.

"Die, miscreant!" cried the trooper, cleaving the other raider to the jaw, but the leader sprang into the lawn, and escaped his vengeance. The shrieks of the appalled females restored Lawton to his presence of mind, and the earnest entreaty of the divine induced him to attend to the safety of the family. One more of the gang fell in with the dragoons, and met with a similar fate, but the remainder had taken the alarm in season to escape. Occupied with Sarah, neither Miss Singleton, nor the ladies of the house discovered the entrance of the skinners, while the flames were raging around them with a fury that threatened the building with rapid destruction. The shrieks of Katy, and of the terrified consort of Cæsar, together with the noise and uproar in the adjacent apartment, first roused Miss Peyton and Isabella to a sense of their danger.

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed the alarmed spinster, "there is a dreadful confusion in the house, and there will be bloodshed in consequence of this affair."

"There are none to fight," returned Isabella, with a face paler than that of the other; Dr. Sitgreaves is very peaceable in his disposition, and surely Captain Lawton would not forget himself so far."

"The southern temper is quick and fiery," continued Miss Peyton; "and your brother, feeble and weak as he is, has looked the whole afternoon flushed and angry."

"Good heaven!" cried Isabella, with difficulty supporting

herself on the couch of Sarah; "he is gentle as the lamb by nature, though the lion is not his equal when roused."

"We must interfere," said the spinster; "our presence will quell the tumult, and possibly save the life of a fellow creature."

Miss Peyton was excited to attempt what she conceived was a duty worthy of her sex and nature, and she advanced with all the dignity of injured female feeling to the door, followed by Isabella, whose energy had returned, and whose eye, by its sparkling brilliancy, announced a soul equal to its task. The apartment to which Sarah had been conveyed was in one of the wings of the building, and communicated with the principal hall of the cottage by a long, and, usually, dark passage. This was now light, and across its termination several figures were noticed, rushing with an impetuosity that prevented an examination of their employment.

"Let us advance," said the spinster, with a firmness that her face belied: "they surely must respect our sex."

"They shall," cried Isabella, taking the lead in the enterprise; and Frances was left alone with her sister. A few minutes were passed in silence by the maid, as she stood earnestly gazing on the pale countenance of Sarah, watching her reviving looks with an anxiety that prevented her observing the absence of her friends, when a loud crash in the upper apartments was succeeded by a bright light that glared through the open door, and made objects as distinct to the eye as if they were placed under a noon-day sun. Sarah raised herself on her bed, and staring wildly around, pressed both her hands on her forehead, as if endeavouring to recollect events, and then smiling vacantly on her sister, said—"This, then, is heaven—and you are one of its bright spirits. Oh! how glorious is its radiance! I had thought the happiness I have lately experienced was too much for earth. But we shall meet again—yes—yes—we will meet again."

"Sarah! Sarah!" cried Frances, in terror; "my sister!—my only sister!—Oh! do not smile so horribly: know me, or you will break my heart."

"Hush," said Sarah, raising her hand for silence; "you may disturb his rest—surely he will follow me to the grave. Think you there can be two wives in the grave?—No—no—no—one—one—one—only one."

Frances dropped her head into the lap of her sister, and wept in agony.

"Do you shed tears, sweet angel?" continued Sarah, soothingly; "then heaven is not exempt from grief. But where is Henry? He was executed, and he must be here too; but perhaps they will come together. Oh, how joyful will be the meeting!"

Frances sprang on her feet, and paced the apartment in a bit-

terness of sorrow that she could not control. The eye of Sarah followed her in childish admiration of her beauty, and her attire, which had been adapted to the occasion, and then pressing her hand across her forehead, she said—"You look like my sister; but all good and lovely spirits are alike. Tell me, were you ever married? Did you ever let another, and a stranger, steal your affections from your father, and brother, and sister, as I have done? If not, poor wretch, I pity you, although you may be in heaven."

"Sarah—peace, peace—I implore you to be silent," shrieked Frances, again rushing to her bed, "or you will kill me at your feet."

Another dreadful crash was heard, that shook the building to its centre. It was the falling of the roof, and the flames threw their light abroad, so as to make objects visible around the cottage through the windows of the room. Frances flew to one of them, and saw the confused group that was collected on the lawn. Among them were her aunt and Isabella, pointing with distraction to the fiery edifice, and apparently urging the dragoons, who were near them, to enter it. It was the first time the maid comprehended their danger, and uttering a wild shriek, she flew through the passage instinctively, without consideration or object.

A dense and suffocating column of smoke opposed her progress. She paused to breathe, when a man caught her in his arms, and bore her, in a state of insensibility, through the falling embers and darkness to the open air. The instant that Frances recovered her recollection, she perceived that it was to Lawton she owed her life, and throwing herself on her knees before him, she cried—"Sarah! Sarah! Sarah! Save my sister, and may the blessing of God await you."

Her strength failed her, and she sunk on the grass in insensibility. The trooper pointed to her figure, and motioned to Katy for assistance, and then advanced once more near to the building. The fire had already communicated to the wood-work of the piazzas and windows, and the whole exterior of the cottage was covered with smoke. The only entrance was through these dangers, and even the hardy and impetuous Lawton paused to consider. It was for a moment only, and he dashed into the heat and darkness, where, missing the entrance, he wandered for a minute, and precipitated himself back again upon the lawn. Drawing a single breath of pure air, he renewed the effort, and was again unsuccessful; but on a third trial, he met a man staggering under the load of a human body. It was neither the place, nor was there time, to question or to make distinctions, and the trooper caught both together in his arms, and, with gigantic strength, bore them through the smoke. He soon per-

ceived, to his astonishment, that it was the surgeon and the body of one of the skimmers that he had saved.

“Archibald!” he exclaimed, “why, in the name of justice, did you bring this dead miscreant to light again? His deeds are rank to heaven!”

The operator was too much bewildered to reply instantly, but wiping the moisture from his forehead, and clearing his lungs from the vapour that he had inhaled, he said, piteously—“Ah! it is all over. Had I been in time to have stopped the effusion from the jugular, he might have been saved; but the heat was conducive to hemorrhage; yes, life is extinct indeed. Well, are there any more wounded?”

His question was put to the air, for Frances was removed to the opposite side of the building, where her friends were collected, and Lawton once more had disappeared in the smoke.

By this time the flames had dispersed much of the suffocating vapour, so that the trooper was able to find the door, and in its very entrance he was met by a man supporting the insensible Sarah in his arms. There was but barely time to reach the lawn again, before the fire broke through all the windows, and wrapped the whole building in a single sheet of flame.

“God be praised!” ejaculated the preserver of Sarah; “it would have been a dreadful death to have died.”

The trooper turned from gazing at the edifice, to the speaker, and, to his astonishment, instead of one of his own men, beheld the pedler.

“Ha! the spy,” he exclaimed: “By heavens, you cross me like a spectre.”

“Captain Lawton,” said Birch, leaning in momentary exhaustion against the fence to which they had retired from the heat, “I am again in your power, for I can neither flee nor resist.”

“The cause of America is dear to me as life,” said the trooper; “but she cannot require me to forget both gratitude and honour. Fly, unhappy man, while yet you are unseen by my men, or I cannot save you.”

“May God prosper you, and make you victorious over your enemies,” cried Birch, grasping the hand of the dragoon with an iron strength that his meagre figure did not indicate.

“Hold!” said Lawton, “but a word—are you what you seem?—can you—are you—”

“A royal spy,” interrupted Birch, averting his face, and endeavouring to release his hand.

“Then go, miserable wretch,” said the trooper, relinquishing his grasp; “either avarice or delusion has led a noble heart astray.”

The bright light from the flames reached to a great distance around what was left of the building, but the words were hardly



passed the lips of Lawton, before the gaunt form of the pedler had glided over the visible space, and plunged into the darkness beyond, which was rendered more gloomy by the contrast. The eye of Lawton rested for a moment on the spot where he had last seen this inexplicable man, and then turning to the yet insensible Sarah, he lifted her in his arms, and bore her, like a sleeping infant, to the care of her friends.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

“ And now her charms are fading fast  
 Her spirits now no more are gay :  
 Alas ! that beauty cannot last—  
 That flowers so sweet so soon decay !  
     How sad appears  
     The vale of years,  
 How chang'd from youth's too flattering scene ?  
     Where are her fond admirers gone ?  
     Alas ! and shall there then be none  
 On whom her soul may lean ?”—*Cynthia's Grave.*

THE torrent and the blast can mar the loveliest scenes in nature ; war, with his ruthless hand, may rival the elements in their work of destruction ; but it is passion alone that can lay waste the human heart. The whirlwind and the flood have duration in their existence, and have bounds for their fury ; the earth recovers from the devastation of the conflict with a fertility that seems enriched by the blood of its victims ;—but there are feelings that no human agency can limit, and mental wounds which are beyond the art of man to heal.

For some years Sarah Wharton had indulged in reflections on the person and character of Wellmere, that were natural to her sex and situation ; and now, when these transient recollections were become permanent from security, and she looked forward to the moment that she was to take the most momentous step of her life, with that engrossing passion which marks a woman's love, the discovery of his real character was a blow too heavy for her faculties to bear. It has already been seen that her first indications of returning life were unaccompanied by a consciousness of what had so recently occurred, nor did her friends, on receiving her from the arms of the trooper, recover more than the lovely image of her whom they had once known.

The walls of the cottage were all that was left of the building ; and these, blackened by smoke, and stripped of their piazzas and ornaments, served only as dreary memorials of the peaceful contentment and security that had so lately reigned within. The roof, together with the rest of the wood-work, had tumbled into the cellars, and a pale and flitting light, ascending from their embers, shone faintly through the windows on objects in the lawn. The early flight of the skimmers left the dragoons at li-

berty to exert themselves in saving from the flames much of the furniture, which lay scattered in heaps, giving the finishing touch of desolation to the scene. Whenever a stronger ray of light than common shot upwards, the composed figures of Sergeant Hollister and his associates, sitting on their horses in rigid discipline, were to be seen in the back ground of the picture, together with the beast of Mrs. Flanagan, that, having slipt its bridle, was quietly grazing by the highway. Betty herself had advanced to where the Sergeant was posted, and, with an incredible degree of composure, witnessed the whole of the events as they occurred. More than once she suggested to her companion, that, as the fighting seemed to be over, the proper time for plunder had arrived; but the veteran promptly acquainted her with his orders, and remained both inflexible and immovable; until the washerwoman, noticing Lawton to come round the wing of the building with Sarah, ventured by herself amongst the warriors. The Captain, after placing Sarah on a sofa that had been hurled from the building by two of his men, retired with delicacy, that the ladies might succeed him in his care, and in order to reflect on what further was necessary to be done. Miss Peyton and her niece flew, with a rapture that was blessed with a momentary forgetfulness of all but her preservation, to receive Sarah from the trooper; but the vacant eye, and flushed cheek, restored them instantly to their recollection.

"Sarah, my child, my beloved niece," said the spinster, folding her in her arms, "you are saved, and may the blessing of God await him who has been the instrument."

"See," said Sarah, "gently pushing her aunt aside, and pointing to the glimmering ruins, "the windows are illuminated in honour of my arrival. They always receive a bride thus—he told me so; listen, and you will hear the bells."

"Here is no bride, no rejoicing, nothing but woe," cried Frances, in a manner but little less frantic than that of her sister; "Oh! may Heaven restore you, my sister, to us—to yourself."

"Peace, foolish young woman," said Sarah, with a smile of affected pity; "all cannot be happy at the same moment; perhaps you have no brother, or no husband, to console you; you look beautiful, and you will yet find one; but," she continued, dropping her voice to a whisper, "see that he has no other wife—'tis dreadful to think what might happen, should he be twice married."

"The shock has destroyed her mind," said Miss Peyton, shaking with apprehension, and clasping her hands in agony; "my child, my beautiful Sarah is a maniac."

"No, no, no," cried Frances, "it is fever; she is light-headed—she must recover—she shall recover."

The aunt caught joyfully at the hope conveyed in this suggestion, and despatched Katy to request the immediate aid and advice of Dr. Sitgreaves. The operator was found inquiring among the men for professional employment, and inquisitively examining every bruise and scratch that he could induce the sturdy warriors to acknowledge they had received. A summons of the sort conveyed by Katy was instantly obeyed, and not a minute elapsed before he was by the side of Miss Peyton.

"This is a melancholy termination to so joyful a commencement of the night, madam," he observed with a soothing manner; "but war must bring its attendant miseries, though doubtless it often supports the cause of liberty, and improves the knowledge of surgical science."

Miss Peyton could make no reply, but pointed to her niece in agony.

"'Tis fever," answered Frances; "see how glassy is her eye; and look at her cheek, how flushed."

The surgeon stood for a moment deeply studying the outward symptoms of his patient, and then silently took her hand into his own. It was seldom that the hard and abstracted features of the operator discovered any violent emotion; all his passions seemed schooled to the most classical dignity, and his countenance did not often betray what his heart so frequently felt. In the present instance, however, the eager gaze of the aunt and sister soon detected the emotions of Sitgreaves. After laying his fingers for a minute on the beautiful arm, which, bared to the elbow, and glittering with jewels, Sarah suffered him to retain, he dropped it with a heavy sigh, and dashing his hand over his eyes, turned sorrowfully to Miss Peyton as he said—"Here is no fever to excite—'tis a case, my dear madam, for time and care only: these, with the blessing of God, may effect a cure."

"And where is the wretch who has caused this ruin?" exclaimed Singleton, rejecting the support of his man, and making an effort to rise from the chair, where the care of his sister had placed him. "It is in vain that we overcome our enemies, if, conquered, they can still inflict such wounds as this."

"Dost think, foolish boy," said Lawton, with a bitter smile; "that hearts can feel in a colony? What is America but a satellite of England—to move as she moves, follow where she wists, and shine, that the mother country may become more splendid by her radiance? Surely you forget that it is honour enough for a colonist to receive ruin from the hand of a child of Britain."

"I forget not that I wear a sword," said Singleton, falling back exhausted; "but was there no willing arm ready to avenge that lovely sufferer—to appease the wrongs of this hoary father?"

"Neither arms nor hearts are wanting, sir, in such a cause," said the trooper, fiercely; "but chance oftentimes helps the wicked. By heavens, I'd give Roanoke himself for a clear field with the miscreant."

"Nay! captain dear, no be parting with the horse, any way," said Betsy, with a significant look; "it is no trifle that can be had by jist asking, and the baste is sure of foot, and jumps like a squirrel."

"Woman!" cried Lawton, "fifty horses, ay, the best that were ever reared on the banks of the Potomac, would be but a paltry price for one blow at such a villain."

"Come," said the surgeon, "the night air can do no service to George or these ladies, and it is incumbent on us to remove them where they can find surgical attendance and refreshment. Here is nothing but smoking ruins and the miasma of the swamps."

To this rational proposition no objection could be raised, and the necessary orders were issued by Lawton to remove the whole party to the Four Corners. America furnished but few and very indifferent carriage makers at the period of which we write, and every vehicle, that in the least aspired to the dignity of patrician notice, was the manufacture of a London mechanic. When Mr. Wharton left the city, he was one of the very few who maintained the state of a carriage in their establishments, and at the time that Miss Peyton and his daughters joined him in his retirement, they had been conveyed to the cottage in the heavy chariot that had once so imposingly rolled through the windings of Queen-street, or emerged with sombre dignity into the more spacious drive of Broadway. This vehicle, stood, undisturbed, where it had been placed on its arrival, and the ages of the horses had alone protected the favourites of Cæsar from sequestration, by the contending forces in their neighbourhood. With a heavy heart, the black, assisted by a few of the dragoons, proceeded to prepare it for the reception of the ladies. It was a cumbrous vehicle, whose faded linings and tarnished hammer-cloth, together with its pannels of changing colour, denoted the want of that art which had once given it lustre and beauty. The "lion couchant" of the Wharton arms was reposing on the reviving splendour of a blazonry that told the armorial bearings of a prince of the church; and the mitre, that already began to shine through its American mask, was a symbol of the rank of its original owner. The chaise which conveyed Miss Singleton was also safe, for the stable and out buildings had entirely escaped the flames; it certainly had been no part of the plan of the marauders to leave so well appointed a stud behind them, but the suddenness of the attack by Lawton, not only disconcerted their arrangements on this point, but on many others also.

A guard was left on the ground, under the command of Hollister, who, having discovered that his enemy was of mortal mould, took his position with admirable coolness, and no little skill, to guard against surprise. He drew off his small party to such a distance from the ruins, that it was effectually concealed in the darkness, while at the same time the light continued sufficiently powerful to discover any one who might approach the lawn with an intent to plunder.

Satisfied with this judicious arrangement, Captain Lawton made his dispositions for the march; Miss Peyton, her two nieces, and Isabella were placed in the chariot, while the cart of Mrs. Flanagan, being amply supplied with blankets and a bed, was honoured with the persons of Captain Singleton and his man. Dr. Sitgreaves took charge of the chaise and Mr. Wharton. What became of the rest of the family during that eventful night is unknown; for Cæsar alone, of the domestics, was to be found, if we except the housekeeper. Having disposed of the whole party in this manner, Lawton gave the word march. He remained himself for a few minutes alone on the lawn, secreting various pieces of plate and other valuables, that he was fearful might tempt the cupidity of his own men; when, perceiving nothing more that he conceived likely to overcome their honesty, he threw himself into the saddle with the soldierly intention of bringing up the rear.

“Stop, stop,” cried a female voice; “will you leave me alone to be murdered? the spoon is melted, I believe, and I’ll have compirsation if there’s law or justice in the land.”

Lawton turned an inquiring eye in the direction of the sound, and perceived a female emerging from the ruins, loaded with an enormous bundle, that vied in size with the renowned pack of the pedler.

“Who have we here,” said the trooper, “rising like a phoenix from the flames? Oh! by the soul of Hippocrates, but it is the identical she-doctor, of famous needle reputation. Well, good woman, what means this outcry?”

“Outcry!” echoed Katy, panting for breath; “is it not disparagement enough to lose a silver spoon, but I must be left alone in this lonesome place, to be robbed, and perhaps murdered? Harvey would not serve me so: when I lived with Harvey, I was always treated with respect at least, if he was a little close with his secrets, and wasteful with his money.”

“Then, madam, you once formed part of the nousehold of Mr. Harvey Birch?”

“You may say I was the whole of his household,” returned the other; “there was nobody but I, and he, and the old gentleman; you didn’t know the old gentleman, did you?”

"That happiness was denied me," said Lawton; "but how long did you live in the family of this Birch?"

"I disremember the precise time," said Katy; "but it must have been hard on upon nine years: but what better am I for it all?"

"Sure enough, I can see but little benefit that you have derived from the association truly. But is there not something odd in Mr. Birch?"

"Odd indeed," replied Katy, lowering her voice and looking around her; "he was a wonderful disregardful man, and minded a guinea no more than I do a karnal of corn. But help me to some way of joining Miss Jinit, and I will tell you prodigies of what Harvey has done, first and last."

"You will!" exclaimed the trooper, musing; "here, give me leave to feel your arm above the elbow. There—it is no small matter of bone that you have, I see." So saying, he gave the spinster a sudden whirl that at once destroyed her philosophy of mind, and effectually confused all her faculties until she found herself safely, if not comfortably, seated on the crupper of Lawton's steed.

"Now, madam, you have the consolation of knowing that you are as well mounted as heart can wish. The nag is sure of foot, and will leap like a panther."

"Let me get down," cried Katy, struggling to release herself from his iron grasp, and yet afraid of falling; "this is no way to put a woman on a horse; besides, I can't ride without a pillion."

"Softly, good madam," said Lawton; for although Roanoke never falls before, he sometimes rises behind. He is far from being accustomed to a pair of heels beating upon his flanks like a drum-major on a field-day; a single touch of the spur will serve him for a fortnight, and it's by no means wise to be kicking in this manner, for he is a horse that but little likes to be outdone."

"Let me down, I say," screamed Katy; "I shall fall and be killed. Besides, I have nothing to hold on with; my arms are full, don't you see?"

"True," returned the trooper, observing that he had brought bundle and all from the ground; "I perceive that you belong to the baggage guard; but my sword-belt will encircle your little waist as well as my own."

Katy was too much pleased with this compliment to make any resistance while he buckled her close to his own Herculean frame, and, driving a spur into his charger, they flew from the lawn with a rapidity that defied further denial. After proceeding for some time, at a rate that discomposed the spinster vastly, they overtook the cart of the washerwoman driving slowly over the stones, with a proper consideration for the wounds of Captain

Singleton. The occurrences of that eventful night had produced an excitement in the young soldier, that was followed by the ordinary lassitude of reaction, and he lay carefully enveloped in blankets, and supported by his man, but little able to converse, though deeply brooding over the past. The dialogue between Lawton and his companion ceased with the commencement of their motions, but a foot pace being more favourable to speech, the trooper began anew—"Then you have been an inmate in the same house with Harvey Birch?"

"For more as nine years," said Katy, drawing her breath, and rejoicing greatly that their speed was abated.

The deep tones of the trooper's voice were soon conveyed by the night air to the ears of the washerwoman, and turning her head, where she sat directing the movements of her mare, she heard both question and answer.

"Belike, then, good woman, yee'r knowing whether or no he's akin to Beelzeboob," said Betty; "it's Sargeant Hollister who's saying the same, and no fool is the Sargeant, any way."

"It's a scandalous disparagement," cried Katy, most vehemently; "there's no kinder soul than Harvey that carries a pack; and for a gownd or a tidy apron, he will never take a king's farthing from a friend. Beelzeboob indeed! For what would he read the Bible, if he had dealings with the evil spirit?"

"He's an honest divil, any way, as I was saying before," returned Betty; "the guinea was pure. But then the Sargeant thinks him amiss, and it's no want of learning that Mister Hollister has."

"He's a fool," said Katy; "Harvey mought be a man of substance, but he's y,disregardful. How often have I told him, that if he did no so but peddle, and would put his gains to use, and get marrihingthat things at home could be kept snug and tidy, and le ed, so his dealings with the rig'lars, and all sich incumbermentsave off would soon become an excellent liver. Sargeant Holli, that hed be glad to hold a candle to him, I guess, indeed."

"Pooh!" said Betty, in her philosophical way; "yee'r no thinking that Mister Hollister is an officer, and stands next the cornet in the troop. But this pidlar gave warning of the brush, the night, and it's no sure that Captain Jack would have got the day, but for the reinforcement."

"How say you, Betty?" cried the trooper, bending forward on his saddle; "had you notice of our danger from this said Birch?"

"The very same, darling; and it's hurry I was till the boys was in motion; not but I knew yee'r enough for the cow-boys any time. But wid the divil on yee'r side, I was sure of the

day. I'm only wondering there's so little plunder in a business of Beelzebub's contriving."

"I'm obliged to you for the rescue," said Lawton, "and equally indebted to the motive."

"Is it the plunder? But little did I tink of it till I saw the movables on the ground, some burnt, and some broke, and other some as good as new. It would be convenient to have one feather-bed in the corps, any way."

"By heavens, 'twas timely succour. Had not Roanoke been swifter than their bullets, I must have fallen. The animal is worth his weight in gold."

"It's continental you mane, darling. Goold weighs heavy, and is no plenty in the states. If the nagur hadn't been staying and frightening the Sargeant with his copper-coloured looks, and a matter of blarney 'bout ghosts, we should have been in time to have killed all the dogs, and taken the rest prisoners."

"It is very well as it is, Betty," said Lawton; "a day will yet come, I trust, when these miscreants will be rewarded, if not in judgments upon their persons, at least in the opinions of their fellow citizens. The time must arrive, when America will learn to distinguish between a patriot and a robber."

"Speak low," said Katy; "there's some who think much of themselves that have doings with the skimmers."

"It's more they are thinking of themselves, then, than other people thinks of them," cried Betty; "a tief's a tief, any wuy, whether he stales for king George or for Congress."

"I know'd that evil would soon happen," said Katy; "the sun set to-night behind a black cloud, and the house-dog whined, although I gave him his supper with my own hands; besides, it's not a week sin' I dreamed that dream about the thousand lighted candles, and the cakes being burned in the oven. Miss Peyton said it was all because I had the tallow melted to dip the next day, and a new baking set; but I know'd better nor that from the beginning."

"Well," said Betty, "it's but little I drame, any way. Jist keep an asy conscience and a plenty of the stuff in yee, and yee'll sleep like an infant. The last drame I had was when the boys put the thistle-tops in the blankets, and then I was thinking that Captain Jack's man was currying me down for the matter of Roanoke; but it's no trifle I mind either in skin or stomach."

"I'm sure," said Katy, with a stiff erection that drew Lawton back in his saddle, "no man should ever dare to lay hands on any bed of mine; it's undecent and despisable conduct."

"Pooh! pooh!" cried Betty; "if you tag after a troop of horse, a small bit of a joke must be borne; what would become of the States and liberty, if the boys had never a clane shirt, or



a drop to comfort them? Ask Captain Jack, there, if they'd fight Mrs. Beelzeboob, and they no clane linen to keep the victory in."

"I'm a single woman, and my name is Haynes," said Katy, "and I'd thank you to use no disparaging terms when speaking to me; it's what I isn't use to, and Harvey is no more of Beelzebub nor yourself."

"You must tolerate a little license in the tongue of Mrs. Flanagan, madam," said the trooper; "the drop she speaks of is often of an extraordinary size, and then she has acquired the freedom of a soldier's manner."

"Pooh! Captain, darling," cried Betty, "why do you bother the wooman? talk like yeerself, dear, and, it's no fool of a tongue that yee've got in yeer own head. But it's here away that the Sargeant made a halt, thinking there might be more divils than one stirring, the night. The clouds are as black as Arnold's heart, and deuce the star is there twinkling among them. Well, the mare is used to a march after night-fall, and is smelling out the road like a pointer slut."

"It wants but little to the rising moon," observed the trooper. He called a dragoon, who was riding in advance, to him, gave a few orders and cautions relative to the comfort and safety of Singleton, and speaking a consoling word to his friend himself, gave Roanoke the spur, and dashed by the cart at a rate that again put to flight all the philosophy of Catherine Haynes.

"Good luck to yee for a free rider and a bold," shouted the washerwoman as he passed; "if yee'r meeting Mister Beelzeboob, jist back the baste up to him and show him his consort that yee've got on the crupper. I'm thinking it's no long he'd tarry to chat. Well, well, it's his life that we saved, he was saying to himself—though the plunder is nothing to signify."

The cries of Betty Flanagan were too familiar to the ears of Captain Lawton to cause any alteration in the gait of his steed, or to elicit a reply. Notwithstanding the unusual burden that Roanoke sustained, he got over the ground with great rapidity, and the distance between the cart of Mrs. Flanagan and the chariot of Miss Peyton, was passed in a manner that, however it answered the intentions of the trooper, in no degree contributed to the comfort of his companion. The meeting occurred but a short distance from the quarters of Lawton, and at the same instant the moon broke from behind a mass of clouds that hovered over the horizon, and threw a light upon objects that seemed paler than usual, after the glaring brightness of the conflagration. There is, however, a sweetness in moonlight that no competition of art can equal, and Lawton checked his horse, and mused in silence for the remainder of the ride.

Compared with the simple elegance and substantial comfort of

the Locusts, the "Hotel Flanagan" presented but a dreary spectacle. In the place of carpeted floors and curtained windows, were the yawning cracks of a rudely constructed dwelling, and boards and paper were ingeniously applied to supply the place of the green glass in more than half the lights. The care of Lawton had anticipated every improvement that their situation would allow, and blazing fires were made before the party arrived, to cheer as much as possible the desolation within. The dragoons, who had been charged with this duty, conveyed a few necessary articles of furniture, and Miss Peyton and her companions, on alighting, found something like habitable apartments prepared for their reception. The mind of Sarah had continued to wander during the ride, and, with the pliability of insanity, she accommodated every circumstance to the feelings that were uppermost in her own bosom. It was necessary to support her to the room intended for the ladies; but the instant she was placed on the seat where her sister sat, she passed an arm affectionately around the waist of Frances, and pointing slowly with the other, said, in an under tone—"See, this is the palace of his father; here is the light of a thousand torches—but no bridegroom. Oh! never—never wed without a ring—a prepared ring; and be wary lest another has a right to it. Poor little girl, how you tremble! but you are safe—there never can be two bridegrooms for more than one bride. Oh!—no—no—no; do not tremble, do not weep, you are safe."

"It is impossible to minister to a mind that has sustained such a blow," said the trooper, who was compassionately regarding the ruin, to Isabella Singleton; "time and God's mercy can alone avail her; but something more may be done towards the bodily comfort of you all. You are a soldier's daughter, and used to scenes like this; help me to exclude some of the cold air from these windows."

Miss Singleton promptly acceded to his request, and while Lawton was endeavouring, from without, to remedy the defect of broken panes, Isabella was arranging a substitute for a curtain within.

"I hear the cart," said the trooper in reply to one of her interrogatories. "Betty is tender-hearted in the main; believe me, poor George will not only be safe but comfortable."

"God bless her for her care, and bless you all," said Isabella fervently. "Dr. Sitgreaves has gone down the road to meet him, I know—but what is that glittering in the moon-beams?"

Directly opposite to the window where they stood, were the outbuildings of the farm, and the quick eye of Lawton caught, at a glance, the object to which she alluded.

"'Tis the glare of fire arms," said the trooper, springing from

the window towards his charger, which yet remained caparisoned at the door. His movement was quick as thought, but a flash of fire was followed by the whistling of a bullet, before he had proceeded a step. A loud shriek burst from the dwelling, and the Captain sprang into his saddle; the whole was the business of but a moment.

“Mount—mount, and follow,” shouted the trooper, and before his astonished men could understand the cause of alarm, Roanoke had carried him in safety over the fence which intervened between him and his foe. The case was for life and death, but the distance to the rocks was again too short, and the disappointed trooper saw his intended victim vanish in their clefts, where he could not follow.

“By the life of Washington,” muttered Lawton, as he sheathed his sabre, “I would have made two halves of him had he not been so nimble on the foot—but a time will come.” So saying, he returned to his quarters, with the indifference of a man who knew his life was at any moment to be offered a sacrifice to his country. An extraordinary tumult in the house induced him to quicken his speed, and on arriving at the door, the panic-stricken Katy informed him that the bullet aimed at his own life had taken effect in the bosom of Miss Singleton.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

“Hush’d were his Gertrude’s lips! but still their bland  
And beautiful expression seem’d to melt  
With love that could not die! and still his hand,  
She presses to the heart no more that felt.”—*Gertrude of Wyoming.*

THE brief arrangements of the dragoons had prepared two apartments for the reception of the ladies, the one being intended as a sleeping room, and situated within the other. In the latter Isabella was immediately conveyed at her own request, and placed on a rude bed by the side of the unconscious Sarah. When Miss Peyton and Frances flew to her assistance, they found her with a smile on her pallid lips, and a composure in her countenance, that induced them to think her uninjured.

“God be praised!” exclaimed the trembling aunt; “the report of fire-arms, and your fall, had led me into an error. Surely, surely, there was enough of horror before; but this has been spared us.”

Isabella pressed her hands upon her bosom, still smiling, but with a ghastliness that curdled the blood of Frances, and said—“Is George far distant? let him know—hasten him, that I may see my brother once again.”

“It is as I apprehended!” shrieked Miss Peyton; “but you smile—surely you are unhurt?”

"Quite well—quite happy," murmured Isabella; "here is a remedy for every pain."

Sarah arose from the reclining posture she had taken, and gazed wildly at her companion. She stretched forth her own hand, and raised that of Isabella from her bosom, where she had continued to hold it, and exhibited it stained with blood.

"See," said Sarah, "there is blood, but will it wash away love? Marry, young woman, and then no one can expel him from your heart, unless," she added, whispering, and bending over the other, "you find another there before you; then die, and go to heaven—there are no wives in heaven."

The lovely maniac hid her face under the clothes, and continued silent during the remainder of the night. It was at this moment that Lawton entered. Inured as he was to danger in all its forms, and accustomed to the horrors of a partisan war, the trooper could not behold the ruin before him unmoved. He bent over the fragile form of Isabella, and the gloomy lowering of his eye betrayed the extraordinary workings of his soul.

"Isabella," he at length uttered, "I know you to possess a courage beyond the strength of women."

"Speak," she said, earnestly; "if you have anything to say, speak fearlessly."

The trooper averted his face, as he replied—"none ever receive a ball there and survive."

"I have no dread of death, Lawton," returned Isabella;—"I thank you for not doubting me; I felt it from the first."

"These are not scenes for a form like yours," added the trooper; "'tis enough that Britain calls our youth to the field; but when such loveliness becomes the victim of war, I sicken at my trade."

"Hear me, Captain Lawton," said Isabella, raising herself with difficulty, but rejecting aid; "from early womanhood to the present hour have I been an inmate of camps and garrisons. It was to cheer the leisure of a father and brother; and think you I would change those days of danger and privation for all the luxurious ease of England's palace?" The paleness of her cheek gave place to a flush of ardour as she continued—"No! I have the consolation of knowing, in my dying moments, that what woman could do in such a cause, I have done."

"Who could prove a recreant, and witness such a spirit!" exclaimed the trooper, unconsciously grasping the hilt of his sabre. "Hundreds of warriors have I witnessed in their blood, but never a firmer soul among them all."

"Ah! 'tis the soul only," said Isabella; "my sex and strength have denied me the dearest of privileges. But to you, Captain Lawton, nature has been bountiful: yours are an arm and a

heart, to make the proudest of Britain's soldiers quail; and I know that they are an arm and a heart that will prove true to the last."

"So long as liberty calls, and Washington points the way," returned the trooper, in the low tone of determination, smiling proudly.

"I know it—I know it; and George—and—" she paused, her lip quivered, and her eye sank to the floor.

"And Dunwoodie!" added the trooper; "would to God he was here to witness and admire."

"Name him not," said Isabella, sinking back upon the bed, and concealing her face in her garments; "leave me, Lawton, and prepare poor George for this unexpected blow."

The trooper continued for a little while gazing, in melancholy interest, at the convulsive shudderings of her frame, which the scanty covering could not conceal, and withdrew to meet his comrade. The interview between Singleton and his sister was painful, and, for a moment, Isabella yielded to a burst of tenderness; but, as if aware that her hours were numbered, she was the first to rouse herself to exertion. At her earnest request, the room was left to herself, the Captain, and Frances. The repeated applications of the surgeon, to be permitted to use professional aid, were steadily rejected, and, at length, he was obliged unwillingly to retire. The rapid approach of death gave to the countenance of Isabella a look of more than usual wildness; her large and dark eyes being strongly contrasted to the ashy paleness of her cheeks. Still Frances, as she leaned over her in sorrow, thought that the expression was changed. Much of the loftiness that formed so marked a characteristic of her beauty, had been succeeded by an appearance of humility; and it was not difficult to fancy, that with the world itself there was vanishing her worldly pride.

"Raise me," she said, "and let me look on a face that I love, once more." Frances silently complied, and Isabella turned her eyes in sisterly affection upon George—"It matters but little, my brother; a few hours must close the scene."

"Live, Isabella, my sister, my only sister," cried the youth, with a burst of sorrow that he could not control; "my father! my poor father—"

"Ah! there is the sting of death," said Isabella, shuddering; "but he is a soldier and a Christian. Miss Wharton, I would speak of what interests you, while yet I have strength for the task."

"Nay," said Frances, tenderly, "compose yourself; let no desire to oblige me endanger a life that is precious to—to—so many." The words were nearly stifled by the emotions of the maid, who had touched a chord that thrilled to her inmost heart.

"Poor sensitive girl!" said Isabella, regarding her with tender

interest ; “ but the world is still before you, and why should I disturb the little happiness it may yet afford ! Dream on, lovely innocent ! and may God keep the evil day of knowledge far distant.”

“ Oh, there is even now little left for me to enjoy,” said Frances, burying her face in the clothes ; “ I am heart-stricken in all that I most loved.”

“ No !” interrupted Isabella ; “ you have one inducement to wish for life, that pleads strongly in a woman’s breast. It is a delusion that nothing but death can destroy—” Exhaustion compelled her to pause, and her auditors continued in breathless suspense until, recovering her strength, she laid her hand on that of Frances, and continued more mildly—“ Miss Wharton, if there breathes a spirit congenial to Dunwoodie’s, and worthy of his love, it is your own.”

A flush of fire passed over the face of the listener, and she raised her eyes, flashing with an ungovernable look of delight, to the countenance of Isabella ; but the ruin she beheld recalled her better feelings, and again her head dropped upon the covering of the bed. Isabella watched her emotions with a smile that partook both of pity and admiration.

“ Such have been the feelings that I have escaped,” she continued ; “ Yes, Miss Wharton, Dunwoodie is wholly yours.”

“ Be just to yourself, my sister,” exclaimed the youth ; “ let no romantic generosity cause you to forget your own character.”

She heard him, and fixed a gaze of tender interest on his face, but slowly shook her head as she replied—“ It is not romance, but truth that bids me speak. Oh ! how much have I lived within an hour ! Miss Wharton, I was born under the burning sun of Georgia, and my feelings seem to have imbibed its warmth ; I have existed for passion only.”

“ Say not so—say not so, I implore you,” cried the agitated brother ; “ think how devoted has been your love to our aged father ; how disinterested, how tender your affection to me.”

“ Yes,” said Isabella, a smile of mild pleasure beaming on her countenance ; “ that is a reflection that may be taken to the very grave.”

Neither Frances nor her brother interrupted her meditations, which continued for several minutes ; when suddenly recollecting herself, she continued—“ I remain selfish even to the last ; with me, Miss Wharton, America and her liberties was my earliest passion, and—” again she paused, and Frances thought it was the struggle of death that followed ; but reviving, she proceeded, with a flush on her face that exceeded the bloom of health, “ Why should I hesitate on the brink of the grave ! Dunwoodie was my next and my last. But,” burying her face in her hands, “ it was a love that was unsought.”

"Isabella!" exclaimed her brother, springing from the bed, and pacing the floor in disorder.

"See how dependent we become under the dominion of worldly pride," said the dying maiden; "it is painful to George to learn that one he loves had not feelings superior to her nature and education."

"Say no more," whispered Frances; "you distress us both—say no more, I entreat you."

"In justice to Dunwoodie I must speak; and for the same reason, my brother, you must listen. By no act or word has Dunwoodie ever induced me to believe he wished me more than a friend; nay, latterly, I have had the burning shame of thinking that he avoided my presence."

"Would he dare!" said Singleton, fiercely.

"Peace, my brother, and listen," continued Isabella, rousing herself with an effort that was final; "here is the innocent, the justifiable cause. We are both motherless; but that aunt—that mild, plain-hearted, observing aunt, has given you the victory. Oh! how much she loses, who loses a female guardian to her youth. I have exhibited those feelings which you have been taught to repress. After this, can I wish to live?"

"Isabella! my poor Isabella! you wander in your mind."

"But one word more—for I feel that blood, which ever flowed too swiftly, rushing where nature never intended it to go. Woman must be sought to be prized: her life is one of concealed emotions; blessed are they whose early impressions make the task free from hypocrisy, for such only can be happy with men like—like Dunwoodie;" her voice failed, and she sank back on her pillow in silence. The cry of Singleton brought the rest of the party to her bedside, but death was already upon her countenance; her remaining strength just sufficed to reach the hand of George, and pressing it to her bosom for a moment, she relinquished her grasp, and, with a slight convulsion, expired.

Frances Wharton had thought that fate had done its worst, in endangering the life of her brother, and destroying the reason of her sister: but the relief that was conveyed by the dying declaration of Isabella, taught her that another sorrow had aided in loading her heart with grief. She saw the whole truth at a glance; nor was the manly delicacy of Dunwoodie's forbearance lost upon her—every thing tended to raise him in her estimation; and, for mourning that duty and pride had induced her to think less of him, she was compelled to substitute regret, that her own act had driven him from her in sorrow, if not in desperation. It is not the nature of youth, however, to despair; and Frances knew a secret joy in the midst of their distress, that gave a new spring to her existence.

The sun broke forth, on the morning that succeeded this night of desolation, in unclouded lustre, and seemed to mock the petty sorrows of those who received his rays. Lawton had early ordered his steed, and was ready to mount as the first burst of golden light broke over the hills. His orders were already given, and the trooper threw his leg across the saddle in silence; and, casting a glance of fierce chagrin at the narrow space that had favoured the flight of the skinner, he gave Roanoke the rein, and moved slowly towards the valley.

The stillness of death pervaded the road, nor was there a single vestige of the scenes of the night to tarnish the loveliness of a glorious morn. Struck with the contrast between man and nature, the fearless trooper rode by each pass of danger, regardless of what might happen, nor roused himself from his musings, until the noble charger, proudly snuffing the morning air, greeted his companions, as they stood patiently by the sides of their masters, who composed the guard under Sergeant Hollister.

Here, indeed, was to be seen sad evidence of the midnight fray; but the trooper glanced his eyes over it with the coolness of a veteran, and checked his horse as he gained the spot selected by the cautious orderly, and slightly returning his salute, inquired—  
“Have you seen anything?”

“Nothing, sir, that we dare charge upon,” returned Hollister, with a little solemnity; “but we mounted once at the report of distant fire-arms.”

“’Tis well,” said Lawton, gloomily. “Ah! Hollister, I would give the animal I ride, to have had your single arm between the wretch who drew that trigger and these useless rocks, which overhang every bit of ground, as if they grudged pasture to a single hoot.”

The dragoons exchanged looks of surprise, and wondered what could have occurred to tempt their leader to offer such a bribe.

“Under the light of day, and charging man to man, ’tis but little I fear,” said the Sergeant, with proud resolution; “but I can’t say that I’m over-fond of fighting with them that neither steel nor lead can bring down.”

“What mean you, silly fellow?” cried Lawton, frowning in disdain; none live who can withstand either.”

“If there was life, it would be easy to take it,” returned the other; “but blows and powder cannot injure him that has already been in the grave. I like not the dark object that has been manœuvring in the skirt of the wood, since the first dawn of day; and twice during the night the same was seen marching across the fire-light, no doubt with evil intent.”

“Ha!” said the trooper, “is it yon ball of black, at the foot of the rock maple, that you mean? By heavens! it moves.”



“Yes, and without mortal motion,” said the Sergeant, regarding it with awful reverence; “it glides along, but no feet have been seen by any who watch here.”

“Had it wings,” cried Lawton, “it is mine; stand fast, until I join.” The words were hardly uttered, before Roanoke was flying across the plain, and apparently verifying the boast of his master.

“Those cursed rocks!” ejaculated the trooper, as he saw the object of his pursuit approaching the hill-side; but either from want of practice, or from terror, it passed the obvious shelter they offered, and fled into the open plain.

“I have you, man or devil,” shouted Lawton, whirling his sabre from its scabbard. “Halt, and take quarter.”

His proposition was apparently acceded to; for, at the sound of his powerful voice, the figure sunk upon the ground, exhibiting a shapeless ball of black, without life or motion.

“What have we here?” cried Lawton, drawing it on its side; “a gala suit of the good maiden, Jeannette Peyton, wandering around its birth-place, or searching in vain for its discomfited mistress?” He leaned forwards in his stirrups, and placing the point of his sword under the silken garment, by throwing aside the covering, discovered part of the form of the reverend gentleman, who had fled from the Locusts the evening before, in his robes of office.

“Ah! in truth, Hollister had some ground for his alarm; an army chaplain is, at any time, a terror to a troop of horse.”

The clergyman had collected enough of his disturbed faculties, to discover that it was a face he knew, and, somewhat disconcerted at the terror he had manifested, he endeavoured to rise and offer some explanation. Lawton received his apologies good-humouredly, if not with much faith in their truth; and, after a short communication upon the state of the valley, the trooper courteously alighted, and they proceeded towards the guard.

“I am so little acquainted, sir, with the rebel uniform, that I really was unable to distinguish, whether those men, whom you say are your own, did or did not belong to the gang of marauders.”

“Apology, sir, is unnecessary,” replied the trooper, curling his lip; “it is not your task, as a minister of God, to take note of the facings of a coat. The standard under which you serve is acknowledged by us all.”

“I serve under the standard of his gracious majesty George III.,” returned the priest, wiping the cold sweat from his brow; “but really the idea of being scalped has a strong tendency to unman a new beginner like myself.”

“Scalped!” echoed Lawton, a little fiercely, and stopping short in his walk; then recollecting himself, he added with in-

finite composure—"if it is to Dunwoodie's squadron of Virginia light dragoons that you allude, it may be well to inform you, that they generally take a bit of the skull with the skin."

"Oh! I can have no apprehensions of gentlemen of your appearance," said the divine, with a smirk; "it is the natives that I apprehend."

"Natives! I have that honour, I do assure you, sir."

"Nay, sir, I beg that I may be understood—I mean the Indians; they who do nothing but rob, and murder, and destroy."

"And scalp!"

"Yes, sir, and scalp too," continued the clergyman, eyeing his companion a little suspiciously; "the copper-coloured, savage Indians."

"And did you expect to meet those nose-jewelled gentry in the neutral ground?"

"Certainly," returned the chaplain, confidently; "we understand in England that the interior swarms with them."

"And call you this the interior of America?" cried Lawton, again halting, and staring the other in the face with a surprise too naturally expressed to be counterfeited.

"Surely, sir, I conceive myself to be in the interior."

"Attend," said Lawton, pointing towards the east; "see you not that broad sheet of water which the eye cannot compass in its range? thither lies the England you deem worthy to hold dominion over half the world. See you the land of your nativity?"

"'Tis impossible to behold objects at a distance of three thousand miles!" exclaimed the wondering priest, a little suspicious of his companion's sanity.

"No! what a pity it is that the powers of man are not equal to his ambition. Now turn your eyes westward; observe that vast expanse of water which rolls between the shores of America and China."

"I see nothing but land," said the trembling priest; "there is no water to be seen."

"'Tis impossible to behold objects at a distance of three thousand miles!" repeated Lawton, gravely, and pursuing his walk; "if it be the savages that you apprehend, seek them in the ranks of your prince. Rum and gold have preserved their loyalty."

"Nothing is more probable than my being deceived," said the man of peace, casting furtive glances at the colossal stature and whiskered front of his companion; "but the rumours we have at home, and the uncertainty of meeting with such an enemy as yourself, induced me to fly at your approach."

"'Twas not judiciously determined," said the trooper, "as Roanoke has the heels of you greatly; and flying from Scylla, you were liable to encounter Charybdis. Those woods and rocks cover the very enemies you dread."

"The savages!" exclaimed the divine, instinctively placing the trooper in the rear.

"Ay! more than savages," cried Lawton, his dark brow contracting to a look of fierceness that was far from quieting the apprehensions of the other; "men who, under the guise of patriotism, prowl through the community, with a thirst for plunder that is insatiable, and a love of cruelty that mocks the Indian ferocity. Fellows, whose mouths are filled with liberty and equality, and whose hearts are overflowing with cupidity and gall—gentlemen that are yecept the Skinners."

"I have heard them mentioned in our army," said the frightened divine, "and had thought them to be the aborigines."

"You did the savages injustice," returned the trooper, in his natural dry manner.

They now approached the spot occupied by Hollister who witnessed with surprise the character of the prisoner made by his captain. Lawton gave his orders promptly, and the men immediately commenced securing and removing such articles of furniture as were thought worthy of the trouble; and the Captain, with his reverend associate, who was admirably mounted on a mettled horse, returned to the quarters of the troop.

It was the wish of Singleton, that the remains of his sister should be conveyed to the post commanded by his father, and preparations were early made to this effect, as well as a messenger despatched with the melancholy tidings of her death. The wounded British were placed under the control of the chaplain, and towards the middle of the day Lawton saw that all the arrangements were so far completed, as to render it probable, that in a few hours, he would be left, with his small party, in undisturbed possession of the Corners.

While leaning in the door-way, gazing in moody silence at the ground on which had been the last night's chase, his ear caught the sound of a horse, at speed, and the next moment a dragoon of his own troop appeared dashing up the road, as if on business of the last importance. His steed was foaming, and the rider had the appearance of having done a hard day's service. Without speaking, he placed a letter in the hand of Lawton, and led his charger to the stable. The trooper knew the hand of his Major, and ran his eye over the following:

"I rejoice it is the order of Washington, that the family of the Locusts are to be removed above the Highlands. They are to be admitted to the society of Captain Wharton, who waits only their testimony to be tried. You will communicate this order, and with proper delicacy I do not doubt. The English are moving up the river, and the moment you see the Whartons in safety, break up and join your troop. There will be good ser-

vice to be done when we meet, as Sir Henry is reported to have sent out a real soldier in command. Reports must be made to the commandant at Peekskill, as Col. Singleton is withdrawn to head quarters, to preside over the inquiry upon poor Wharton. Fresh orders have been sent to hang the pedler if we can take him, but they are not from the Commander-in-Chief.—Detail a small guard with the ladies, and get into the saddle as soon as possible. “Yours, sincerely, PEYTON DUNWOODIE.”

This communication entirely changed the whole arrangement. There could be no motive to convey the body of Isabella to a post where her father was not, and Singleton reluctantly acquiesced in her immediate interment. A retired and lovely spot was selected, near the foot of the adjacent rocks, and such rude preparations were made as their time and the situation of the country permitted. A few of the neighbouring inhabitants collected from curiosity and interest, and Miss Peyton and Frances wept in sincerity over her grave. The solemn offices of the church were performed by the minister of God, who had so lately stood forth to officiate in another and very different duty; and Lawton bent down his head, as he leaned upon his sabre, and passed his hand across his brow, while the words were pronouncing that for ever shut such fervent feeling and loveliness from the sight of man.

A new stimulus was given to the Whartons by the intelligence conveyed in the letter of Dunwoodie; and Cæsar, with his horses, was once more put in requisition. The relics of the property were entrusted to a neighbour, in whom they had confidence, and accompanied by the unconscious Sarah, and attended by four dragoons, and all of the American wounded, Mr. Wharton's party took their departure. They were speedily followed by the English chaplain, with his countrymen, who were conveyed to the water side, where a vessel was in waiting to receive them. Lawton joyfully witnessed these movements, and as soon as the latter were out of sight, he ordered his own bugle to be sounded. Everything was instantly in motion. The mare of Mrs. Flanagan was again fastened to the cart; Dr. Sitgreaves once more exhibited his shapeless form on horseback; and the trooper appeared in the saddle, rejoicing in his emancipation.

The word to march was given; and Lawton, throwing a look of sullen ferocity at the place of the skinner's concealment, and another of melancholy regret towards the grave of Isabella, led the way, accompanied by the surgeon, in a brown study; while Sergeant Hollister and Betty brought up the rear, leaving a fresh southerly wind to whistle through the open doors and

broken windows of the "Hotel Flanagan," where the laugh of hilarity and the joke of the hardy partisans had so lately echoed in triumph.

## CHAPTER XXV.

"No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,  
But winter, lingering, chills the lap of May;  
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,  
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest."—*Goldsmith.*

It was only after the establishment of their independence that the American people seemed to consider themselves as anything more than sojourners in the land of their nativity. Before that era, their inventions, their wealth, and their glory, centered in the isle of Britain, as unerringly as the needle pointed to the pole. Forty years of self-government has done for them, what a century and a half of dependence was unable to achieve.

The uneven surface of West Chester was, at the period of which we write, intersected with roads in every direction, it is true; but they were of a character with the people and the times. None of those straight, tasteless paths, which, with premeditated convenience, running directly from one point of the country to the other, abound in our newly settled territory, were to be found under the ancient regime; unless, in extraordinary instances, where a river curbed their vagaries on one side, and a mountain on the other. Instead of these direct and shortened passages, with the few exceptions we have mentioned, the highways uniformly discovered that classical taste which is only cherished under the institutions that partake of the poetry of life—the two forming no unapt illustration of the different institutions to which we have alluded. On one side, is the result of accident and circumstances, embellished with the graces of art, so as to render pleasing what is not always convenient; and on the other, a straight-forward reason, that tends directly to the object, leaving the moral of applicability to atone for what it may want in beauty and interest.

Whatever evidence of a parallel between the roads and the governments our ingenuity may devise, Cæsar Thompson found, in the former, nothing but transitory pleasures and repeated dangers. So long as one of those lovely valleys which abound in the interior of the country, lay before him, all was security and ease. Following the meanderings of the stream that invariably wound through the bottom, the path lingered to the last moment among the rich meadows and pleasant pastures; or, running off at a right angle, shot up the gentle ascent to the foot of the hill that bounded the vale, and, sweeping by the door of some retired dwelling, again sought the rivulet and the meadow, until

every beauty was exhausted, and no spot, however secluded, had escaped the prying curiosity of the genius of the highway; then, as if eager to visit another place of sylvan beauty, the road ran boldly to the base of a barrier that would frighten a spirit less adventurous, and, regardless of danger and difficulties, kept its undeviating way until the summit was gained, when, rioting for a moment in victory, it has daringly plunged into the opposite vale, and resumed its meandering and its sloth. In getting over a highway of such varied characteristics, Cæsar necessarily experienced a diversity of emotions. The cumbersome chariot that he directed moved at an even space over the level ground, and, perched on the elevated box, the black felt no little of the dignity of his situation: but the moment of ascension was one of intense anxiety, and the descent one of terror. As soon as the foot of a hill was discerned, Cæsar, with a reasoning derived from the Dutch settlers of the colony, commenced applying the whip to his venerable steeds, and accompanying the blows with a significant cry, their ambition was roused to the undertaking. The space between them and the point of struggle was flown over with a velocity that shook the crazy vehicle, and excessively annoyed its occupants; but the manœuvre sufficed to obtain an impetus that carried the steeds up the ascent one-third of the way with glory. By this time their wind was gone, their strength enfeebled, and the heaviest difficulties remained to be overcome. Then, indeed, it was often a matter of doubt which were to prevail in the dispute, the chariot or the horses. But the lash and the cries of the black stimulated the steeds to unwonted efforts, and happily they prevailed in each of these well-contested points. Short breathing time was allowed on gaining what in truth might be termed the "debateable land," before a descent more dangerous, if less difficult, than the ascent was to be encountered. At these moments, Cæsar would twine the reins round his body, in a manner of remarkable ingenuity, and lead them over his head in such a way, as to make that noble member sustain the labour of curbing his horses, with either hand grasping a side of his dangerous perch, and with a countenance showing a double row of ivory, and eyes glistening like diamonds set in ebony, he abandoned everything to the government of the ancient proverb of "the devil take the hindmost." The vehicle, with the zeal of a new made convert, would thrust the horses to the conclusion of the argument, with a rapidity that was utterly discomfiting to the philosophy of the African. But practice makes perfect; and by the time that evening had begun to warn the travellers of the necessity of a halt, Cæsar was so much accustomed to these critical flights, that he encountered them with incredible fortitude. We should not have ventured

thus to describe the unprecedented achievements of Mr. Wharton's coach-horses on this memorable occasion, did not numberless instances still exist of those dangerous pinnacles—to which we fearlessly refer as vouching for our veracity; a circumstance the more fortunate for us, when we consider, that in almost every instance, inviting passes are open, where alterations might long since have been made, that would have entirely deprived us of this indisputable testimony.

While Cæsar and his steeds were thus contending with the difficulties we have recorded, the inmates of the carriage were too much engrossed with their own cares to attend to those who served them. The mind of Sarah had ceased to wander so wildly as at first; but at every advance that she made towards reason, she seemed to retire a step from animation; from being excited and lively, she was gradually becoming moody and melancholy. There were moments, indeed, when her anxious companions thought, with ecstasy, that they could discern marks of recollection; but the expression of exquisite woe that accompanied these transient gleams of reason, forced them to the dreadful alternative of wishing, at times, that she might for ever be spared the agony of thought. The day's march was performed chiefly in silence, and the party found shelter for the night in different farm houses.

The following morning the cavalcade dispersed. The wounded diverged towards the river, with the intention of taking water at Peekskill, and thus to be transported to the hospitals of the American army above; the litter of Singleton was conveyed to a part of the Highlands where his father held his quarters, and where it was intended that the youth should complete his cure; the carriage of Mr. Wharton, accompanied by a wagon, conveying the housekeeper and what baggage had been saved, and could be transported, resumed its route towards the place where Henry Wharton was held in duress, and where he only waited their arrival to be put on trial for his life.

The country which lies between the waters of the Hudson and Long Island Sound, is, for the first forty miles from their junction, a succession of hills and dales. The land bordering on the latter then becomes less abrupt, and gradually assumes a milder appearance, until it finally melts into the lovely plains and meadows of the Connecticut. But as you approach the Hudson, the rugged aspect increases, until you at length meet with the formidable barrier of the Highlands. It was here the neutral ground ceased. The royal army held the two points of land that commanded the southern entrance of the river into the mountains; but all the remaining passes were guarded by the Americans.

We have already stated that the pickets of the continental army were sometimes pushed low into the country, and that the

hamlet of the White Plains was occasionally maintained by parties of troops. At other times, their advanced guards were withdrawn to the northern extremity of the county, and the intermediate country was abandoned entirely to the ravages of the miscreants who plundered between both armies, serving neither.

The road taken by our party was not the one that communicates between the two principal cities of the state, but was a retired and unfrequented pass, that to this hour is but little known, and which, entering the hills near the eastern boundary, emerges into the plain above, many miles from the Hudson.

It would have been impossible for the tired steeds of Mr. Wharton to drag the heavy chariot up the lengthened and steep ascents which now lay before them, and a pair of country horses were procured, with but little regard to their owner's wishes, by the two dragoons who still continued to accompany the party. With their assistance, Cæsar was enabled to advance, by slow and toilsome steps, into the bosom of the hills. Willing to relieve her own melancholy by breathing a fresher air, and also to lessen the weight, Frances alighted, as they reached the foot of the mountain, and found that Katy had made similar preparations, with the like intention of walking to the summit. It was near the setting of the sun, and from the top of the mountain their guard had declared, that the desired end of their journey might be discerned. The maid moved forward with the elastic step of youth; and, followed by the housekeeper at a little distance, they soon lost sight of the sluggish carriage, that was slowly toiling up the hill, occasionally halting to allow the animals that drew it to breathe.

"Oh, Miss Fanny, what dreadful times these be," said Katy, when they paused for breath themselves; "but I know'd that calamity was about to befall, ever sin' the streak of blood was seen in the clouds."

"There has been blood upon earth, Katy," returned the shuddering Frances, "though but little, I imagine, is ever seen in the clouds."

"Not blood in the clouds!" echoed the housekeeper; "yes, that there has, often, and comets with fiery, smoking tails. Didn't people see armed men in the heavens the year the war begun? and the night before the battle of the Plains, wasn't there thunder just like the cannon themselves?—Ah! Miss Fanny, I'm fearful that no good can follow rebellion against the Lord's anointed."

"These events are certainly dreadful," returned Frances, "and enough to sicken the stoutest heart. But what can be done, Katy?—Gallant and independent men are unwilling to submit to oppression; and I am fearful that such scenes are but too common in war."



“If I could but see anything to fight about,” said Katy, renewing her walk as the young lady proceeded, “I shouldn’t mind it so much. ’Twas said the king wanted all the tea for his own family, at one time; and then agin, that he meant the colonies should pay over to him all their arnins. Now this is matter enough to fight about—for I’m sure that no one, howsomever he may be a lord or a king, has a right to the hard arnins of another. Then it was all contradicted, and some said Washington wanted to be king himself, so that betwen the two, one doesn’t know which to believe.”

“Believe neither—for neither are true. I do not pretend to understand, myself, all the merits of this war, Katy,” said Frances, pausing, and blushing with the consciousness of whence it was that she had derived her opinions; “but to me it seems unnatural, that a country like this should be ruled by another so distant as England.”

“So I have heard Harvey say to his father that is dead and in his grave,” returned Katy, approaching nearer to the young lady, and lowering her voice.—“Many is the good time that I’ve listened to them talking, when all the neighbours was asleep; and sich conversations, Miss Fanny, that you can have no idee on.—Well, to say the truth, Harvey was a mystified body, and he was like the winds in the good book; no one could tell whence he came or whither he went.”

Frances glanced her eye at her companion with an interest altogether new to her, and, with an apparent desire to hear more, observed—“There are rumours abroad relative to the character of Harvey, that I should be sorry were true.”

“’Tis a disparagement, every word on’t,” cried Katy, vehemently; “Harvey had no more dealings with Beelzebub than you nor I had. I’m sure if Harvey had sold himself, he would take care to be better paid; though, to speak the truth, he was always a wasteful and disregardful man.”

“Nay, nay,” returned the smiling Frances, “I have no such injurious suspicion of him; but has he not sold himself to an earthly prince; one good and amiable, I allow, but too much attached to the interests of his native island to be always just to this country?”

“To the king’s majesty!” replied Katy. “Why, Miss Fanny, your own brother that is in gaol serves King George.”

“True,” said Frances, “but not in secret—openly, manfully, and bravely.”

“’Tis said he is a spy, and why an’t one spy as bad as another?”

“’Tis false!” exclaimed Frances, her eyes lighting with extraordinary animation, and the colour rushing to her face until even her fine forehead glowed with fire; “no act of deception

is worthy of my brother, nor of any would he be guilty, for so base a purpose as gain or promotion."

"Well, I'm sure," said Katy, a little appalled at the manner of the young lady, "if a body does the work, he should be paid for it. Harvey is by no means partic'lar about getting his lawful dues, and I dar'st to say, if the truth was forthcoming, King George owes him money this very minute."

"Then you acknowledge his connexion with the British army," said Frances; "I confess there have been moments when I have thought differently."

"Lord, Miss Fanny, Harvey is a man that no calculation can be made on. Though I lived in his house for a long concourse of years, I have never known whether he belonged above or below. The time that Burg'yne was taken, he came home, and there was great doings between him and the old gentleman, but for the life I couldn't tell if 'twas joy or grief. Then, here, the other day, when the great British general—I'm sure I have been so flurried with losses and troubles, that I forget his name—"

"André," said Frances, in a melancholy tone.

"Yes, Ondree; when he was hung acrost the Tapaan, the old gentleman was near hand to going crazy about it, and didn't sleep for night nor day till Harvey got back; and then his money was mostly golden guineas; but the skimmers took it all, and now he is a beggar, or, what's the same thing, despicable for poverty and want."

To this speech Frances made no reply, but continued her walk up the hill, deeply engaged in her own reflections. The allusions to André had recalled her thoughts to the situation of her own brother. Hope is a powerful stimulus to enjoyment, and though arising from a single cause, seldom fails to mingle with every emotion of the heart. The dying declaration of Isabella had left an impression on the mind of Frances that influenced her whole deportment. She looked forward with confidence to the restoration of Sarah's intellect; and even now, as she mused on the condition of Henry, there was a secret presentiment of his acquittal that pervaded her thoughts, which sprang from the buoyancy of youth, but for which she would have been at a loss to account. They now reached the highest point in their toilsome progress to the summit, and Frances seated herself on a rock to rest and to admire. Immediately at her feet lay a deep dell, but little altered by cultivation, and dark with the gloom of a November sunset. Another hill arose opposite to where she sat, at no great distance, along whose rugged sides nothing was to be seen but shapeless rocks, and oaks whose stunted growth proved the absence of soil.

To be seen in their perfection, the Highlands must be passed

immediately after the fall of the leaf. The picture is then in its chastest keeping, for neither the scanty foliage which the summer lends the trees, nor the snows of winter, are present to conceal the minutest objects from the eye. Chilling solitude is the characteristic of the scenery, nor is the mind at liberty, as in March, to look forward to a renewed vegetation that is soon to check, without improving the view.

The day had been cloudy and cool, and thin fleecy clouds hung around the horizon, often promising to disperse, but as frequently disappointing the maid in her expectation of a parting beam from the setting sun. At length a solitary gleam of light struck on the base of the mountain on which she was gazing, and moved gracefully up its side, until, reaching the summit, it stood for a minute, forming a crown of glory to the sombre pile beneath. So strong were the rays, that what was before indistinct, now clearly opened to the view. With a feeling of awe at being thus unexpectedly admitted, as it were, into the secrets of that desert place, Frances gazed intently, until, among the scattered trees and fantastic rocks, something like a rude structure was seen. It was low, and so obscured by the colour of its materials, that but for its roof, and the glittering of a window, it must have escaped her notice. While yet lost in the astonishment created by discovering a habitation for man in such a spot, on moving her eyes she perceived another object that increased her wonder. It apparently was a human figure, but of a singular mould and unusual deformity. It stood on the edge of a rock, but a little above the hut, and it was no difficult task for our heroine to fancy it was gazing at the vehicles that were ascending the side of the mountain beneath her. The distance, however, was too great for her to distinguish with precision. After looking at it a moment in breathless wonder, Frances had just come to the conclusion that it was ideal, and that what she saw was a part of the rock itself, when the object moved swiftly from its position, and glided into the hut, at once removing any doubts as to the nature of either. Whether it was owing to the recent conversation that she had been holding with Katy, or to some fancied resemblance that she had discerned, Frances thought, as the figure vanished from her view, that it bore a marked likeness to Birch, moving under the weight of his pack. She continued to gaze in breathless silence towards the mysterious residence, when the gleam of light passed away, and at the same instant the tones of a bugle rang through the glens and hollows, and were re-echoed in every direction. Springing on her feet in alarm, the maid heard the trampling of horses, and directly a party in the well known uniform of the Virginians, came sweeping round the point of a rock near her, and drew up

at a short distance from where she stood. Again the bugle sounded a lively strain, and before the agitated girl had time to rally her thoughts, Dunwoodie dashed by the party of dragoons, threw himself from his charger, and advanced to the side of his mistress.

His manner was earnest and interested, but in a slight degree constrained. In a few words he explained to Frances, that he had been ordered up, with a party of Lawton's men, in the absence of the Captain himself, to attend the trial of Henry, which was fixed for the morrow, and that, anxious for their safety in the rude passes of the mountain, he had ridden a mile or two in quest of the travellers. Frances explained, with blushing cheeks and trembling voice, the reason of her being in advance, and taught him to expect the arrival of her father momentarily. The constraint of his manner had, however, unwillingly on her part, communicated itself to her own deportment, and the approach of the chariot was a relief to both. The Major handed her in, spoke a few words of encouragement to Mr. Wharton and Miss Peyton, and again mounting, led the way towards the plains of Fishkill, which broke on their sight, on turning the rock, with the effect of enchantment. A short half hour brought them to the door of the farm-house, which the care of Dunwoodie had already prepared for their reception, and where Captain Wharton was anxiously expecting their arrival.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"These limbs are strengthened with a soldier's toil,  
Nor has this cheek been ever blanch'd with fear—  
But this sad tale of thine enervates all  
Within me, that I once could boast as man:  
Chill, trembling agues seize upon my frame,  
And tears of childish sorrow pour, apace,  
Through scarred channels, that were mark'd by wounds."—*Duo.*

THE friends of Henry Wharton had placed so much reliance on his innocence, that they were unable to see the full danger of his situation. As the moment of trial, however, approached, the uneasiness of the youth himself increased; and after spending most of the night with his afflicted family, he awoke, on the following morning, from a short and disturbed slumber, to a clearer sense of his condition, and survey of the means that were to extricate him from it with life. The rank of André, and the importance of the measures he was plotting, together with the powerful intercessions that had been made on his behalf, occasioned his execution to be stamped with greater notoriety than the ordinary events of the war. But spies were frequently arrested, and the instances occurred of summary punishment for this crime were numberless. These were facts that were well

known to both Dunwoodie and the prisoner ; and to their experienced judgments the preparations for the trial were indeed alarming. Notwithstanding their apprehensions, they succeeded so far in concealing them, that neither Miss Peyton nor Frances was aware of their extent. A strong guard was stationed in the outbuilding of the farm-house where the prisoner was quartered, and several sentinels watched the avenues that approached the dwelling ; one was constantly near the room of the British officer. A court was already detailed to examine into the circumstances ; and upon their decision the fate of Henry rested.

The moment at length arrived, and the different actors in the approaching investigation assembled. Frances experienced a feeling like suffocation, as, after taking her seat in the midst of her family, her eyes wandered over the group who were thus collected. The judges, three in number, sat by themselves, clad in the martial vestments of their profession, and maintained a gravity worthy of the occasion, and becoming in their rank. In the centre was a man of advanced years, but whose person continued rigidly erect, and whose whole exterior bore the stamp of early and long-tried military habits. This was the president of the court ; and Frances, after taking a hasty and unsatisfactory view of his associates, turned to his benevolent countenance as to the harbinger of mercy to her brother. There was a melting and subdued expression in the features of the veteran, that, contrasted with the rigid decency and composure of the others, could not fail to attract her notice. His attire was strictly in conformity to the prescribed rules of the service to which he belonged ; but while his hair was erect and military, his fingers trifled, with a kind of convulsive and unconscious motion, with the crape that entwined the hilt of the sword on which his body partly reclined, and which, like himself, seemed a relic of older times. There were the workings of an unquiet soul within ; but his commanding and martial front blended awe with the pity that its exhibition excited. His associates were officers selected from the eastern troops who held the fortresses of West Point and the adjacent passes ; they were men who had attained the meridian of life, and the eye sought in vain the expression of any passion or emotion, on which it might seize as an indication of human infirmity. In their demeanour, there was a mild, but a grave intellectual reserve. If there was no ferocity or harshness to chill, neither was there compassion or interest to attract. They were men who had long acted under the dominion of a prudent reason, and whose feelings seemed trained to a perfect submission to their judgments.

Before these arbiters of his fate Henry Wharton was ushered, under the custody of two armed men. A profound and awful

silence succeeded his entrance, and the blood of Frances chilled in her veins. There was but little of pomp in the preparations to impress her imagination, but the reserved, business-like air of the whole scene, made it seem, indeed, as if the destinies of life awaited on the judgment of these men. Two of the judges sat in grave reserve, fixing their inquiring eyes on the object of their investigation, but the president continued gazing round with uneasy, convulsive motions of the muscles of the face, that indicated a restlessness foreign to his years and duty. It was Colonel Singleton, who, but the day before, had learned the fate of Isabella, but who proudly stood forth in the discharge of a duty that his country required at his hands. The silence and the expectation in every eye, at length struck him, and making an effort to collect himself, he spoke, in the deep tones of one used to authority—"Bring forth the prisoner."

The sentinels dropped the points of their bayonets towards the judges, and Henry Wharton advanced, with a firm step, into the centre of the apartment. All was now anxiety, and eager curiosity. Frances turned for a moment in grateful emotion, as the deep and perturbed breathing of Dunwoodie reached her ears; but her brother again concentrated all her interest into one feeling of intense care. In the back-ground were arranged the inmates of the family who owned the dwelling, and behind them, again, was a row of shining faces of ebony, glistening with pleased wonder at the scene. Amongst these was the faded lustre of Cæsar Thomson's countenance.

"You are said," continued the president, "to be Henry Wharton, a Captain in his Britannic Majesty's 60th regiment of foot."

"I am."

"I like your candour, sir; it partakes of the honourable feelings of a soldier, and cannot fail to impress your judges favourably."

"It would be prudent," said one of his companions, "to advise the prisoner, that he is bound to answer no more than he deems necessary; although we are a court of martial law, yet, in this respect, we own the principles of all free governments."

A nod of approbation from the silent member was bestowed on this remark, and the president proceeded with caution, referring to the minutes he held in his hand.

"It is in accusation against you, that, being an officer of the enemy, you passed the pickets of the American army at the White Plains, in disguise, on the 29th of October last, whereby you are suspected of views hostile to the interests of America, and have subjected yourself to the punishment of a spy."

The mild, but steady tones of the speaker's voice, as he slowly repeated the substance of this charge, sunk to the hearts of most of the listeners. The accusation was so plain, the facts so limit-

ed, the proofs so obvious, and the penalty so well established, that escape at once seemed impossible. But Henry replied with earnest grace—"That I passed your pickets in disguise is true, but"—

"Peace," interrupted the president; "the usages of war are stern enough, in themselves; you need not aid them to your own condemnation."

"The prisoner can retract that declaration if he pleases," remarked another judge. "His confession, which must be taken, goes fully to prove the charge."

"I retract nothing that is true," said Henry, proudly.

The two nameless judges heard him in silent composure, yet there was no exultation mingled with their gravity. The president now appeared, however, to take new interest in the scene; and, with an animation unlooked-for in his years, he cried—"Your sentiment is noble, sir; I only regret that a youthful soldier should so far be misled by loyalty, as to lend himself to the purposes of deceit."

"Deceit!" echoed Wharton, "I thought it prudent to guard against capture from my enemies."

"A soldier, Captain Wharton," exclaimed the veteran, "should never meet his enemy but openly, and with arms in his hands. For fifty years have I served two kings of England, and now my native land; but never did I approach a foe, unless under the light of the sun, and with honest notice that an enemy was nigh."

"You are at liberty to explain what your motives were, in entering the ground held by our army, in disguise," said the other judge, with a slight movement of the muscles of his mouth.

"I am the son of this aged man before you," continued Henry. "It was to visit him that I encountered the danger. Besides, the country below is seldom held by your troops, and its very name implies a right to either party to move at pleasure over its territory."

"Its name, as a neutral ground, is unauthorised by law; and is an appellation that originates with the condition of the country. But wherever an army goes, it carries its rights along; and the first is, the ability to protect itself."

"I am no casuist sir," returned the youth, earnestly; "but I feel that my father is entitled to my affection, and would encounter greater risks to prove it to him, in his old age."

"A very commendable spirit," cried the veteran; "come, gentlemen, this business brightens. I confess, at first, it was very bad; but no man can censure him for desiring to see his parent."

"And have you proof that such only was your intention?"

"Yes—here," said Henry, admitting a ray of hope; "here is proof—my father, my sister, Major Dunwoodie, all know it."

"Then, indeed," returned his immovable judge, "we may be

able to save you. It would be well, sir, to examine further into this business."

"Certainly," said the president, with alacrity; "let the elder Mr. Wharton approach and take the oath."

The father made an effort at composure, and advancing with a feeble step, complied with the necessary forms of the court.

"You are the father of the prisoner?" said Colonel Singleton, in a subdued voice, after pausing a moment in respect of the agitation of the witness.

"He is my only son."

"And what, sir, do you know of his visit to your house, on the 29th day of October last?"

"He came, as he told you, sir, to see me and his sisters."

"Was he in disguise?" asked the other judge.

"He did not wear the uniform of the 60th."

"To see his sisters, too!" said the president with great emotion. "Have you daughters, sir?"

"I have two—both are in this house."

"Had he a wig?" interrupted the officer.

"There was some such thing, I do believe, upon his head."

"And how long had you been separated?" asked the president.

"One year and two months."

"Did he wear a loose great coat of coarse materials?" inquired the officer, referring to the paper that contained the charges.

"There was an over-coat."

"And you think it was to see you, only, that he came out?"

"And my daughters."

"A boy of spirit," whispered the president to his silent comrade. "I see but little harm in such a freak; 'twas imprudent, but then it was kind."

"Do you know that your son was entrusted with no commission from Sir Henry Clinton, and that the visit to you was not merely a cloak to other designs?"

"How can I know it?" said Mr. Wharton, in alarm; "would Sir Henry entrust me with such a business?"

"Know you anything of this pass?" exhibiting the paper that Dunwoodie had retained when Wharton was taken.

"Nothing—upon my honour, nothing," cried the father, shrinking from the paper as from contagion.

"But, on your oath?"

"Nothing."

"Have you other testimony?—this does not avail you, Captain Wharton. You have been taken in a situation where your life is forfeited; the labour of proving your innocence rests with yourself. Take time to reflect, and be cool."

There was a frightful calmness in the manner of this judge that



appalled the prisoner. In the sympathy of Colonel Singleton, he could easily lose sight of his danger; but the obdurate and collected air of the others was ominous of his fate. He continued silent, casting expressive glances towards his friend. Dunwoodie understood the appeal, and offered himself as a witness. He was sworn, and desired to relate what he knew. His statement did not materially alter the case, and Dunwoodie felt that it could not. To him personally but little was known, and that little rather militated against the safety of Henry than otherwise. His account was listened to in silence, and the significant shake of the head that was made by the silent member spoke too plainly what effect it had produced.

“Still you think that the prisoner had no other object than what he has avowed?” said the president, when he had ended.

“None other, I will pledge my life,” cried the Major with fervour.

“Will you swear it?” asked the immovable judge.

“How can I? God alone can tell the heart; but I have known this gentleman from a boy; deceit never formed part of his character. He is above it.”

“You say that he escaped, and was retaken in open arms?” said the president.

“He was; nay, he received a wound in the combat. You see he yet moves his arm with difficulty. Would he, think you, sir, have trusted himself where he could fall again into our hands, unless conscious of his innocence?”

“Would André have deserted a field of battle, Major Dunwoodie, had he encountered such an event near Tarrytown?” asked his deliberate examiner. “Is it not natural to youth to seek glory?”

“Do you call this glory?” exclaimed the Major, “an ignominious death and a tarnished name.”

“Major Dunwoodie,” returned the other, still with inveterate gravity; “you have acted nobly; your duty has been arduous and severe, but it has been faithfully and honourably discharged; ours must not be less so.”

During the examination, the most intense interest prevailed among the hearers. With that kind of feeling which could not separate the principle from the cause, most of the auditors thought that, if Dunwoodie failed to move the hearts of Henry’s judges, no other possessed the power. Cæsar thrust his mis-shapen form forward; and his features, so expressive of the concern he felt, and so different from the vacant curiosity pictured in the countenances of the other blacks, caught the attention of the silent judge. For the first time he spoke—“Let that black be brought forward.”

It was too late to retreat, and Cæsar found himself confronted

with a row of the rebel officers, before he knew what was uppermost in his thoughts. The others yielded the examination to the one who suggested it, and using all due deliberation, he proceeded accordingly—"You know the prisoner?"

"I tink I ought," returned the black, in a manner as sententious as that of his examiner.

"Did he give you the wig when he threw it aside?"

"I don't want 'em," grumbled Cæsar; "got a berry good hair he'self."

"Were you employed in carrying any letters or messages while Captain Wharton was in your master's house?"

"I do what a tell me," returned the black.

"But what did they tell you to do?"

"Sometime a one ting—sometime anoder."

"Enough," said Colonel Singleton, with dignity; "you have the noble acknowledgment of a gentleman, what more can you obtain from this slave? Captain Wharton, you perceive the unfortunate impression against you. Have you other testimony to adduce?"

To Henry there now remained but little hope; his confidence in his security was fast ebbing, but with an indefinite expectation of assistance from the loveliness of his sister, he fixed an earnest gaze on the pallid features of Frances. She arose, and with a tottering step moved towards the judges; the paleness of her cheek continued but for a moment, and gave place to a flush of fire, and with a light, but firm tread, she stood before them. Raising her hand to her polished forehead, Frances threw aside her exuberant locks, and displayed a beauty and innocence to their view that was unrivalled. The president shrouded his eyes for a moment, as if the wildly-expressive eye and speaking countenance recalled the image of another. The movement was transient, and recovering himself proudly, he said, with an earnestness that betrayed his secret wishes—"To you, then, your brother communicated his intention of paying your family a secret visit."

"No!—no!" said Frances, pressing her hand on her brain, as if to collect her thoughts; "he told me nothing—we knew not of the visit until he arrived; but can it be necessary to explain to gallant men, that a child would incur hazard to meet his only parent, and that in times like these, and in a situation like ours?"

"But was this the first time? Did he never even talk of doing so before?" inquired the Colonel, leaning towards her with paternal interest.

"Certainly—certainly," cried Frances, catching the expression of his own benevolent countenance. "This is but the fourth of his visits."

"I knew it!" exclaimed the veteran, rubbing his hands with

delight; "an adventurous, warm-hearted son—I warrant me, gentlemen, a fiery soldier in the field. In what disguises did he come?"

"In none, for none were then necessary; the royal troops covered the country, and gave him safe passage."

"And was this the first of his visits out of the uniform of his regiment?" asked the Colonel, in a suppressed voice, avoiding the penetrating looks of his companions.

"Oh! the very first," exclaimed the eager girl; "his first offence, I do assure you, if offence it be."

"But you wrote him—you urged the visit; surely, young lady, you wished to see your brother?" added the impatient Colonel.

"That we wished it, and prayed for it, oh! how fervently we prayed for it, is true; but to have held communion with the royal army would have endangered our father, and we dared not."

"Did he leave the house until taken, or had he intercourse with any out of your own dwelling?"

"With none—not one, excepting our neighbour, the pedler Birch."

"With whom?" exclaimed the Colonel, turning pale, and shrinking as from the sting of an adder.

Dunwoodie groaned aloud, and striking his head with his hand, cried in piercing tones, "he is lost!" and rushed from the apartment.

"But Harvey Birch," repeated Frances, gazing wildly at the door by which her lover had disappeared.

"Harvey Birch!" echoed all the judges. The two immovable members of the court exchanged significant looks, and threw many an inquisitive glance at their prisoner.

"To you, gentlemen, it can be no new intelligence to hear that Harvey Birch is suspected of favouring the royal cause," said Henry, again advancing before the judges; "for he has already been condemned by your tribunals to the fate that I now see awaits myself. I will, therefore, explain, that it was by his assistance that I procured the disguise, and passed your pickets; but to my dying moment, and with my dying breath, I will avow, that my intentions were as pure as the innocent being before you."

"Captain Wharton," said the president, solemnly, "the enemies of American liberty have made mighty and subtle efforts to overthrow our power. A more dangerous man, for his means and education, is not ranked among our foes, than this pedler of West Chester. He is a spy—artful, delusive, and penetrating, beyond the abilities of any of his class. Sir Henry could not do better than to associate him with the officer in his next attempt. He would have saved him André. Indeed, young man, this is a connexion that may prove fatal to you." The honest indignation that beamed on the countenance of the aged warrior as he spoke,

was met by a satisfied look of perfect conviction on the part of his comrades.

"I have ruined him!" cried Frances, clasping her hands in terror; "do you desert us? then he is lost indeed."

"Forbear!—lovely innocent—forbear!" cried the Colonel, with strong emotion; "you injure none, but distress us all."

"Is it then such a crime to possess natural affection?" said Frances, wildly; "would Washington—the noble, upright, impartial Washington, judge so harshly? delay but till Washington can hear his tale."

"It is impossible," said the president, covering his eyes, as if to hide her beauty from his view.

"Impossible! oh! but for a week suspend your judgment. On my knees I entreat you, as you will expect mercy yourself, where no human power can avail you, give him but a day."

"It is impossible," repeated the Colonel, in a voice that was nearly choked; "our orders are peremptory, and too long delay has been given already." He turned from the kneeling suppliant, but could not, or would not, extricate the hand that she grasped with frenzied fervour.

"Remand your prisoner," said one of the judges to the officer who was in the charge of Henry. "Colonel Singleton, shall we withdraw?"

"Singleton! Singleton!" echoed Frances; "then you are a father, and know how to pity a father's woes; you cannot, will not, wound a heart that is now nearly crushed. Hear me, Colonel Singleton: as God will listen to your dying prayers, hear me, and spare my brother."

"Remove her," said the Colonel, gently endeavouring to extricate his hand; but there were none who appeared disposed to obey. Frances eagerly strove to read the expression of his averted face, and resisted all his efforts to retire.

"Colonel Singleton! how lately was your own son in suffering and in danger? under the roof of my father he was cherished—under my father's roof he found shelter and protection. Oh! suppose that son, the pride of your age, the solace and protector of your orphan children, and then pronounce my brother guilty if you dare."

"What right has Heath to make an executioner of me!" exclaimed the veteran fiercely, rising with a face flushed like fire, and every vein and artery swoln with suppressed emotion. "But I forget myself; come, gentlemen, let us mount; our painful duty must be done."

"Mount not! go not!" shrieked Frances; "can you tear a son from his parent? a brother from his sister, so coldly? Is this the cause I have so ardently loved? Are these the men I

have been taught to reverence? But you relent, you do hear me, you will pity and forgive."

"Lead on, gentlemen," said the Colonel, motioning towards the door, and erecting himself into an air of military grandeur, in the vain hope of quieting his feelings.

"Lead not on, but hear me," cried Frances, grasping his hand convulsively; "Colonel Singleton, you are a father!—pity—mercy—mercy for the son! mercy for the daughter! Yes—you had a daughter. On this bosom she poured out her last breath; these hands closed her eyes; these very hands, that are now clasped in prayer, did those offices for her, that you condemn my poor, poor brother, to require."

One mighty emotion the veteran struggled with, and quelled; but with a groan that shook his whole frame. He even looked around in conscious pride at his victory; but a second burst of feeling conquered. His head, white with the frost of seventy winters, sank upon the shoulder of the frantic suppliant. The sword that had been his companion in so many fields of blood, dropped from his nerveless hand, and as he cried—"May God bless you for the deed!" he wept aloud.

Long and violent was the indulgence that Colonel Singleton yielded to his feelings. On recovering, he gave the senseless Frances into the arms of her aunt, and, turning with an air of fortitude to his comrades, he said—"Still, gentlemen, we have our duty as officers to discharge;—our feelings as men may be indulged hereafter. What is your pleasure with the prisoner!"

One of the judges placed in his hand a written sentence, that he had prepared while the Colonel was engaged with Frances, and declared it to be the opinion of himself and his companion. It briefly stated, that Henry Wharton had been detected in passing the lines of the American army as a spy, and in disguise. That, thereby, according to the laws of war, he was liable to suffer death, and that this court adjudged him to the penalty—recommending him to be executed, by hanging, before nine o'clock on the following morning.

It was not usual to inflict capital punishments, even on the enemy, without referring the case to the Commander-in-chief, for his approbation; or, in his absence, to the officer commanding for the time being. But, as Washington held his headquarters at New Windsor, on the western bank of the Hudson, sufficient time was yet before them to receive his answer.

"This is short notice," said the veteran, holding the pen in his hand, in a suspense that had no object; "not a day to fit one so young for heaven?"

"The royal officers gave Hale but an hour," returned his comrade; "we have extended the usual time. But Washington has the power to extend it, or to pardon."

“Then to Washington will I go,” cried the Colonel, returning the paper with his signature, “and if the services of an old man like me, or that brave boy of mine, entitle me to his ear, I will yet save the youth.” So saying, he departed, full of his generous intentions in favour of Henry Wharton.

The sentence of the court was communicated with proper tenderness to the prisoner; and after giving a few necessary instructions to the officer in command, and despatching a courier to head-quarters with their report, the remaining judges mounted, and rode to their own quarters, with the same unmoved exterior, but with the consciousness of the same dispassionate integrity, that they had maintained throughout the trial.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

“Have you no countermand for Claudio yet,  
But he must die to-morrow?”—*Measure for Measure.*

A FEW hours were passed by the condemned prisoner, after his sentence was received, in the bosom of his family. Mr. Wharton wept in hopeless despondency over the untimely fate of his son; and Frances, after recovering from her insensibility, experienced an anguish of feeling to which the bitterness of death itself would have been comparatively light. Miss Peyton alone retained a vestige of hope, or presence of mind to suggest what might be proper to be done, under their circumstances. The comparative composure of the good spinster in no degree arose from any want of interest in the welfare of her nephew, but was founded in a kind of instinctive dependence on the character of Washington. He was a native of the same colony with herself, and although his early military services, and her frequent visits to the family of her sister, and subsequent establishment at its head, had prevented their ever meeting, still she was familiar with his domestic virtues, and well knew that the rigid inflexibility for which his public acts were distinguished, formed no part of his reputation in private life. He was known in Virginia as a consistent but just and lenient master, and the maiden felt a kind of pride in associating in her mind her countryman with the man who led the armies, and, in a great measure, controlled the destinies of America. She knew that Henry was innocent of the crime for which he was condemned to suffer, and with that kind of simple faith, that is ever to be found in the most ingenuous and innocent characters, could not conceive of those constructions and interpretations of law, that inflicted punishment without the actual existence of crime. But even her confiding hopes were doomed to meet with a speedy termination. Towards noon, a regiment of militia, that was quartered on the banks of the river, moved up to the ground in front of the house

that held our heroine and her family, and deliberately pitched their tents, with the avowed intention of remaining until the following morning, to give solemnity and impression to the execution of a British spy.

Dunwoodie had performed all that was required of him by his orders, and was at liberty to retrace his steps to his expecting troops, who were impatiently awaiting his return to be led against a detachment of the enemy, that was known to be slowly moving up the banks of the river, to cover a party of foragers in their rear. He was accompanied by a small party of Lawton's troop, under the expectation of their testimony being required to convict the prisoner, and Mason, the Lieutenant, was in command. But the confession of Captain Wharton had removed the necessity of examining any witnesses on behalf of the people. The Major, from an unwillingness to encounter the distress of Henry's friends, and a dread of trusting himself within its influence, had spent the time we have mentioned, in walking by himself, in keen anxiety, at a short distance from the dwelling. Like Miss Peyton, he had some reliance on the mercy of Washington, although moments of terrific doubt and despondency were continually crossing his mind. To him the rules of service were familiar, and he was more accustomed to consider his General in the capacity of a ruler, than as exhibiting the characteristics of the individual. A dreadful instance had too recently occurred, which fully proved that Washington was above the weakness of sparing another in mercy to himself. While pacing with hurried steps through the orchard, labouring under these constantly recurring doubts, enlivened by transient rays of hope, Mason approached him, accoutred completely for the saddle.

"Thinking you might have forgotten the news brought this morning from below, sir, I have taken the liberty to order the detachment under arms," said the Lieutenant, very coolly, cutting down with his sheathed sabre the mullen tops that grew within his reach.

"What news?" cried the Major, starting.

"Only that John Bull is out in West Chester, with a train of wagons, which, if he fills, will compel us to retire through these cursed hills, in search of provender. These greedy Englishmen are so shut up on York island, that when they do venture out, they seldom leave straw enough to furnish the bed of a Yankee heiress."

"Where did the express leave them, did you say? The intelligence has entirely escaped my memory."

"On the heights above Sing Sing," returned the Lieutenant, with no little amazement. "The road below looks like a hay-market, and all the swine are sighing forth their lamentations,

as the corn passes them towards Kingsbridge. George Singleton's orderly, who brought up the tidings, says that our horses were holding consultation if they should not go down without their riders, and eat another meal, for it is questionable with them whether they can get a full stomach again. If they are suffered to get back with their plunder, we shall not be able to find a piece of pork, at Christmas, fat enough to fry itself."

"Peace, with all this nonsense of Singleton's orderly, Mr. Mason," cried Dunwoodie impatiently; "let him learn to wait the orders of his superiors."

"I beg pardon in his name, Major Dunwoodie," said the subaltern; "but, like myself, he was in error. We both thought it was the order of General Heath, to attack and molest the enemy whenever he ventured out of his nest."

"Recollect yourself, Lieutenant Mason," said the major fiercely, "or I may have to teach you that your orders pass through me."

"I know it, Major Dunwoodie—I know it," said Mason with a look of reproach; "and I am sorry that your memory is so bad, as to forget that I have never yet hesitated to obey them."

"Forgive me, Mason," cried Dunwoodie, taking both his hands; "I do know you for a brave and obedient soldier; forget my humour. But this business.—Had you ever a friend?"

"Nay, nay," interrupted the Lieutenant; "forgive me and my honest zeal. I knew of the orders, and was fearful that censure might fall on my officer. But remain, and let a man breathe a syllable against the corps, and every sword will start from the scabbard of itself; besides, they are still moving up, and it is a long road from Croton to Kingsbridge. Happen what may, I see plainly that we shall be on their heels before they are housed again."

"Oh! that the courier was returned from head-quarters," exclaimed Dunwoodie. "This suspense is insupportable."

"You have your wish," cried Mason; "here he is coming at the moment, and riding like the bearer of good news. God send it may be so; for I can't say that I particularly like myself to see a brave young fellow dancing upon nothing." Dunwoodie heard but very little of this feeling declaration; for, ere half of it was uttered, he had leaped the fence, and stood before the messenger.

"What news have you?" cried the Major, the moment that the soldier stopped his horse.

"Good!" exclaimed the man; and feeling no hesitation to intrust an officer so well known as Major Dunwoodie, he placed the paper in his hands, as he added, "but you can read it, sir, for yourself." Dunwoodie paused not to read; but flew, with the elastic spring of youth and joy, to the chamber of the pri-



soner. The sentinel knew him, and he was suffered to pass without question.

"Oh! Peyton," cried Frances as he entered the apartment, "you look like a messenger from heaven: bring you tidings of mercy?"

"Here, Frances—here, Henry—here, dear cousin, Jeanette," cried the youth, as with trembling hands he broke the seal; "here is the letter itself, directed to the Captain of the guard. But listen—"

All did listen with intense anxiety; and the pang of blasted hope was added to their misery, as they saw the glow of delight which had beamed on the countenance of the Major on his entrance, give place to a look of astonishment and terror. The paper contained the sentence of the court, and underneath were written these simple words—"Approved—George Washington."

"He's lost, he's lost!" cried Frances in the piercing tones of despair, sinking into the arms of her aunt.

"My son! my son!" sobbed the father, "there is mercy in heaven, if there is none on earth. May Washington never want that mercy he thus denies to my innocent child."

"Washington!" echoed Dunwoodie, gazing around him in vacant horror. "Yes, 'tis the act of Washington himself, there are his characters; his very name is here to sanction the dreadful deed."

"Cruel, cruel Washington!" cried Miss Peyton; "how has familiarity with blood changed his nature!"

"Blame him not," said Dunwoodie; "it is the General, and not the man; my life on it, he feels the blow he is compelled to inflict."

"I have been deceived in him," cried Frances. "He is not the saviour of his country; but a cold and merciless tyrant. Oh! Peyton, Peyton! how have you misled me in his character!"

"Peace, dear Frances; peace, for God's sake; use not such language," cried her lover. "He is but the guardian of the law."

"You speak the truth, Major Dunwoodie," said Henry, recovering from the shock of having his last ray of hope extinguished, and advancing from his seat by the side of his father. "I, who am to suffer, blame him not. Every indulgence has been granted me that I can ask. On the verge of the grave, I cannot continue unjust. At such a moment, with so recent an instance of danger to your cause from treason, I wonder not at Washington's unbending justice. Nothing now remains but for me to prepare for that fate which so speedily awaits me. To you, Major Dunwoodie, I make my first request."

"Name it," said the Major, giving utterance with difficulty.

Henry turned, and pointed impressively to the group of weep-

ing mourners near him, as he continued—"Be a son to this aged man; help his weakness, and defend him from any usage to which the stigma thrown upon me may subject him. He has not many friends amongst the rulers of this country; let your powerful name be found among them."

"It shall," said Dunwoodie, fervently pressing the hand of his friend.

"And this helpless innocent," continued Henry, pointing to where Sarah sat, in unconscious melancholy. "I had hoped for an opportunity to revenge her wrongs;" a momentary flush of excitement passed over his pallid features; "but such thoughts are evil—I feel them to be wrong. Under your care, Peyton, she will find sympathy and refuge."

"She will," whispered Dunwoodie, unable to speak aloud.

"This good aunt has claims upon you already; of her I will not speak; but here," taking the hand of Frances, and dwelling upon her countenance with an expression of fraternal affection—"here is the choicest gift of all. Take her to your bosom, and cherish her as you would cultivate innocence and virtue."

The Major could not repress the eagerness with which he extended his hand to receive the precious boon; but Frances, shrinking from his touch, hid her face in the bosom of her aunt, as she murmured—"No, no, no—none can ever be anything to me, who aid in my brother's destruction."

Henry continued gazing at her in tender pity for several moments, before he again resumed a discourse that all felt was most peculiarly his own.

"I have been mistaken, then. I did think, Peyton, that your worth, your noble devotion to a cause that you have been taught to revere, that your kindness to our father when in imprisonment, your friendship to me, in short, that your character was understood and valued by my sister."

"It is—it is," whispered Frances, burying her face still deeper in the bosom of her aunt.

"I believe, dear Henry," said Dunwoodie, "this is a subject that had better not be dwelt upon now."

"You forget," returned the prisoner, with a faint smile, "how much I have to do, and how little time is left to do it in."

"I apprehend," continued the Major, with a face of fire, "that Miss Wharton has imbibed some opinions of me, that would make a compliance with your request irksome to her—opinions that it is now too late to alter."

"No, no, no," cried Frances, quickly; "you are exonerated, Peyton—with her dying breath she removed my doubts."

"Generous Isabella!" murmured Dunwoodie, with a glow of momentary rapture; "but still, Henry, spare your sister now; nay, spare even me."

"I speak in pity to myself," returned the brother, gently removing Frances from the arms of her aunt. "What a time is this to leave two such lovely females without a protector!—Their abode is destroyed, and misery will speedily deprive them of their last male friend," looking at his father; "can I die in peace with the knowledge of the danger to which they will be exposed?"

"You forget me," said Miss Peyton, shrinking herself at the idea of celebrating nuptials at such a moment.

"No, my dear aunt, I forget you not, nor shall I, until I cease to remember; but you forget the times and the danger. The good woman who lives in this house has already despatched a messenger for a man of God, to smooth my passage to another world?—Frances, if you would wish me to die in peace, to feel a security that will allow me to turn my whole thoughts to heaven, you will let this clergyman unite you to Dunwoodie." Frances shook her head, but remained silent.

"I ask for no joy—no demonstration of a felicity that you will not, cannot feel, for months to come—but obtain a right to his powerful name—give him an undisputed title to protect you—" Again the maid made an impressive gesture of denial.

"For the sake of that unconscious sufferer—" pointing to Sarah, "for your sake—for my sake—my sister—"

"Peace, Henry, or you will break my heart," cried the agitated girl; "not for worlds would I at such a moment engage in the solemn vows that you wish. It would render me miserable for life."

"You love him not," said Henry, reproachfully. "I cease to importune you to do what is against your inclinations."

Frances raised one hand to conceal the countenance that was overspread with crimson, as she extended the other towards Dunwoodie, and said earnestly—"Now you are unjust to me—before you were unjust to yourself."

"Promise me, then," said Wharton, musing awhile in silence, "that so soon as the recollection of my fate is softened, you will give my friend that hand for life, and I am satisfied."

"I do promise," said Frances, withdrawing the hand that Dunwoodie delicately relinquished, without even pressing it to his lips.

"Well, then, my good aunt," continued Henry, "will you leave me for a short time alone with my friend? I have a few melancholy commissions with which to entrust him, and would spare you and my sister the pain of hearing them."

"There is yet time to see Washington again," said Miss Peyton, moving towards the door; and then, speaking with extreme dignity, she continued—"I will go myself: surely he must listen to a woman from his own colony!—and we are in some degree connected with his family."

“Why not apply to Mr. Harper?” said Frances, recollecting the parting words of their guest for the first time.

“Harper!” echoed Dunwoodie, turning towards her with the swiftness of lightning: “what of him? do you know him?”

“It is in vain,” said Henry, drawing him aside; “Frances clings to hope with the fondness of a sister. Retire, my love, and leave me with my friend.”

But Frances read an expression in the eye of Dunwoodie that chained her to the spot. After struggling to command her feelings, she continued—“He staid with us for two days—he was with us when Henry was arrested.”

“And—and—did you know him?” “Nay,” continued Frances, catching her breath as she witnessed the intense interest of her lover, we knew him not; he came to us in the night, a stranger, and remained with us during the severe storm; but he seemed to take an interest in Henry, and promised him his friendship.”

“What!” exclaimed the youth, in astonishment; “did he know your brother?” “Certainly;—it was at his request that Henry threw aside his disguise.”

“But,” said Dunwoodie, turning pale with suspense, “he knew him not as an officer of the royal army.” “Indeed he did,” cried Miss Peyton; “and cautioned him against this very danger.”

Dunwoodie caught up the fatal paper, that still lay where it had fallen from his own hands, and studied its characters intently. Something seemed to bewilder his brain. He passed his hand over his forehead, while each eye was fixed on him in dreadful suspense—all feeling afraid to admit those hopes anew that had once been so sadly destroyed. “What said he? what promised he?” at length Dunwoodie asked with feverish impatience.

“He bid Henry apply to him when in danger, and promised to requite to the son the hospitality of the father.”

“Said he this, knowing him to be a British officer?”

“Most certainly; and with a view to this very danger.”

“Then,” cried the youth aloud, and yielding to his rapture, “then you are safe—then will I save him; yes, Harper will never forget his word.”

“But has he the power?” said Frances; “can he move the stubborn purpose of Washington?”

“Can he! If he cannot,” shouted the youth in uncontrollable emotion, “if he cannot, who can?—Greene, and Heath, and young Hamilton, are as nothing, compared to this Harper. But,” rushing to his mistress, and pressing her hands convulsively, “repeat to me—you say you have his promise?”

“Surely, surely, Peyton;—his solemn, deliberate promise, knowing all of the circumstances.”

“Rest easy,” cried Dunwoodie, holding her to his bosom for

a moment, "rest easy, for Henry is safe." He waited not to explain, but darting from the room, he left the family in amazement. They continued in silent wonder, until they heard the feet of his charger, as he dashed from the door with the speed of an arrow.

A long time was spent after this abrupt departure of the youth, by the anxious friends he had left, in discussing the probability of his success. The confidence of his manner had, however, communicated to his auditors something of its own spirit. Each felt that the prospects of Henry were again brightening, and with their reviving hopes, they experienced a renewal of spirits, which, in all but Henry himself, amounted to pleasure; with him, indeed, his state was too awful to admit of trifling, and, for a few hours, he was condemned to feel how much more intolerable was suspense, than even the certainty of calamity. Not so with Frances. She, with all the reliance of affection, reposed in security on the assurance of Dunwoodie, without harassing herself with doubts, that she possessed not the means of satisfying; but believing her lover able to accomplish everything that man could do, and retaining a vivid recollection of the manner and benevolent appearance of Harper, she abandoned herself to all the felicity of renovated hope. The joy of Miss Peyton was more sobered, and she took frequent occasions to reprove her niece for the exuberance of her spirits, before there was a certainty that their expectations were to be realized. But the slight smile that hovered around the lips of the spinster contradicted the very sobriety of feeling that she inculcated.

"Why, dearest aunt," said Frances, playfully, in reply to one of her frequent reprimands, "would you have me repress the pleasure that I feel at Henry's deliverance, when you yourself have so often declared it to be impossible, that such men as ruled in our country could sacrifice an innocent man?"

"Nay, I did believe it impossible, my child, and yet think so; but still there is a discretion to be shown in joy as well as in sorrow."

Frances recollected the declaration of Isabella, and turned an eye filled with tears of gratitude on her excellent aunt, as she replied—"True; but there are feelings that will not yield to reason. Ah! here are those monsters, who have come to witness the death of a fellow creature, moving around yon field, as if this life was to them nothing but a military show."

"It is but little more to the hireling soldier," said Henry, endeavouring to forget his uneasiness.

"You gaze, my love, as if you thought a military show of some importance," said Miss Peyton, observing her niece to be looking from the window with a fixed and abstracted attention. But Frances answered not.

From the window where she stood, the pass that they had travelled through the Highlands was easily to be seen; and the mountain which held on its summit the mysterious hut was directly before her. Its side was rugged and barren; huge, and apparently impassable barriers of rock presenting themselves through the stunted oaks, which, stripped of their foliage, were scattered over its surface. The base of the hill was not half a mile from the house, and the object which attracted the notice of Frances, was the figure of a man emerging from behind a rock of remarkable formation, and as suddenly disappearing. This manœuvre was several times repeated, as if it were the intention of the fugitive (for such by his air he seemed to be) to reconnoitre the proceedings of the soldiery, and assure himself of the position of things on the plain. Notwithstanding the distance, Frances instantly imbibed the opinion that it was Birch. Perhaps this impression was partly owing to the air and figure of the man, but in a great measure to the idea that presented itself, on formerly beholding the object at the summit of the mountain. That they were the same figure she was confident, although this wanted the appearance which in the other she had taken for the pack of the pedler. Harvey had so connected himself with the mysterious deportment of Harper within her imagination, that under circumstances of less agitation than those in which she had laboured since her arrival, she would have kept her suspicions to herself. Frances, therefore, sat ruminating on this second appearance in silence, and endeavouring to trace, in her thoughts, what possible connexion this extraordinary man could have with the fortunes of her own family. He had certainly saved Sarah, in some degree, from the blow that had partially alighted on her, and in no instance had he proved himself to be hostile to their interests. After gazing for a long time at the point where she had last seen the figure, in the vain expectation of its re-appearance, she turned to her friends in the apartment. Miss Peyton was sitting by Sarah, who gave some slight additional signs of noticing what passed, but who still continued insensible to either joy or grief."

"I suppose, by this time, my love, that you are well acquainted with the manœuvres of a regiment," said the spinster, smiling at her nephew. "It is no bad quality in a soldier's wife, at all events."

"I am not a wife yet," said Frances, colouring to the eyes; "and we have no reason to wish for another wedding in our family."

"Frances!" exclaimed her brother, starting from his seat, and pacing the floor in violent agitation, "touch not the cord again, I entreat you. While my fate is yet so uncertain, I would wish to be at peace with all men."

"Then let the uncertainty cease," cried Frances, springing to

the door, "for here comes Peyton with the joyful intelligence of your release." The words were hardly uttered, before the door opened, and the Major entered. In his air there was neither the appearance of success, nor defeat, but there was a marked display of vexation. He took the hand that Frances, in the fulness of her heart, extended towards him, but instantly relinquishing it, threw himself into a chair, in evident fatigue.

"You have failed," said Wharton, with a bound of his heart, but an appearance of composure.

"Have you seen Harper?" cried Frances, turning pale.

"I have not; I crossed the river in one boat as he must have been coming to this side in another. I returned without delay, and traced him for several miles into the Highlands, by the western pass, but there I unaccountably lost him. I have returned here to relieve your uneasiness; but see him I will this night, and bring a respite for Henry."

"But saw you Washington?" asked Miss Peyton.

Dunwoodie gazed at her a moment in abstracted musing, and the question was repeated. He answered gravely, and with some reserve—"The Commander-in-chief had left his quarters."

"But, Peyton," cried Frances, in returning terror, "if they should not see each other, it will be too late. Harper alone will not be sufficient."

Her lover turned his eyes slowly on her anxious countenance, and dwelling a moment on her features, said, still musing—"You say that he promised to assist Henry."

"Certainly, of his own accord, and in requital for the hospitality that he had received."

Dunwoodie shook his head, and began to look extremely grave.

"I like not that word hospitality—it has an empty sound; there must be something more reasonable to tie Harper. I dread some mistake; repeat to me all that passed."

Frances, in a hurried and earnest voice, complied with his request. She related particularly the manner of his arrival at the Locusts, the reception that he received, and the events that passed, as minutely as her memory could supply her with the means. As she alluded to the conversation that occurred between her father and his guest, the Major smiled, but remained silent. She then gave a detail of Henry's arrival, and the events of the following day. She dwelt upon the part where Harper had desired her brother to throw aside his disguise, and recounted with wonderful accuracy his remarks upon the hazard of the step that the youth had taken. She even remembered a remarkable expression of his to her brother, "that he was safer from Harper's knowledge of his person than he would be without it." Frances mentioned, with the warmth of her youthful admiration, the benevolent character of his deportment to herself, and gave a minute relation of his adieus to the whole family.

Dunwoodie at first listened with grave attention; then evident satisfaction followed as she proceeded. When she spoke of herself in connexion with their guest, he smiled with pleasure, and as she concluded, he exclaimed, with perfect delight—"We are safe—we are safe."

But he was interrupted, as we will show in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"The owlet loves the gloom of night,  
The lark salutes the day,  
The timid dove will coo at hand—  
But falcons soar away."—*Song in Duo.*

IN a country, settled like these states, by a people who fled their native land and much-loved fire-sides, victims to their tender consciences and religious zeal, none of the decencies and solemnities of a christian death are dispensed with, when circumstances will admit of their exercise. The good woman of the house was a strict adherent to the forms of the church to which she belonged; and having herself been awakened to a sense of her depravity, by the ministry of the divine who harangued the people of the adjoining parish, she thought that it was from his exhortation only, that salvation could be meted out to the short-lived hopes of Henry Wharton. Not that the kind-hearted matron was so ignorant of the doctrines of the religion which she professed, as to depend, theoretically, on mortal aid for protection; but she had, to use her own phrase, "set so long under the preaching of good Mr.—," that she had unconsciously imbibed a practical reliance on his assistance for that which her faith should have taught her could come from the Deity alone. With her, the consideration of death was at all times awful; and the instant that the sentence of the prisoner was promulgated, she despatched Cæsar, mounted on one of her husband's best horses, in quest of her clerical monitor. This step had been taken without consulting Henry or his friends, and it was only when the services of Cæsar were required upon some domestic emergency, that she explained the nature of his absence. The youth heard her, at first, with an unconquerable reluctance to admit of such a spiritual guide; but as our view of the things of this life becomes less vivid, our prejudices and habits cease to retain their influence; and a civil bow of thanks was finally given, in requital for the considerate care of the well-meaning woman.

The black returned early from his expedition, and, as well as could be gathered from his somewhat incoherent narrative, a minister of God might be expected to arrive in the course of the day. The interruption that we mentioned in our preceding chapter, was occasioned by the entrance of the landlady. At



the intercession of Dunwoodie, orders had been given to the sentinel who guarded the door of Henry's room, that the members of the prisoner's family should at all times have free access to his apartment: Cæsar was included in this arrangement, as a matter of convenience, by the officer in command; but strict inquiry and examination was made into the errand of every other applicant for admission. The Major had, however, included himself among the relatives of the British officer; and one pledge, that no rescue should be attempted, was given in his name for them all. A short conversation was passing between the woman of the house and the corporal of the guard, before the door that the sentinel had already opened in anticipation of the decision of his non-commissioned commandant.

"Would you refuse the consolations of religion to a fellow creature about to suffer death?" said the matron, with earnest zeal. "Would you plunge a soul into the fiery furnace, and a minister at hand to point out the straight and narrow path?"

"I'll tell you what, good woman," returned the corporal, gently pushing her away; "I've no notion of my back being a highway for any man to walk to heaven upon. A pretty figure I should make at the pickets, for disobeying my orders. Just step down and ask Lieutenant Mason, and you may bring in the whole congregation. We have not taken the guard from the foot-soldiers but an hour, and I shouldn't like to have it said that we know less of our duty than the militia."

"Admit the woman," said Dunwoodie, sternly, observing, for the first time, that one of his own corps was on post.

The Corporal raised his hand to his cap, and fell back in silence; the soldier stood to his arms, and the matron entered.

"Here is a reverend gentleman below, come to soothe the parting soul, in the place of our own divine, who is engaged with an appointment that could not be put aside; 'tis to bury old Mr.—"

"Show him in," said Henry, with feverish impatience.

"But will the sentinel let him pass? I would not wish a friend of Mr.— to be rudely stopped on the threshold, and he a stranger."

All eyes were now turned on Dunwoodie, who, looking at his watch, spoke a few words with Henry, in an under tone, and hastened from the apartment, followed by Frances. The subject of their conversation was a wish expressed by the prisoner for a clergyman of his own persuasion, and a promise from the Major, that one should be sent from Fishkill town, through which he was about to pass, on his way to the ferry to intercept the expected return of Harper. Mason soon made his bow at the door, and willingly complied with the wishes of the landlady, and the divine was invited to make his appearance accordingly.

The person who was ushered into the apartment, preceded by Cæsar with a face of awful gravity, and followed by the matron with one of deep concern, was a man beyond the middle age, or who might rather be said to approach the downhill of life. In stature he was above the size of ordinary men, though his excessive leanness might contribute in deceiving as to his height; his countenance was sharp and unbending, and every muscle seemed set in the most rigid compression. No joy or relaxation appeared ever to have dwelt on features that frowned habitually, as if in detestation of the vices of mankind. The brows were beetling, dark, and forbidding, giving the promise of eyes of no less repelling expression; but the organs were concealed beneath a pair of enormous green spectacles, through which they glared around with a fierceness that denounced the coming day of wrath, nor spoke any of that benevolence which, forming the essence of our holy religion, should be the characteristic of its ministers. All was fanaticism, uncharitableness, and denunciation. Long, lank, and party-coloured hair, being a mixture of gray and black, fell down his neck, and in some degree obscured the sides of his face, and, parting on his forehead, fell in either direction in straight and formal screens. On the top of this ungraceful exhibition was laid, impending forward, so as to overhang in some measure the whole fabric, a large hat of three equal cocks. His coat was of a rusty black, and his breeches and stockings were of the same colour; his shoes without lustre, and half concealed beneath their huge plated buckles. He stalked into the room, and giving a stiff nod with his head, took the chair offered him by the black, in dignified silence. For several minutes no one broke this ominous pause in the conversation; Henry feeling a repugnance to his guest, that he was vainly endeavouring to conquer, and the stranger himself drawing forth occasional sighs and groans, that threatened a dissolution of the unequal connexion between his sublimed soul and its ungainly tenement. During this deathlike preparation, Mr. Wharton, with a feeling nearly allied to that of his son, led Sarah from the apartment. His retreat was noticed by the divine, in a kind of scornful disdain, who began to hum the air of a popular psalm tune, giving it the full richness of the twang that distinguishes the eastern psalmody.

“Cæsar,” said Miss Peyton, “hand the gentleman some refreshment; he must need it after his ride.”

“My strength is not in the things of this life,” said the divine, sternly, speaking the startling tones of a hollow, sepulchral voice. “Thrice have I this day held forth in my master’s service, and fainted not; still it is prudent to help this frail tenement of clay, for, surely, ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire.’” Opening a pair of enormous jaws to the exit of a proportionable

chew of tobacco, he took a good measure of the proffered brandy, and suffered it to glide downwards, with that facility with which man is prone to sin.

"I apprehend, then, sir, that fatigue will disable you from performing those duties which kindness has induced you to attempt."

"Woman!" exclaimed the stranger, with appalling energy, "when was I ever known to shrink from a duty? But 'judge not, lest ye be judged,' and fancy not that it is given to mortal eyes to fathom the intentions of the Deity."

"Nay," returned the spinster, meekly, and slightly disgusted with his jargon, "I pretend not to judge of either events or the intentions of my fellow creatures, much less of those of Omnipotence."

"'Tis well, woman—'tis well," cried the minister, waving his head with supercilious disdain; "humility becometh thy sex and lost condition; thy weakness driveth thee on headlong, like 'unto the besom of destruction.'"

Surprised, at this extraordinary deportment, but yielding to that habit which urges us to speak reverently on sacred subjects, even when perhaps we had better continue silent, Miss Peyton replied—"There is a power above that can and will sustain us all in well-doing, if we seek its support in humility and truth."

The stranger turned a lowering look of dissatisfaction at the speaker, and then composing himself into an air of self-abasement, continued, in the same repelling tones as before—"It is not every one that crieth out for mercy that will be heard. The ways of Providence are not to be judged by men—'Many are called, but few are chosen.' It is easier to talk of humility, than to feel it. Are you so humble, vile worm, as to wish to glorify God by your own damnation? If not, away with you for a publican and pharisee."

Such gross fanaticism was uncommon in America, and Miss Peyton began to imbibe the impression that their guest was deranged; but remembering that he was sent by a well-known divine, and one of reputation, she discarded the idea, and with much forbearance observed—"I may deceive myself, in believing that mercy is proffered to all; but it is so soothing a doctrine, that I would not willingly be undeceived."

"Mercy is only for the elect," cried the stranger, with an unaccountable energy; "and you are in the valley of the shadow of death. Are you not a follower of them idle ceremonies, which belong to the vain church, that our tyrants would gladly establish here, along with their stamp-acts and tea-laws? Answer me that, woman; and remember, that heaven hears your answer: are you not of that idolatrous communion?"

"I worship at the altars of my fathers," said the spinster, motioning to Henry for silence; "but bow to no other idol than my

own infirmities." "Yes, yes, I know ye, self-righteous and papal, as ye are—followers of forms and listeners to bookish preaching: think you, woman, that holy Paul had notes in his hand to propound the word to the believers?"

"My presence disturbs you," said Miss Peyton, rising: "I will leave you with my nephew, and offer those prayers in private that I did wish to mingle with his." So saying, she withdrew, followed by the landlady, who was not a little shocked, and somewhat surprised, by the intemperate zeal of her new acquaintance; for, although the good woman believed that Miss Peyton and her whole church were on the high road to destruction, she was by no means accustomed to hear such offensive and open avowals of their fate.

Henry had with difficulty repressed the indignation excited by this unprovoked attack on his meek and unresisting aunt; but as the door closed on her retiring figure, he gave way to his feelings, and exclaimed with heat—"I must confess, sir, that in receiving a minister of God, I thought I was admitting a Christian; and one who, by feeling his own weaknesses, knew how to pity the frailties of others. You have wounded the meek spirit of that excellent woman, and I acknowledge but little inclination to mingle in prayer with so intolerant a spirit."

The minister stood erect, with grave composure, following with his eyes, in a kind of scornful pity, the retiring spinster, and suffered the expostulation of the youth to be given as if unworthy of his notice. A third voice, however, spoke—"Such a denunciation would have driven many women into fits; but it has answered the purpose well enough as it is."

"Who's that?" cried the prisoner in amazement, gazing around the room in quest of the speaker—"It is me, Captain Wharton," said Harvey Birch, removing his spectacles, and exhibiting his piercing eyes shining under a pair of false eye-brows.

"Good Heavens!—Harvey!"

"Silence!" said the pedler, solemnly; "'tis a name not to be mentioned, and least of all here, within the heart of the American army." Birch paused and gazed around him for a moment, with an emotion exceeding the base passion of fear, and then continued in a gloomy tone, "there are a thousand halts in that very name, and little hope would there be left me of another escape, should I be again taken. This is a fearful venture that now I am making; but I could not sleep in quiet, and know that an innocent man was about to die the death of a dog, when I might save him."

"No," said Henry, with a glow of generous feeling on his cheek; "if the risk to yourself be so heavy, retire as you came, and leave me to my fate. Dunwoodie is making, even now, powerful exertions in my behalf; and if he meets with Mr. Harper in the course of the night, my liberation is certain."

“Harper!” echoed the pedler, remaining with his hands raised, in the act of replacing the spectacles; “what do you know of Harper? and why do you think he will do you service?” “I have his promise;—you remember our recent meeting in my father’s dwelling, and he then gave an unmasked promise to assist me.”

“Yes—but do you know him? that is—why do you think he has the power? or what reason have you for believing he will remember his word?” “If there ever was the stamp of truth, or simple, honest benevolence, in the countenance of man, it shone in his,” said Henry; “besides, Dunwoodie has powerful friends in the rebel army, and it would be better that I take the chance where I am, than thus to expose you to certain death, if detected.”

“Captain Wharton,” said Birch, looking guardedly around, with habitual caution, and speaking with impressive seriousness of manner, “if I fail you, all fail you. No Harper or Dunwoodie can save your life; unless you get out with me, and that within the hour, you die to-morrow on the gallows of the murderer. Yes, such are their laws; the man who fights, and kills, and plunders, is honoured; but he who serves his country as a spy, no matter how faithfully, no matter how honestly, lives to be reviled, or dies like the vilest criminal.”

“You forget, Mr. Birch,” said the youth, a little indignantly, “that I am not a treacherous, lurking spy, who deceives to betray; but am innocent of the charge imputed to me.”

The blood rushed over the pale, meagre features of the pedler, until his face was one glow of fire; but it passed away as quickly, and he replied—“I have told you. Cæsar met me, as he was going on his errand this morning, and with him I have laid the plan, which, if executed as I wish, will save you—otherwise, you are lost; and I again tell you, that no other power on earth, not even Washington, can save you.”

“I submit,” said the prisoner, yielding to his earnest manner, and goaded by the fears that were thus awakened anew.

The pedler beckoned him to be silent, and walking to the door, opened it, with the stiff, formal air, with which he had entered the apartment. “Friend, let no one enter,” he said to the sentinel, “we are about to go to prayer, and would wish to be alone.”

“I don’t know that any will wish to interrupt you,” returned the soldier, with a waggish leer of his eye; “but, should they be so disposed, I have no power to stop them, if they be of the prisoner’s friends; I have my orders, and must mind them, whether the Englishman goes to heaven or not.”

“Audacious sinner!” said the pretended priest, “have you not the fear of God before your eyes? I tell you, as you will dread punishment at the last day, to let none of the idolatrous communion enter to mingle in the prayers of the righteous.”

“Whew—ew—ew—what a noble commander you’d make

for Sergeant Hollister; you'd preach him dumb in a roll-call. Hark'ee, I'll just thank you not to make such a noise, when you hold forth, as to drown our bugles, or you may get a poor fellow a short horn at his grog for not turning out to the evening parade: if you want to be alone, have you no knife to stick over the door-latch, that you must have a troop of horse to guard your meeting-house?"

The pedler took the hint, and closed the door immediately, using the precaution suggested by the angry dragoon.

"You overact your part," said young Wharton, in constant apprehension of a discovery; "your zeal is too intemperate."

"For a foot soldier and them eastern militia, it might be," said Harvey, turning a bag upside down that Cæsar now handed him; "but these dragoons are fellows that you must brag down. A faint heart, Captain Wharton, would do but little here; but come, here is a black shroud for your good-looking countenance," taking, at the same time, a parchment mask and fitting it to the face of Henry. "The master and the man must change places for a season."

"I don't tink he look a bit like me," said Cæsar, with disgust, as he surveyed his young master with his new complexion. "Stop a minute, Cæsar," said the pedler, with the lurking drollery that at times formed part of his manner, "'till we get on the wool."

"He worse than ebber now," cried the discontented African. "A tink coloured man like a sheep. I nebber see sich a lip, Harvey; he most as big as a sausage."

Great pains had been taken in forming the different articles used in the disguise of Captain Wharton, and when arranged under the skilful superintendence of the pedler, they formed together a transformation that would easily escape detection from any but an extraordinary observer. The mask was stuffed, and shaped in such a manner as to preserve the peculiarities, as well as the colour, of the African visage; and the wig was so artfully formed of black and white wool, as to imitate the pepper-and-salt colour of Cæsar's own head, and to exact plaudits from the black himself, who thought it an excellent counterfeit in every thing but quality.

"There is but one man in the American army who could detect you, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, surveying his work with satisfaction, "and he is just now out of our way."

"And who is he?" "The man who made you prisoner. He would see your white skin through a horse-hide. But strip both of you: your clothes must be changed from head to foot."

Cæsar, who had received minute instructions from the pedler in the morning interview, immediately commenced throwing aside his coarse garments, which the youth took up and prepared to invest himself with; unable, however, to repress a few signs of

loathing. In the manner of the pedler, there was an odd mixture of care and humour; the former was the result of a perfect knowledge of their danger, and the means necessary to be used in avoiding it; and the latter proceeded from the unavoidably ludicrous circumstances before him, acting on an indifference which sprang from habit, and long familiarity with such scenes as the present.

“Here, Captain,” he said, taking up some loose wool, and beginning to stuff the stockings of Cæsar, which were already on the leg of the prisoner; “some judgment is necessary in shaping this limb. You will have to display it on horseback; and them southern dragoons are so used to the brittle-shins, that, should they notice your well-turned calf, they’d know at once that it never belonged to the carcass of a black.”

“Golly!” said Cæsar, with a chuckle that exhibited a mouth open from ear to ear, “massy Harry breeches fit like ebbery ting.”

“Everything but your leg,” said the pedler, coolly pursuing the toilet of Henry. “Slip on the coat, Captain, over all. Upon my word, you’d pass well at a pinkster frolic; and here, Cæsar, place this powdered wig over your curls, and be careful and look out of the window whenever the door is open, and on no account speak, or you will betray all.”

“I s’pose Harvey tink a colour’d man an’t got a tongue like oder folk,” grumbled the black, as he took the station assigned to him.

Everything was now arranged for action, and the pedler very deliberately went over the whole of his injunctions to the two actors in the scene. The Captain he conjured to dispense with his erect military carriage, and for a season to adopt the humble paces of his father’s negro; and Cæsar he enjoined to silence and disguise, so long as he could possibly maintain them. Thus prepared, he opened the door, and called aloud to the sentinel, who had retired to the farthest end of the passage, in order to avoid receiving any of that spiritual comfort, which he felt was the sole property of another.

“Let the woman of the house be called,” said Harvey, in the solemn key of his assumed character; “and let her come alone. The prisoner is in a happy train of meditation, and must not be led from his devotions.” Cæsar sank his face between his hands, and when the soldier looked into the apartment, he thought he saw his charge in deep abstraction. Casting a glance of huge contempt at the divine, he called aloud for the good woman of the house. She hastened at the summons with earnest zeal, entertaining a secret hope that she was to be admitted to the gossip of a death-bed repentance.

“Sister,” said the minister, in the authoritative tones of a master, “have you in the house, ‘The Christian criminal’s last moments, or thoughts on eternity for them who die a violent death?’”

“ I never heard of the book !” said the matron, in astonishment.

“ ’Tis not unlikely ; there are many books you have never heard of ; it is impossible for this poor penitent to pass in peace, without the consolations of that volume. One hour’s reading in it is worth an age of man’s preaching.”

“ Bless me, what a treasure to possess !—when was it put out ?”

“ It was first put out at Geneva in the Greek language, and then translated at Boston. It is a book, woman, that should be in the hands of every Christian, especially such as die upon the gallows. Have a horse prepared instantly for this black, who shall accompany me to my Brother——, and I will send down the volume yet in season.—Brother, compose thy mind ; you are now in the narrow path to glory.” Cæsar wriggled a little in his chair, but had sufficient recollection to conceal his face with hands that were in their turn concealed by gloves. The landlady departed to comply with this very reasonable request, and the group of conspirators were again left to themselves.

“ This is well,” said the pedler ; “ but the difficult task is to deceive the officer who commands the guard—he is Lieutenant to Lawton, and has learned some of the Captain’s own cunning in these things. Remember, Captain Wharton,” continued he, with an air of pride, “ that now is the moment when everything depends on our coolness.”

“ My fate can be made but little worse than it is at present, my worthy fellow,” said Henry ; “ but for your sake I will do all that in me lies.”

“ And wherein can I be more forlorn and persecuted than I now am ?” asked the pedler, with that wild incoherence which often crossed his manner. “ But I have promised *one* to save you, and to him I never have yet broken my word.”

“ And who is he ?” said Henry, with awakened interest.

“ No one,” returned the pedler. The man now returned, and announced that both their horses were at the door. Harvey gave the Captain a glance of his eye, and led the way down the stairs, first desiring the woman to leave the prisoner to himself, in order to his digesting the wholesome food that he had so lately received at his hands.

The rumour of the odd character of the priest had spread from the sentinel at the door to his comrades ; so that when Harvey and Wharton reached the open space before the building, they found a dozen idle dragoons loitering about, with the waggish intention of quizzing the fanatic, and employed in affected admiration of the steeds.

“ A fine horse, you have,” said the leader in this plan of mischief ; “ but a little low in flesh ; I suppose from hard labour in your calling.”

“ My calling may be laboursome to both myself and this faith-



ful beast, but then a day of settling is at hand, that will reward me for all my out-goings and in-comings," said Birch, putting his foot in the stirrup, and preparing to mount.

"So then you work for pay, as we fight for't?" cried another of the party. "Even so—'is not the labourer worthy of his hire?'"

"Come, suppose you give us a little preaching; we have a leisure moment just now, and there's no telling how much good you might do a set of reprobates like us, in a few words; here, mount this horse-block, and take your text from where you please." The men now gathered around the pedler in eager delight, who, glancing his eye expressively towards the Captain, who had been suffered to mount in peace, replied—

"Doubtless, for such is my duty. But, Cæsar, you can ride up the road, and give the note—the unhappy prisoner will be wanting the book, for his hours are numbered."

"Ay—ay, go along, Cæsar, and get the book," shouted half a dozen voices, all crowding eagerly around the ideal priest, in anticipation of a frolic.

The pedler inwardly dreaded, that, in their unceremonious handling of himself and garments, his hat and wig might be displaced, when detection would be certain; he was therefore fain to comply with their request. Ascending the horse-block, after hemming once or twice, and casting several glances at the Captain, who continued immovable, he commenced as follows:—

"I shall call your attention, my brethren, to that portion of scripture which you will find in the 2d book of Samuel, and which is written in the following words: '*And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters; as a man falleth before wicked men, so falleth thou, and all the people wept again over him.*' Cæsar, ride forward, I say, and obtain the book as directed; thy master is groaning in spirit even now for the want of it."

"An excellent text," cried the dragoons. "Go on, go on, let the snow-ball stay; he wants to be edified as well as another."

"What are you at there, you scoundrels?" cried Lieutenant Mason, as he came in sight from a walk he had taken to sneer at the evening parade of the regiment of militia; away with every man of you to your quarters, and let me find that each horse is cleaned and littered when I come round." The sound of the officer's voice operated like a charm, and no priest could desire a more silent congregation, although he might possibly have wished for one that was more numerous. Mason had not done speaking, when it was reduced to the image of Cæsar only. The pedler took that opportunity to mount, but he had to preserve the gravity of his movements, for the remark of the troopers

upon the condition of their beasts was but too just, and a dozen of dragoon horses stood saddled and bridled at hand, ready to receive their riders at a moment's warning.

"Well, have you bitted the poor devil within," said Mason, "that he can take his last ride under the curb of divinity, old gentleman?"

"There is evil in thy conversation, profane man," cried the priest, raising his hands, and casting his eyes upwards in holy horror; "so I will depart from thee unhurt, as Daniel was liberated from the lion's den."

"Off with you, for a hypocritical, psalm-singing, canting rogue in disguise," said Mason, scornfully; "by the life of Washington! it worries an honest fellow, to see such voracious beasts of prey ravaging a country for which he shed his blood. If I had you on a Virginia plantation for a quarter of an hour, I'd teach you to worm the tobacco with the turkeys."

"I leave you, and shake the dust off my shoes, that no remnant of this wicked hole may tarnish the vestments of the godly."

"Start, or I will shake the dust from your jacket, you designing knave. A fellow to be preaching to my men! There's Hollister put the devil in them by his exhorting; the rascals were getting too conscientious to strike a blow that would raise the skin. But hold, whither do you travel, master blackey, in such godly company?"

"He goes," said the minister, hastily speaking for his companion, "to return with a book of much condolence and virtue to the sinful youth above, whose soul will speedily become white, even as his outwards are black and unseemly. Would you deprive a dying man of the consolation of religion?"

"No, no, poor fellow, his fate is bad enough; a famous good breakfast his prim body of an aunt gave us. But harkee, Mr. Revelations, if the youth must die *secundum artem*, let it be under a gentleman's directions; and my advice is, that you never trust that skeleton of yours among us again, or I will take the skin off and leave you naked."

"Out upon thee for a reviler and scoffer of goodness!" said Birch, moving slowly, and with a due observance of clerical dignity, down the road, followed by the imaginary Cæsar; "but I leave thee, and that behind me that will prove thy condemnation, and take from thee a hearty and joyful deliverance."

"Damn him," muttered the trooper, pursing his lip with a scornful smile; "the fellow rides like a stake, and his legs stick out like the cocks of his hat. I wish I had him below these hills, where the law is not over particular, I'd—"

"Corporal of the guard!—corporal of the guard!"—shouted the sentinel in the passage to the chambers—"corporal of the guard!—corporal of the guard!" The subaltern flew up the

narrow stairway that led to the room of the prisoner, and demanded of the man the meaning of his outcry.

The soldier was standing at the open door of the apartment, looking in with a suspicious eye, on the supposed British officer. On observing his lieutenant, he fell back with habitual respect, and replied, with an air of puzzled thought—"I don't know, sir; but just now the prisoner looked queer. Ever since the preacher has left him he don't look as he used to do—but"—gazing intently over the shoulder of his officer, "it must be him, too. There is the same powdered head, and the darn in the coat, where he was hit the day we had the last brush with the enemy."

"And then all this noise is occasioned by your doubting whether that poor gentleman is your prisoner or not, is it, sirrah? Who the devil do you think it can be else?"

"I don't know who else it can be," returned the fellow, sullenly; "but he is grown thicker and shorter, if it is him; and see for yourself, sir, he shakes all over like a man in an ague."

This was but too true. Cæsar was an alarmed auditor of this short conversation, and from congratulating himself upon the dexterous escape of his young master, his thoughts were very naturally beginning to dwell upon the probable consequences to his own person. The pause that succeeded to the last remark of the sentinel, in no degree contributed to the restoration of his faculties. Lieutenant Mason was busied in examining with his own eyes the suspected person of the black, and Cæsar was aware of the fact, by stealing a look through a passage under one of his arms, that he had left for the purpose of reconnoitring. Captain Lawton would have discovered the fraud immediately, but Mason was by no means so quick-sighted as his commander. He therefore turned rather contemptuously to the soldier, and, speaking in an under tone, observed—"That anabaptist, methodistical, quaker, psalm-singing rascal has frightened the boy, with his farrago about flames and brimstone. I'll step in and cheer him with a little rational conversation."

"I have heard of fear making a man white," said the soldier, drawing back, and staring as if his eyes would start from their sockets; "but it has changed the royal captain to a black."

The truth was, that Cæsar, unable to hear what Mason uttered in a low voice, and having every fear aroused in him by what had already passed, incautiously removed the wig a little from one of his ears, in order to hear the better, without in the least remembering that its colour might prove fatal to his disguise. The sentinel had kept his eyes fastened on his prisoner, and noticed the action. The attention of Mason was instantly drawn to the same object, and forgetting all delicacy for a brother officer in distress; or, in short, forgetting everything but the censure that might alight on his corps, the lieutenant sprang

forward and seized the terrified African by the throat; for no sooner had Cæsar heard his colour named, than he knew his discovery was certain; and at the first sound of Mason's heavy boot on the floor, he arose from his seat, and retreated precipitately to a corner of the room.

"Who are you?" cried Mason, dashing the head of the old man against the angle of the wall at each interrogatory, "who the devil are you, and where is the Englishman? Speak! you thundercloud. Answer me, you jack-daw, or I'll hang you on the gallows of the spy." But Cæsar continued firm. Neither the threats nor the blows could extract any reply, until the lieutenant, by a very natural transition in the attack, sent his heavy boot forward in a direction that brought it in exact contact with the most sensitive part of the negro—his shin. The most obdurate heart could not have exacted further patience, and Cæsar instantly gave in. The first words he spoke were—"Golly! Massa! you tink I got no feelin!"

"By heavens!" shouted the lieutenant, "it is the negro himself. Scoundrel! where is your master, and who was the priest?" While speaking, he made a movement, as if about to renew the attack; but Cæsar cried aloud for mercy, promising to tell all he knew.

"Who was the priest?" repeated the dragoon, drawing back his formidable leg, and holding it in threatening suspense—

"Harvey, Harvey!" cried Cæsar, dancing from one leg to the other, as he thought each member in its turn assailed.

"Harvey who, you black villain?" cried the impatient lieutenant, as he executed a full measure of vengeance by letting his leg fly.

"Birch!" shrieked Cæsar, falling on his knees, the tears rolling in large drops over his shining face.

"Harvey Birch!" echoed the trooper, hurling the black from him, and rushing from the room; "to arms! to arms! Fifty guineas for the life of the pedler spy—give no quarter to either. Mount, mount! to arms! to horse!"

During the uproar occasioned by the assembling of the dragoons, who all rushed tumultuously to their horses, Cæsar rose from the floor, where he had been thrown by Mason, and began to examine into his injuries. Happily for himself, he had alighted on his head, and sustained no material damage.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

"Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,  
 Away went hat and wig;  
 He little dreamt, when he set out,  
 Of running such a rig."—*Cowper.*

THE road which it was necessary for the pedler and the English

Captain to travel, in order to reach the shelter of the hills, lay, for a half-mile, in full view from the door of the building that had so recently been the prison of the latter; running for the whole distance over the rich plain, that spreads to the very foot of the mountains, which here rise in a nearly perpendicular ascent from their bases; it then turned short to the right, and was obliged to follow the windings of nature, as it won its way into the bosom of the Highlands.

To preserve the supposed difference in their stations, Harvey rode a short distance ahead of his companion, and maintained the sober, dignified pace, that was suited to his assumed character. On their right, the regiment of foot, that we have already mentioned, lay in tents; and the sentinels who guarded their encampment, were to be seen moving with measured tread under the skirts of the hills themselves. The first impulse of Henry was, certainly, to urge the beast he rode to his greatest speed at once, and by a coup-de-main, not only accomplish his escape, but relieve himself from the torturing suspense of his situation. But the forward movement that the youth made for this purpose was instantly checked by the pedler.

"Hold up!" he cried, dexterously reining his own horse across the path of the other; "would you ruin us both? Fall into the place of a black, following his master. Did you not see their blooded chargers, all saddled and bridled, standing in the sun before the house? How long do you think that miserable Dutch horse that you are on would hold his speed, if pursued by the Virginians? Every foot that we can gain, without giving the alarm, counts us a day in our lives. Ride steadily after me, and on no account look back. They are as subtle as foxes, ay, and as ravenous for blood as wolves!"

Henry reluctantly restrained his impatience, and followed the direction of the pedler. His imagination, however, continually alarmed him with the fancied sounds of pursuit; though Birch, who occasionally looked back under the pretence of addressing his companion, assured him that all continued quiet and peaceful.

"But," said Henry, "it will not be possible for Cæsar to remain long undiscovered; had we not better put our horses to the gallop, and by the time that they can reflect on the cause of our flight, we can reach the corner of the woods?"

"Ah! you little know them, Captain Wharton," returned the pedler; "there is a sergeant at this moment looking after us, as if he thought all was not right; the keen-eyed fellow watches me like a tiger lying in wait for his leap. When I stood on the horse-block, he half suspected that something was wrong. Nay, check your beast—we must let the animals walk a little, for he is laying his hand on the pommel of his saddle. If he mounts now we are gone. The foot-soldiers could reach us with their muskets."

"What does he do?" asked Henry, reining his horse to a walk, but at the same time pressing his heels into the animal's sides, to be in readiness for a spring.

"He turns from his charger, and looks the other way; now trot on gently—not so fast—not so fast. Observe the sentinel in the field, a little ahead of us—he eyes us keenly."

"Never mind the footman," said Henry, impatiently; "he can do nothing but shoot us—whereas these dragoons may make me a captive again. Surely, Harvey, there are horse moving down the road behind us. Do you see nothing particular?"

"Humph!" ejaculated the pedler; "there is something particular indeed, to be seen behind the thicket on our left. Turn your head a little, and you may see and profit by it too." Henry eagerly seized this permission to look aside, and the blood curdled to his heart as he observed that they were passing a gallows that unquestionably had been erected for his own execution. He turned his face from the sight in undisguised horror.

"There is a warning to be prudent in that bit of wood," said the pedler, in the sententious manner that he often adopted.

"It is a terrific sight, indeed!" cried Henry, for a moment veiling his eyes with his hand, as if to drive a vision from before him.

The pedler moved his body partly around and spoke with energetic but gloomy bitterness—"And yet, Captain Wharton, you see it where the setting sun shines full upon you; the air you breathe is clear, and fresh from the hills before you. Every step that you take, leaves that hated gallows behind, and every dark hollow, and every shapeless rock in the mountains, offers you a hiding place from the vengeance of your enemies. But I have seen the gibbet raised, when no place of refuge offered. Twice have I been buried in dungeons, where, fettered and in chains, I have passed nights in torture, looking forward to the morning's dawn that was to light me to a death of infamy. The sweat has started from limbs that seemed already drained of their moisture; and if I ventured to the hole that admitted air through grates of iron, to look out upon the smiles of nature, which God has bestowed for the meanest of his creatures, the gibbet has glared before my eyes like an evil conscience, harrowing the soul of a dying man. Four times have I been in their power, besides this last; but twice—twice—did I think that my hour had come. It is hard to die at the best, Captain Wharton; but to spend your last moments alone and unpitied; to know that none near you so much as think of the fate that is to you the closing of all that is earthly; to think, that in a few hours you are to be led from the gloom, which, as you dwell on what follows, becomes dear to you, to the face of day, and there to meet all eyes upon you, as if you were a wild beast; and to lose sight of every thing amidst the jeers and scoffs of your fellow-creatures—that, Captain Wharton, that indeed is to die."

Henry listened in amazement, as his companion uttered this speech with a vehemence altogether new to him; both seemed to have forgotten their danger and their disguises, as he cried—“What! were you ever so near death as that?”

“Have I not been the hunted beast of these hills for three years past?” resumed Harvey; “and once they even led me to the foot of the gallows itself, and I escaped only by an alarm from the royal troops. Had they been a quarter of an hour later, I must have died. There was I placed in the midst of unfeeling men, and gaping women and children, as a monster to be cursed. When I would pray to God, my ears were insulted with the history of my crimes; and when, in all that multitude, I looked around for a single face that showed me any pity, I could find none—no, not even one; all cursed me as a wretch who would sell his country for gold. The sun was brighter to my eyes than common—but then it was the last time I should see it. The fields were gay and pleasant, and every thing seemed as if this world was a kind of heaven. Oh! how sweet life was to me at that moment! ’Twas a dreadful hour, Captain Wharton, and such as you have never known. You have friends to feel for you, but I had none but a father to mourn my loss, when he might hear of it; but there was no pity, no consolation near, to soothe my anguish. Every thing seemed to have deserted me. I even thought that HE had forgotten that I lived.”

“What! did you feel that God had forsaken you, Harvey?” cried the youth, with strong sympathy.

“God never forsakes his servants,” returned Birch, with reverence, and exhibiting naturally a devotion that hitherto he had only assumed.

“And who did you mean by HE?”

The pedler raised himself in his saddle to the stiff and upright posture that was suited to the outward appearance. The look of fire, that for a short time glowed upon his countenance, disappeared in the solemn lines of unbending self-abasement, and speaking as if addressing a negro, he replied—“In heaven there is no distinction of colour, my brother; therefore you have a precious charge within you, that you must hereafter render an account of;” dropping his voice—“this is the last sentinel near the road; look not back, as you value your life.”

Henry remembered his situation, and instantly assumed the humble demeanour of his adopted character. The unaccountable energy of the pedler’s manner was soon forgotten in the sense of his own immediate danger; and with the recollection of his critical situation, returned all the uneasiness that he had momentarily forgotten.

“What see you, Harvey?” he cried, observing the pedler to gaze towards the building they had left, with ominous interest; “what see you at the house?”

“That which bodes no good to us,” returned the pretended priest. “Throw aside the mask and wig; you will need all your senses without much delay; throw them in the road—there are none before us that I dread, but there are those behind who will give us a fearful race.”

“Nay, then,” cried the Captain, casting the implements of his disguise into the highway, “let us improve our time to the utmost. We want a full quarter to the turn; why not push for it at once?”

“Be cool; they are in alarm, but they will not mount without an officer, unless they see us fly—now he comes, he moves to the stables; trot briskly; a dozen are in their saddles, but the officer stops to tighten his girths; they hope to steal a march upon us; he is mounted; now ride, Captain Wharton, for your life, and keep at my heels. If you quit me you will be lost.” A second request was unnecessary. The instant that Harvey put his horse to his speed, Captain Wharton was at his heels, urging the miserable animal that he rode to the utmost. Birch had selected the beast on which he rode, and although vastly inferior to the high-fed and blooded chargers of the dragoons, still it was much superior to the little pony that had been thought good enough to carry Cæsar Thompson on an errand. A very few jumps convinced the Captain that his companion was fast leaving him, and a fearful glance that he threw behind, informed the fugitive that his enemies were as speedily approaching. With that abandonment that makes misery doubly grievous, when it is to be supported alone, Henry cried aloud to the pedler not to desert him. Harvey instantly drew up, and suffered his companion to run alongside of his own horse. The cocked hat and wig of the pedler fell from his head, the moment that his steed began to move briskly, and this development of their disguise, as it might be termed, was witnessed by the dragoons, who announced their observation by a boisterous shout, that seemed to be uttered in the very ears of the fugitives; so loud was the cry, and so short the distance between them.

“Had we not better leave our horses?” said Henry, “and make for the hills across the fields on our left?—the fence will stop our pursuers.”

“That way lies the gallows,” returned the pedler; “these fellows go three feet to our two, and would mind them fences no more than we do these ruts; but it is a short quarter to the turn, and there are two roads behind the wood. They may stand to choose until they can take the track, and we shall gain a little upon them there.”

“But this miserable horse is blown already,” cried Henry, urging his beast with the end of his bridle, at the same time that Harvey aided his efforts by applying the lash of a heavy riding



whip that he carried ; “ he will never stand it for half a mile further.”

“ A quarter will do ; a quarter will do,” said the pedler ; “ a single quarter will save us, if you follow my directions.”

Somewhat cheered by the cool and confident manner of his companion, Henry continued silently urging his horse forward. A few moments brought them to the desired turn, and as they doubled round a point of low under-brush, the fugitives caught a glimpse of their pursuers scattered along the highway. Mason and the Sergeant, being better mounted than the rest of the party, were much nearer to their heels than even the pedler thought could be possible. At the foot of the hills, and for some distance up the dark valley that wound among the mountains, a thick underwood of saplings had been suffered to shoot up, where the heavier growth was felled for the sake of the fuel. At the sight of this cover, Henry again urged the pedler to dismount, and to plunge into the woods ; but his request was promptly refused. The two roads, before mentioned, met at a very sharp angle, at a short distance from the turn, and both were circuitous, so that but little of either could be seen at a time. The pedler took the one which led to the left, but held it only a moment ; for, on reaching a partial opening in the thicket, he darted across into the right-hand path, and led the way up a steep ascent, which lay directly before them. This manœuvre saved them. On reaching the fork, the dragoons followed the track, and passed the spot where the fugitives had crossed to the other road, before they missed the marks of the footsteps. Their loud cries were heard by Henry and the pedler, as their wearied and breathless animals toiled up the hill, ordering their comrades in the rear to ride in the right direction. The Captain again proposed to leave their horses and dash into the thicket.”

“ Not yet, not yet,” said Birch, in a low voice ; “ the road falls from the top of this hill as steep as it rises ; first let us gain the top.” While speaking, they reached the desired summit, and both threw themselves from their horses, Henry plunging into the thick underwood, which covered the side of the mountain for some distance above them. Harvey stopped to give each of their beasts a few severe blows of his whip, that drove them headlong down the path on the other side of the eminence, and then followed the example.

The pedler entered the thicket with a little caution, and avoided, as much as possible, rustling or breaking the branches in his way. There was but time only to shelter his person from view, when a dragoon led up the ascent, and on reaching the height he cried aloud—“ I saw one of their horses turning the hill this minute.”

“ Drive on ; spur forward, my lads,” shouted Mason ; “ give

the Englishman quarter, but cut down the pedler, and make an end of him." Henry felt his companion gripe his arm hard, as he listened in a great tremour to this cry, which was followed by the passage of a dozen horsemen, with a vigour and speed, that showed too plainly how little security their over-tired steeds could have afforded them.

"Now," said the pedler, rising from their cover to reconnoitre, and standing for a moment in suspense, "all that we gain is clear gain; for as we go up, they go down. Let us be stirring."

"But will they not follow us, and surround this mountain?" said Henry, rising, and imitating the laboured but rapid progress of his companion; "remember, they have foot as well as horse, and at any rate we shall starve in the hills."

"Fear nothing, Captain Wharton," returned the pedler, with confidence; "this is not the mountain that I would be on, but necessity has made me a dexterous pilot among these hills. I will lead you where no man will dare to follow. See, the sun is already setting behind the tops of the western mountains, and it will be two hours to the rising of the moon. Who, think you, will follow us far, on a November night, among these rocks and precipices?"

"But listen!" exclaimed Henry; "the dragoons are shouting to each other; they miss us already."

"Come to the point of this rock, and you may see them," said Harvey, composedly setting himself down to rest.

"Nay, they can see us—notice, they are pointing up with their fingers. There! one has fired his pistol, but the distance is too great for even a musket to carry upwards."

"They will pursue us," cried the impatient Henry; "let us be moving."

"They will not think of such a thing," returned the pedler, picking the chicker-berries that grew on the thin soil where he sat, and very deliberately chewing them, leaves and all, to refresh his mouth. "What progress could they make here in their heavy boots and spurs, with their long swords, or even pistols? No, no—they may go back and turn out the foot, but the horse pass through these defiles, when they can keep the saddle, with fear and trembling. Come, follow me, Captain Wharton; we have a troublesome march before us, but I will bring you where none will think of venturing this night." So saying, they both arose, and were soon hid from view among the rocks and caverns of the mountain.

The conjecture of the pedler was true. Mason and his men dashed down the hill, in pursuit, as they supposed, of their victims, but on reaching the bottom lands, they found only the deserted horses of the fugitives. Some little time was spent in examining the woods near them, and in endeavouring to take the

trial on such ground as might enable the horse to pursue, when one of the party descried the pedler and Henry seated on the rock already mentioned.

“He’s off,” muttered Mason, eyeing Harvey with savage fury; “he’s off, and we are disgraced. By heavens, Washington will not trust us with the keeping of a suspected tory, if we let this rasele trifle in this manner with the corps; and there sits the Englishman too, looking down upon us with a mighty smile of benevolence. I fancy that I can see it. Well, well, my lad, you are comfortably seated, I will confess, and something better than dancing upon nothing; but you are not to the west of the Haerlem river yet, and I’ll try your wind before you tell Sir Henry what you have seen, or I’m no soldier.”

“Shall I fire, and frighten the pedler?” asked one of the men, drawing his pistol from the holster. “Ay, startle the birds from their perch—let us see how they can use the wing.” The man fired his pistol, and Mason continued—“’Fore George, I believe the scoundrels laugh at us. But homeward, or we shall have them rolling stones upon our heads, and the Royal Gazettes teeming with an account of a rebel regiment routed by two loyalists. They have told bigger lies than that before now.” The dragoons moved sullenly after their officer, who rode towards their quarters, musing on the course it behoved him to pursue in the present dilemma. It was twilight when Mason’s party reached the dwelling, before the door of which were collected a great number of the officers and men, busily employed in giving and listening to the most exaggerated accounts of the escape of the spy. The mortified dragoons gave their ungrateful tidings with the sullen air of disappointed men; and most of the officers gathered round Mason, in consultation as to the steps that ought to be taken. Miss Peyton and Frances were breathless and unobserved listeners to all that passed between them, from the window of the chamber immediately above their heads.

“Something must be done, and that speedily,” observed the commanding officer of the regiment, which lay encamped before the house; “this English officer is doubtless an instrument in the great blow aimed at us by the enemy lately; besides, our honour is involved in his escape.”

“Let us beat the woods!” cried several at once; “by morning we shall have them both again.”—“Softly, softly, gentlemen,” returned the Colonel; “no man can travel these hills after dark, unless used to the passes. Nothing but horse can do service in this business, and I presume Lieutenant Mason hesitates to move without the orders of his Major.”

“I certainly dare not,” replied the subaltern, gravely shaking his head, “unless you will take the responsibility of an order; but Major Dunwoodie will be back again in two hours, and we

can carry the tidings through the hills before daylight; so that by spreading patrols across from one river to the other, and offering a reward to the country people, their escape will yet be impossible, unless they join the party that is said to be out on the Hudson."

"A very plausible plan," cried the Colonel, "and one that must succeed; but let a messenger be despatched to Dunwoodie, or he may continue at the ferry until it proves too late; though doubtless the runaways will lie in the mountains to night." To this suggestion Mason acquiesced, and a courier was sent to the Major, with the important intelligence of the escape of Henry, and an intimation of the necessity of his presence to conduct the pursuit. After this arrangement, the officers separated.

When Miss Peyton and her niece first learnt the escape of Captain Wharton, it was with difficulty they could credit their senses. They both relied so implicitly on the success of Dunwoodie's exertions, that they thought the act, on the part of their relative, extremely imprudent; but it was now too late to mend it. While listening to the conversation of the officers, both were struck with the increased danger of Henry's situation, if recaptured, and they trembled to think upon the great exertions that would be made to accomplish this object. Miss Peyton consoled herself, and endeavoured to cheer her niece, with the probability, that the fugitives would pursue their course with unremitting diligence, so that they might reach the neutral ground before the horse would carry down the tidings of their flight. The absence of Dunwoodie seemed to her all-important, and the artless spinster was anxiously devising some project that might detain her kinsman, and thus give her nephew the longest possible time. But very different were the reflections of Frances. She could no longer doubt that the figure she had seen on the hill was Birch, and she felt certain, that, instead of flying to the friendly forces below, her brother would be taken to the mysterious hut to pass the night. Frances and her aunt held a long and animated discussion by themselves, when the good spinster reluctantly yielded to the representation of her niece, and folding her in her arms, she kissed her cold cheek, and fervently blessing her, allowed her to depart on an errand of fraternal love.

## CHAPTER XXX.

"And here, forlorn and lost, I tread,  
With fainting steps, and slow;  
Where wilds, immeasurably spread  
Seem length'ing as I go."—*Goldsmith.*

THE night had set in dark and chilling, as Frances Wharton, with a beating heart, but light steps, moved through the little garden that lay behind the farm house which had been her brother's

prison, and took her way to the foot of the mountain, where she had seen the figure of him that she supposed to be the pedler. It was still early, but the darkness and dreary nature of a November evening would, at any other moment, or with less inducement to exertion, have driven her back in terror to the circle that she had left. Without pausing to reflect, however, she flew over the ground with a rapidity that seemed to bid defiance to all impediments, nor stopped even to breathe, until she had gone half the distance to the rock, that she had marked as the spot where Birch made his appearance on that very morning.

The good treatment of their women is the surest evidence that a people can give of their civilization; and there is no nation which has more to boast of, in this respect, than the Americans. Frances felt but little apprehension from the orderly and quiet troops, who were taking their evening's repast on the side of the highway, opposite to the field through which she was flying. They were her countrymen, and she knew that her sex would be respected by the Eastern militia, who composed this body; but in the volatile and reckless character of the Southern horse, she had less confidence. Outrages of any description were seldom committed by the really American soldiery, but the maid recoiled with exquisite delicacy from even the appearance of humiliation. When therefore, she heard the footsteps of a horse moving slowly up the road, she shrunk, timidly, into a little thicket of wood, which grew, neglected, around the spring that bubbled from the side of a hillock near her. The vidette, for such it proved to be, passed her without noticing her form, which was so enveloped as to be as little conspicuous as possible, humming a low air to himself, and probably thinking of some other fair that he had left, in the pride of her beauty, on the banks of the Potomac. Frances listened anxiously to the retreating footsteps of his horse, and as they died upon her ear, she ventured from her place of secrecy, and advanced a short distance into the field; where, startled at the gloom, and appalled with the dreariness of the prospect, she paused to reflect on what she had undertaken. Throwing back the hood of her cardinal, she sought the support of a tree, and gazed towards the summit of the mountain that was to be the goal of her enterprise. It rose from the plain, like a huge pyramid, giving nothing to the eye but its outlines. The pinnacle could be faintly discerned in front of a lighter back ground of clouds, between which a few glimmering stars occasionally twinkled in momentary brightness, and then gradually became obscured by the passing vapour, that was moving before the wind, at a vast distance below the clouds themselves. Should she return, Henry and the pedler would most probably pass the night in fancied security, upon that very hill, towards which she was straining her eyes, in the vain hope of observing some light that

might encourage her to proceed. The deliberate, and what to her seemed cold-blooded, project of the officer, for the re-capture of the fugitives, still rung in her ears, and stimulated her to go on: but the solitude into which she must venture, the time, the actual danger of the ascent, and the uncertainty of her finding the hut, or, what was still more disheartening, the chance that it might be occupied by unknown tenants, and those of the worst description—all urged her to retreat.

The increasing darkness was each moment rendering objects less and less distinct, and the clouds were gathering more gloomily in the rear of the hill, until its form could no longer be discerned. Frances threw back the profusion of her rich curls with both hands on her temples, in order to possess her senses in the utmost keenness; but the towering hill was entirely lost to the eye. At length she discovered a faint and twinkling blaze in the direction in which she thought the building stood, that, by its reviving and receding lustre, might be taken for the glimmering of a fire. But the delusion vanished as the horizon again cleared, and the star of the evening shone forth from a cloud, after struggling hard as if for existence, in all its unrivalled brilliancy. The maid now saw the mountain, to the left of where the planet was shining, through an opening in the hills, and suddenly a streak of mellow light burst upon the fantastic oaks that were thinly scattered over its summit, and gradually moved down its side, until the whole pile stood proudly erect under the rays of the rising moon. Although it would have been physically impossible for our heroine to advance without the aid of the friendly light, which now gleamed in softened brightness on the long line of level land before her, yet she was not encouraged to proceed. If she could see the goal of her wishes, she could also perceive the difficulties that must attend her reaching it. While deliberating in distressing uncertainty, now shrinking with the timidity of her sex and years from the enterprise, and now resolving to rescue her brother at every hazard, Frances turned her looks towards the east, in earnest gaze at the clouds which constantly threatened to involve her again in comparative darkness. Had an adder stung her, she could not have sprung with greater celerity than she recoiled from the object against which she was leaning, and which she, for the first time, noticed. The two upright posts, with a cross beam on their tops, and a rude platform beneath, told but too plainly the nature of the structure; even the cord was suspended from an iron staple, and was swinging to and fro in the night air. Frances hesitated no longer, but rather flew than ran across the meadow, and was soon at the base of the rock, where she hoped to find something like a path to the summit of the mountain. Here she was compelled to pause for breath, and she improved the leisure by surveying the ground about her. The ascent was quite abrupt,

but she soon found a sheep path that wound among the shelving rocks, and through the trees, so as to render her labour much less tiresome than it otherwise would have been. Throwing a fearful glance behind, the determined girl commenced her journey upwards. Young, active, and impelled by the generous wish of saving her brother, she moved up the hill with elastic steps, and very soon emerged from the cover of the woods, into an open space of more level ground, that had evidently been cleared of its timber for the purpose of cultivation. But either the war, or the sterility of the soil, had compelled the adventurer to abandon the advantages that he had obtained over the wilderness, and already the bushes and briers were springing up afresh, as if the plough had never traced its furrows through the mould which nourished them.

Frances felt her spirits invigorated by even these faint vestiges of the labour of man, and walked up the gentle acclivity with renewed hopes of success. The path now diverged in so many different directions, that she soon saw it would be useless to follow their windings, and abandoning it, at the first turn, she laboured forward towards what she thought was the nearest point to the summit. The cleared ground was soon past, and woods and rocks, clinging to the precipitous sides of the mountain, again opposed themselves to her progress. Occasionally, the path was to be seen running along the verge of the clearing, and then striking off into the scattering patches of grass and herbage, but in no instance could she trace it upward. Tufts of wool, hanging to the briers, sufficiently denoted the origin of these tracks, and Frances rightly conjectured that whoever descended the mountain, would avail himself of their existence to lighten the labour. Seating herself on a stone, the maid again paused to rest and to reflect: the clouds were rising before the moon, as if repelled by her brightness, and the whole scene at her feet lay pictured in the softest colours. The white tents of the militia were stretched in regular lines immediately beneath her. The light was shining in the window of her aunt, who, Frances easily fancied, was standing watching the mountain, racked with all the anxiety she might be supposed to feel for her niece. Lanterns were playing about in the stable-yard, where she knew the horses of the dragoons were kept, and believing them to be preparing for their night march, she again sprang upon her feet, and renewed her toil.

It was more than a quarter of a mile farther that our heroine had to ascend, although she had already conquered two-thirds of the height of the mountain. But she was now without a path, or any guide to direct her in her course: fortunately, the hill was conical, like most of the mountains in that range, and, by advancing upwards, she was certain of at length reaching the desired hut, which hung, as it were, on the very pinnacle. Nearly an

hour did she struggle with the numerous difficulties that she was obliged to overcome, when, having been repeatedly exhausted with her efforts, and, in several instances, in great danger from falls, she succeeded in gaining the small piece of table-land on the summit. Faint with her exertions, which had been unusually severe for her slender frame, she sunk on a rock, to recover her strength and fortitude for the approaching interview with her brother. A few moments sufficed for this purpose, when she proceeded in quest of the hut. All the neighbouring hills were distinctly visible by the aid of the moon, and Frances was able, where she stood, to trace the route of the highway, from the plains into the mountains. By following this line with her eyes, she soon discovered the point whence she had seen the mysterious dwelling, and directly opposite to that point she well knew the hut must stand.

The chilling air sighed through the leafless branches of the gnarled and crooked oaks, as with a step so light as hardly to rustle the dry leaves over which she trod, Frances moved forward to that part of the hill where she expected to find this secluded habitation; but nothing could she discern that in the least resembled a dwelling of any sort. In vain she examined every recess of the rocks, or inquisitively explored every part of the summit that she thought could hold the tenement of the pedler. No hut, nor any vestige of a human being, could she trace. The idea of her solitude struck on the terrified mind of the affrighted girl, and approaching to the edge of a shelving rock, she bent forward to gaze on the signs of life in the vale, when a ray of keen light dazzled her eyes, and a warm air diffused itself over her whole frame. Recovering from her surprise, Frances looked on the ledge beneath her, and at once perceived that she stood directly over the object of her search. A hole through its roof afforded a passage to the smoke, which as it blew aside, showed her a clear and cheerful fire crackling and snapping on a rude hearth of stone. The approach to the front of the hut was by a winding path around the point of the rock on which she stood, and by this she advanced to its door. Three sides of this singular edifice, if such it could be called, were composed of logs laid alternately on each other, to a little more than the height of a man; and the fourth was formed by the rock against which it leaned. The roof was made of the bark of trees, laid in long strips from the rock to its eaves; the fissures between the logs had been stuffed with clay, which in many places had fallen out, and dried leaves were made use of as a substitute to keep out the wind; a single window of four panes of glass was in front, but a board carefully closed it, in such a manner as to emit no light from the fire within. After pausing some time to view this singularly constructed hiding-place, for such Frances knew it must be, she applied her eye to a



crevice to examine the scene within. There was no lamp nor candle, but the blazing fire of dry wood made the interior of the hut light enough to read by. In one corner lay a bed of straw, with a pair of blankets thrown carelessly over it, as if left where they had last been used by the occupant. Against the walls and rock were suspended, from pegs forced into the crevices, various garments, and such as were apparently fitted for all ages and conditions, and for either sex. British and American uniforms hung peaceably by the side of each other; and on the peg that supported a gown of striped calico, such as was the usual country wear, was also depending a well powdered wig: in short, the attire was numerous, and as various as if a whole parish were to be equipped from this one wardrobe.

In the angle against the rock, and opposite to the fire, which was burning in the other corner, was an open cupboard, that held a plate or two, a mug, and the remains of some broken meat. Before the fire was a table, with one of its legs fractured, and made of rough boards; these, with a single stool, composed the furniture, if we except a few articles for cooking. A book that, by its shape and size, appeared to be a Bible, was lying on the table, unopened. But it was the occupant of the hut in whom Frances was chiefly interested. This was a man, sitting on the stool, with his head leaning on his hand, in such a manner as to conceal his features, and deeply occupied in examining some open papers before him. On the table lay a pair of curiously and richly mounted horseman's pistols, and the handle of a sheathed rapier, of exquisite workmanship, protruded from between the legs of the gentleman, one of whose hands rested carelessly on its guard. The tall stature of this unexpected tenant of the hut, and his form, much more athletic than that of either Harvey or her brother, told Frances, without the aid of his dress, that it was neither of those whom she sought. A close surtout was buttoned high in the throat of the stranger, and parting at his knees, showed breeches of buff, with military boots and spurs. His hair was dressed so as to expose the whole face, and, after the fashion of that day, was profusely powdered. A round hat was laid on the stones that formed a paved floor to the hut, as if to make room for a large map, which, among other papers, occupied the table.

This was an unexpected event to the maid. She had been so confident that the figure she had twice seen was the pedler, that on learning his agency in her brother's escape, she did not in the least doubt of finding them both in the place, which, she now discovered, was occupied by another and a stranger's form. She stood earnestly looking through the crevice, hesitating whether to retire, or to wait under the expectation of yet meeting with Henry, as the stranger moved his hand from before his eyes, and raised his face apparently in deep musing, when Frances instantly recog-

nized the benevolent and strongly marked, but composed features of Harper.

All that Dunwoodie had said of his power and disposition ; all that he had himself promised her brother ; and all the confidence that had been created by his dignified and paternal manner, rushed across the mind of Frances, who threw open the door of the hut, and falling at his feet, clasped his knees with her arms, as she cried—"Save him—save him—save my brother ; remember your promise, and save him !"

Harper had risen as the door opened, and there was a slight movement of one hand towards his pistols, but it was cool, and instantly checked, as Frances entered. He raised the hood of the cardinal which had fallen over her features, and exclaimed, with some uneasiness—"Miss Wharton ! But you cannot be alone ?"

"There is none here but my God and you ; and by his sacred name, I conjure you to remember your promise, and save my brother."

Harper gently raised her from her knees, and placed her on the stool he resigned, begging her at the same time to be composed, and to acquaint him with all that she knew. This Frances instantly did, with a hurried voice, ingenuously admitting him to a knowledge of her own views in visiting that lone spot at such an hour, and by herself. It was at all times difficult to probe the thoughts of one who held his passions in such disciplined subjection as Harper, but still there was a lighting of his thoughtful eye, and a slight unbending of his muscles, as the maid proceeded in her narrative. His interest, as she dwelt upon the manner of Henry's escape, and the flight to the woods, was deep and manifest, and he listened to the remainder of her tale with a marked expression of benevolent indulgence. Her apprehensions that her brother might still be too late through the mountains, seemed to have much weight with him, for, as she concluded, he walked a turn or two across the hut, in silent musing.

Frances hesitated, and unconsciously played with the handle of one of the pistols, and the paleness that her fears had spread over her fine features began to give place to a rich tint, as, after a short pause, she added—"We can depend much on the friendship of Major Dunwoodie, but his sense of honour is so pure, that—that—~~notwithstanding his—his—feelings—~~he will conceive it to be his duty to apprehend my brother again. Besides, he thinks there will be no danger in so doing, as he relies greatly on your interference."

"On mine !" said Harper, raising his eyes in surprise.

"Yes, on yours. When we told him of your kind language, he at once assured us all, that you had the power, and if you had promised, would have the inclination, to procure Henry's pardon."

"Said he more?" asked Harper, glancing a quick and searching eye towards the maiden. "Nothing but reiterated assurances of Henry's safety; even now he is in quest of you."

"Miss Wharton," said Harper, advancing with calm but impressive dignity, "that I bear no mean part in the unhappy struggle between England and America, it might be now useless to deny. You owe your brother's escape, this night, to my knowledge of his innocence, and the remembrance of my word. Major Dunwoodie is mistaken, when he says that I might openly have procured his pardon. I now, indeed, can control his fate, and I pledge to you a word which has some influence with Washington, that means shall be taken to prevent his re-capture. But from you, also, I exact a promise, that this interview, and all that has passed between us, remain confined to your own bosom, until you have my permission to speak upon the subject." Frances gave the desired assurance, and he continued—"The pedler and your brother will soon be here, but I must not be seen by the royal officer, or the life of Birch might be the forfeiture."

"Never!" cried Frances, ardently; "Henry could never be so base as to betray the man who saved him."

"It is no childish game that we are now playing, Miss Wharton. Men's lives and fortunes hang upon slender threads, and nothing must be left to accident that can be guarded against. Did Sir Henry Clinton know that the pedler held communion with me, and under such circumstances, the life of the miserable man would be taken instantly; therefore, as you value human blood, or remember the rescue of your brother, be prudent, and be silent. Communicate what you know to them both, and urge them to instant departure. If they can reach the last pickets of our army before morning's dawn, it shall be my care that there are none to intercept them. There is better work for Major Dunwoodie than to be exposing the life of his friend." While Harper was speaking, he carefully rolled up the map he had been studying, and placed it, together with sundry papers that were also open, into his pocket. He was still occupied in this manner, when the voice of the pedler, talking in unusually loud tones, was heard directly over their heads.

"Stand further this way, Captain Wharton, and you can see the tents in the moonshine. But let them mount and ride; I have a nest here that will hold us both, and we will go in at our leisure."

"And where is this nest?" cried Henry, with a voice of exultation; "I confess that I have eaten but little the two last days, and I crave some of the cheer that you mentioned."

"Hem," said the pedler, exerting his voice still more; "hem—this fog has given me a cold; but move slow—and be careful not to slip, or you may land on the baggonet of the sentinel on

the flats; 'tis a steep hill to rise, but one can go down it with all ease. Harper pressed his finger on his lip, to remind Frances of her promised silence, and taking his pistols and hat, so that no vestige of his visit remained, retired deliberately to a far corner of the hut, where, lifting several articles of dress, he entered a recess in the rock, and letting them fall again, was hid from view. Frances noticed, by the strong firelight, as he entered, that it was a natural cavity, and contained nothing but a few more articles for domestic use.

The surprise of Henry and the pedler, on entering and finding Frances in possession of the hut, may be easily imagined. Without waiting for explanations or questions, the warm-hearted girl flew into the arms of her brother, and gave a vent to her emotions in tears. But the pedler seemed struck with very different feelings. His first look was at the fire, which had been recently supplied with fuel: he then drew open a small drawer of the table, and looked a little alarmed at finding it empty—"Are you alone, Miss Fanny?" he asked, in a quick voice; "you did not come here alone?" "As you see me, Mr. Birch," said Frances, raising herself from her brother's arms, and turning an expressive glance towards the secret cavern, that the quick eye of the pedler instantly understood.

"But why, and wherefore are you here?" exclaimed her astonished brother; "and how knew you of this place at all?" Frances entered at once into a brief detail of what had occurred at the house since their departure, and the motives which induced her to seek them.

"But," said Birch, "why follow us here, when we were left on the opposite hill?" The maid related the glimpse that she had caught of the hut and the pedler, in her passage through the Highlands, as well as her view of him on that day, and her immediate conjecture that the fugitives would seek the shelter of this habitation for the night. Birch examined her features, as, with open ingenuousness, she related the simple incidents that had made her mistress of his secret, and as she ended, he sprang upon his feet, and striking the window with the stick in his hand demolished it at a blow.

"'Tis but little of luxury or comfort that I know," he said, "but even that little cannot be enjoyed in safety. Miss Wharton," he added, advancing before Fanny, and speaking with the bitter melancholy that was common to him, "I am hunted through these hills like a beast of the forest; but whenever, tired with my toils, I can reach this spot; poor and dreary as it is, I can spend my solitary nights in safety. Will you aid to make the life of a wretch still more miserable?" "Never!" cried Frances, with fervour; "your secret is safe with me." "Major Dunwoodie—" said the pedler, slowly, turning an eye upon her that read her soul.

Frances lowered her head upon her bosom for a moment in shame, then elevating her fine face glowing with fire, she added with enthusiasm—"Never, never, Harvey, as God may hear my prayers."

The pedler seemed satisfied; for he drew back, and, watching his opportunity, unseen by Henry, slipped behind the screen, and entered the cavern. Frances and her brother, who thought his companion had passed through the door, continued conversing on the latter's situation for several minutes, when the maid urged the necessity of expedition on his part in order to precede Dunwoodie, from whose sense of duty they knew they had no escape. The Captain took out his pocket-book, and wrote a few lines with his pencil, then folding the paper, he handed it to his sister—"Frances," he said, "you have this night proved yourself to be an incomparable woman. As you love me, give that unopened to Dunwoodie, and remember that two hours of time may save my life." "I will—I will; but why delay? why not fly, and improve these precious moments?"

"Your sister says well, Captain Wharton," exclaimed Harvey, who had re-entered unseen; "we must go at once. Here is food to eat as we travel." "But who is to see this fair creature in safety?" cried the Captain. "I can never desert my sister in such a place as this."

"Leave me! leave me!" said Frances; "I can descend as I came up. Do not doubt me; you know not my courage nor my strength." "I have not known you, dear girl, it is true; but now as I learn your value, can I quit you here? no; never, never."

"Captain Wharton," said Birch, throwing open the door, "you can trifle with your own lives, if you have many to spare: I have but one, and must nurse it. Do I go alone, or not?"

"Go, go, dear Henry," said Frances, embracing him; "go; remember our father; remember Sarah." She waited not for his answer, but gently forced him through the door, and closed it with her own hands.

For a short time there was a warm debate between Henry and the pedler; but the latter finally prevailed, and the maid heard the successive plunges, as they went down the sides of the mountain at a rapid rate, and they were soon out of hearing. Immediately after the noise of the departure had ceased, Harper reappeared. He took the arm of Frances in silence, and led her from the hut. The way seemed familiar to him, as, ascending to the ledge above them, he led his companion across the table land, tenderly pointing out the little difficulties in their route, and cautioning her against injury. Frances felt, as she walked by the side of his majestic person, that she was supported by a man of no common stamp. The firmness of his step, and the

composure of his manner, seemed to indicate a mind that was settled and resolved. By taking a route over the back of the hill, they descended with great expedition, and but little danger. The distance it had taken Frances an hour to conquer, was passed by Harper and his companion in ten minutes, and they entered the open space already mentioned. He struck into one of the sheep paths, and, crossing the clearing with rapid steps, they came suddenly upon a horse, caparisoned for a rider of no mean rank. The noble beast snorted and pawed the earth as his master approached, and replaced the pistols in the holsters.

Harper then turned, and taking the hand of Frances, spoke as follows: "You have this night saved your brother, Miss Wharton. It would not be proper for me to explain why there are limits to my ability to serve him, but if you can detain the horse for two hours, he is safe. After what you have already done, I can believe you equal to any duty. God has denied to me children, young lady, but if it had been his blessed will that my marriage should not have been childless, such a treasure as yourself would I have asked from his mercy. But you are my child; all who dwell in this broad land are my children, and my care, and take the blessing of one who hopes yet to meet you in happier days." As he spoke, with a solemnity that touched Frances to the heart, he laid her hand impressively upon her head. The maid turned her face towards him, and the hood again falling back, exposed her lovely features to the fulness of the moonbeams. A tear was glistening on either cheek, and her mild blue eyes were gazing upon him with reverence. Harper bent and pressed a paternal kiss upon her forehead, and continued—"Any of these sheep paths will take you to the plain; but here we must part—I have much to do, and far to ride; forget me in all but your prayers." He then mounted his horse, and lifting his hat with studied politeness, rode towards the back of the mountain, descending at the same time, and was soon hid by the trees. Frances sprang forward with a lightened heart, and taking the first path that led downwards, in a few minutes reached the plain in safety. While busied in stealing privately through the meadows towards the house, the noise of horse approaching startled her, and she felt how much more was to be apprehended from man, in some situations, than from solitude. Hiding her form in the angle of a fence near the road, she remained quiet for a moment, and watched their passage. A small party of dragoons, whose dress was different from the Virginians, passed at a brisk trot, and were followed by a gentleman, enveloped in a large cloak, whom she at once knew to be Harper. Behind him rode a black in livery, and two youths in uniforms brought up the rear. Instead of taking the road that led by the encampment, they turned short to the left, and entered the hills.

Wondering who this unknown but powerful friend of her brother could be, Frances glided across the fields, and using due precautions in approaching the dwelling, regained her residence undiscovered and in safety.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

“Hence, bashful cunning!  
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!  
I am your wife, if you will marry me.”—*Tempest*.

ON joining Miss Peyton, Frances learnt that Dunwoodie was not yet returned; although with a view to relieve Henry from the importunities of the supposed fanatic, he had desired a very respectable divine of their own church to ride up from the river and offer his services. This gentleman was already arrived, and spent the half hour he had been there in a sensible and well-bred conversation with the spinster, that in no degree touched upon their domestic affairs. To the eager inquiries of Miss Peyton, relative to her success in her romantic excursion, Frances could say no more than that she was bound to be silent, and to recommend the same precaution to the good maiden also. There was a smile that played around the beautiful mouth of Frances, while she uttered this injunction, chasing away the momentary gleam of distrust that clouded her features, which satisfied her aunt that all was as it should be. She was urging her niece to take some refreshment after her fatiguing expedition, with a kind-hearted consideration of her habits, when the noise of a horseman riding to the door, announced the return of the Major. He had been found by the courier, who was despatched by Mason, impatiently waiting the return of Harper to the ferry, and immediately flew to the place where his friend had been confined, harassed by many different reflections. The heart of Frances bounded with violence, as she listened to his approaching footsteps. It wanted yet an hour to the termination of the shortest period that the pedler had fixed as the time necessary, in which to effect his escape. Even Harper, powerful and well disposed as he acknowledged himself to be, had laid great stress upon the importance of detaining the Virginians from pursuit during that hour. She, however, had no time to rally her thoughts, before Dunwoodie entered one door, as Miss Peyton, with the readiness of female instinct, retired through another.

The countenance of Peyton was flushed, and there was an air of vexation and disappointment pervading his whole manner. “’Twas imprudent Frances; nay, it was unkind,” he cried, throwing himself into a chair, “to fly at the very moment that I had assured him of his safety. I can almost persuade myself, that you delight in creating points of difference in our feelings and duties.”

"In our duties there may very possibly be a difference," returned his mistress, approaching near to where she sat, and leaning her slender form slightly against the wall; "but not in our feelings, Peyton. You must certainly rejoice in the escape of Henry from death!"

"There was no death impending. He had the promise of Harper; and it is a word never to be doubted. Oh! Frances! Frances! had you known this man, you would never have trusted his assurance; nor would you have again reduced me to this distressing alternative."

"What alternative?" asked Frances, pitying his emotions deeply, but eagerly seizing upon every circumstance to prolong the interview.

"What alternative! am I not compelled to spend this night in the saddle, to re-capture your brother, when I had thought to have laid my head on its pillow, with the happy consciousness of contributing to his release? You make me seem your enemy; I, who would cheerfully shed the last drop of blood in your service. I repeat, Frances, it was rash; it was unkind; it was a sad, sad mistake."

The maid bent towards him, and timidly took one of his hands, while with the other she gently removed the raven curls from his burning brow, as she said—"But why go at all, dear Peyton? You have done much for our country, and she cannot exact such a sacrifice as this at your hand."

"Frances! Miss Wharton!" exclaimed the youth, springing on his feet, and pacing the floor with a cheek that burnt with fire through its brown covering, and an eye that sparkled with conscientious integrity; "it is not my country, but my honour, that requires the sacrifice. Has he not fled from the guard of my own corps? But for this I might have been spared the blow! But if the eyes of the Virginians are blinded to deception and artifice, their horses are swift of foot, and their sabres keen. We will see, before to-morrow's sun, who it is will presume to hint, that the beauty of the sister furnished a mask to conceal the brother. Yes, yes; I should like, even now," he continued, laughing bitterly, "to hear the villain, who would dare to surmise that such a treachery existed!"

"Peyton, dear Peyton," said Frances, recoiling in terror from his angry eye, "you curdle my blood—would you kill my brother?"

"Would I not die for him!" exclaimed Dunwoodie, with a softened voice, as he turned to her more mildly; "you know I would; but I am distracted with the cruel surmise to which this step of Henry's subjects me. What will Washington think of me, should he learn that I ever became your husband?"

"If that alone impels you to act so harshly towards my brother," returned Frances, with a slight tremour in her voice, "let it never happen for him to learn."



“And this is consoling me, Frances!” cried her lover; “what a commentary on my sufferings!”

“Nay, dear Dunwoodie, I meant nothing harsh or unkind; but are you not making us both of more consequence to Washington than the truth will justify!”

“I trust that my name is not entirely unknown to the Commander-in-Chief,” said the Major, a little proudly; “nor are you as obscure as your modesty would make you. I believe you, Frances, when you say that you pity me, and it must be my task to continue worthy of such feelings. But I waste the precious moments; we must go through the hills to-night, that we may be refreshed, in time, for the duty of to-morrow. Mason is already waiting for my orders to mount. Frances, I leave you with a heavy heart; pity me, but feel no concern for your brother; he must again become a prisoner, but every hair of his head is sacred.”

“Stop! Dunwoodie, I conjure you,” cried Frances, gasping for breath, as she noticed that the hand of the clock still wanted many minutes to the desired hour; “before you go on your errand of fastidious duty, read this note that Henry has left for you, and which, doubtless, he thought he was writing to the friend of his youth.”

“Frances, I excuse your feelings; but the time will come when you will do me justice.”

“That time is now,” she answered, extending her hand, unable any longer to feign a displeasure that she did not feel.”

“Where got you this note?” exclaimed the youth, glancing his eyes over its contents. “Poor Henry, you are indeed my friend! If any one wishes me happiness, it is you.”

“He does, he does,” cried Frances, eagerly; “he wishes you every happiness; believe what he tells you; every word is true.”

“I do believe him, lovely girl, and he refers me to you for its confirmation. Would that I could trust equally to your affections.” “You may, Peyton,” said Frances, looking up with innocent confidence towards her lover.

“Then read for yourself, and verify your words,” interrupted Dunwoodie, holding the note towards her eyes, that sparkled with every passion but anger.

Frances received it in astonishment, and read the following:—

*“Life is too precious to be trusted to uncertainties. I leave you, Peyton, unknown to all but Cæsar, and I recommend him to your mercy. But there is a care that weighs me to the earth. Look at my aged and infirm parent. He will be stigmatized for the supposed crime of his son. Look at those helpless sisters, that I leave behind me, without a protector. Prove to me that you love us all. Let the clergyman whom you will bring with you, unite you this night to Frances, and become, at once, brother, son, and husband.”*

The paper fell from the hands of Frances, and she endeavoured to raise her eyes to the face of Dunwoodie, but they sank abashed before his eager gaze.

"What say you!" said Peyton, with an insinuating voice; "am I worthy of this confidence? will you send me out against your brother this night, to meet my own brother; or will it be the officer of Congress in quest of the officer of Britain?"

"And would you do less of your duty because I am your wife, Major Dunwoodie? In what degree would it better the condition of Henry?"

"Henry, I repeat, is safe. The word of Harper is his guarantee; but I will show the world a bridegroom," continued the youth, perhaps deceiving himself a little, "who is equal to the duty of arresting the brother of his bride." "And will the world comprehend it all?" said Frances, with a musing air, that lighted a thousand hopes in the bosom of her lover. In fact the temptation was mighty. Indeed, there seemed no other way to detain Dunwoodie until the fatal hour had elapsed. The words of Harper himself, who had so lately told her that openly he could do but little for Henry, and that everything depended upon the gaining of time, were deeply engraved upon her memory. Perhaps there was also a fleeting thought of the possibility of an eternal separation from her lover, should he proceed and bring back her brother to punishment. It is difficult at all times to analyze human emotions, and they pass through the sensitive heart of a woman with the rapidity, and nearly with the vividness of lightning.

"Why do I tarry, dear Frances," cried Dunwoodie, who was studying her varying countenance with rapture; "a few minutes might give me a husband's claim to protect you." The brain of Frances whirled. She turned an anxious eye to the clock, and the hand seemed to linger over its face, as if with intent to torture her.

"Speak, my Frances," murmured Dunwoodie; "may I summon my good kinswoman? determine, for time presses." Frances endeavoured to reply, but could only whisper something that was inaudible, but which her lover, with the privilege of immemorial custom, construed into assent. He turned and flew to the door, when the maid recovered her voice—"Stop, Peyton; I cannot enter into such a solemn engagement with a fraud upon my conscience. I have seen Henry since his escape, and time is all-important to him. Here is my hand; if, with this knowledge of the consequences of delay, you will not reject it, it is freely yours."

"Reject it!" cried the delighted youth; "I take it as the richest gift of heaven. There is time enough for us all. Two hours will take me through the hills, and by noon, to-morrow,

I will return with Washington's pardon for your brother, and Henry will help to enliven our nuptials."

"Then meet me here in ten minutes," said Frances, greatly relieved by unburthening her mind, and filled with the hope of securing Henry's safety, "and I will return and take those vows which will bind me to you for ever." Dunwoodie paused only to press her once to his bosom, and flew to communicate his wishes to the priest.

Miss Peyton received the avowal of her niece with infinite astonishment, and a little displeasure. It was violating all the order and decorum of a wedding to get it up so hastily, and with so little ceremony. But Frances, with modest firmness, declared that her resolution was taken; she had long possessed the consent of her friends, and their nuptials, for months, had only waited her pleasure. She had now promised Dunwoodie, and it was her wish to comply; more she dare not say without committing herself, by entering into explanations that might endanger Birch, or Harper, or both. Unused to contention, and really much attached to her kinsman, the feeble objections of Miss Peyton gave way to the firmness of her niece. Mr. Wharton was too completely a convert to the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, to withstand any solicitation from an officer of Dunwoodie's influence in the rebel armies, and the maid returned to the apartment, accompanied by her father and aunt, at the expiration of the time that she had fixed. Dunwoodie and the clergyman were already there. Frances, silently, and without the affectation of reserve, placed in his hand the wedding ring of her own mother, and after some little time spent in arranging Mr. Wharton and herself, Miss Peyton suffered the ceremony to proceed. The clock stood directly before the wandering eyes of Frances, and she turned many an anxious glance at the dial; but soon the solemn language of the priest caught her attention, and her mind became intent upon the vows she was uttering. It was quickly over; and as the clergyman closed the words of benediction, the clock told the hour of nine. This was the time that Harper had deemed so important, and Frances felt as if a mighty load was at once removed from her heart. Dunwoodie folded her in his arms, saluted the spinster again and again, and shook Mr. Wharton and the divine repeatedly by the hands. In the midst of this excess of rapture, a tap was heard at the door. It was opened, and Mason appeared.

"We are in the saddle," said the lieutenant, "and with your permission, will lead on; as you are so well mounted you can overtake us at your leisure." "Yes, yes, my good fellow; march," cried Dunwoodie, gladly seizing an excuse to linger; "I will reach you at the first halt." The subaltern retired to execute these orders, and was followed by Mr. Wharton and the divine.

"Now, Peyton," said Frances, "it is indeed a brother that you seek; I am sure I need not caution you in his behalf, should you unfortunately find him." "Say fortunately," cried the youth; "for I am determined he shall yet dance at my wedding. Would that I could win him to our cause; it is the cause of his country, and I could fight with more pleasure, Frances, with your brother by my side."

"Oh! mention it not! you awake terrible reflections."

"I will not mention it," returned her husband; "but I must now leave you. Tom Mason moved off at a famous rate, and the fellow has no orders. But the sooner I go, Frances, the sooner I shall return."

The noise of a horseman was heard approaching the house with great speed, and Dunwoodie was yet taking leave of his bride and her aunt, when an officer was shown into the room by his own man. The gentleman wore the dress of an aid-de-camp, and the Major at once knew him to be one of the family of Washington.

"Major Dunwoodie," he said, after bowing courteously to the ladies; "the Commander-in-chief has directed me to give you these orders." He executed his mission, and, pleading duty, took his leave immediately.

"Here, indeed!" cried the Major, "is an unexpected turn in the whole affair; but I understand it; Harper has got my letter, and already we feel his influence." "Have you news affecting Henry?" cried Frances, springing to his side.

"Listen, and you shall judge."

"SIR—Upon the receipt of this, you will concentrate your squadron, so as to be in front of the enemy's covering party to their foragers, by ten o'clock to-morrow, on the heights of Croton, where you will find a body of foot to support you. The escape of the English spy has been reported to me, but his arrest is unimportant, compared with the duty I now assign you. You will, therefore, recall your men, if any are in pursuit, and endeavour to defeat the enemy forthwith,

"Your Obedient Servant, "GEORGE WASHINGTON."

"There, thank God," cried Dunwoodie, "my hands are washed of Henry's re-capture; I can now move to my duty with honour."

"And with prudence too, dear Peyton," said Frances, with a face as pale as death; "remember, Dunwoodie, you leave behind you new claims upon your caution and care."

The youth dwelt on her lovely but pallid features with rapture, and as he pressed her hand to his heart, exclaimed—"But why this haste? I can reach Peekskill before the troops have breakfasted, if I start some hours hence. I am too old a soldier to be hastened or disconcerted."

"Nay! go at once," said Frances, in a hurried voice, with a

face whose bright tints would have shamed a ruddy morn; "neglect not the orders of Washington.—And oh! be prudent—be careful." "For your sake I will, lovely innocent," cried her husband, folding her to his heart for the last time. Frances sobbed a moment on his bosom, and he tore himself from her presence. Miss Peyton retired to her niece, to whom she conceived it necessary, before they separated for the night, to give an abundance of good advice on the subject of matrimonial duty. Her lecture was modestly received, if not properly digested. We regret that history has not handed down to us this precious dissertation; but the result of all our investigation has been to learn, that it partook largely of those peculiarities, which are said to tincture the rules prescribed to govern bachelors' children. We will leave them, and return to Captain Wharton and Harvey Birch.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

"Allow him not a parting word;  
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!"—*Rokeby*:

THE pedler and his companion soon reached the valley, and after pausing to listen, and hearing no sounds which announced that pursuers were abroad, they entered the highway. Acquainted with every step that led through the mountains, and possessed of sinews inured to toil, Birch led the way, in silent activity, with the lengthened strides that were peculiar to the man and his profession; his pack was alone wanting to finish the appearance of his ordinary business air. At times, when they approached one of those little posts held by the American troops, with which the Highlands abounded, he would take a circuit to avoid the sentinels, and plunge at once fearlessly into a thicket, or ascend a rugged hill, that to the eye seemed impassable. But the pedler was familiar with every turn in their difficult route, knew where the ravines might be penetrated, or where the streams were fordable. In one or two instances, Henry thought that their further progress was absolutely at an end, but the ingenuity or knowledge of his guide conquered every difficulty. After walking at an incredible rate for three hours, they suddenly diverged from the road which inclined to the east, and held their course directly across the hills in a due south direction. This movement was made, the pedler informed his companion, in order to avoid the parties who constantly patrolled in the southern entrance of the Highlands, as well as to shorten the distance, by travelling in a straight line. After reaching the summit of a very considerable hill, Harvey seated himself by the side of a little run, and opened the wallet, that he had slung where his pack was commonly suspended, invited his comrade to partake of the coarse fare that

it contained. Henry had kept pace with the pedler, more by the excitement natural to his situation, than by the equality of his physical powers. The idea of any halt was unpleasant, so long as there existed a possibility of the horse getting below him, in time to intercept their retreat through the neutral ground. He, therefore, started his apprehensions to his companion, and urged his wish to proceed. "Follow my example, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, commencing his frugal meal; "if the horse have started, it will be more than man can do to head them; and if they have not, other work is cut out for them that will drive all thoughts of you and I from their brains."

"You said yourse'f, that two hours' detention was all important to us, and if we loiter here, of what use will be the advantage that we may have already obtained."

"Them two hours are passed, and Major Dunwoodie thinks little of following two men, when hundreds are waiting for him on the banks of the river."

"Listen!" interrupted Henry; "there are horse at this moment passing at the foot of the hill. I hear them even laughing and talking to each other. By heavens! there is the voice of Dunwoodie himself, and he calls to his comrade in a manner that shows but little uneasiness. One would think that the situation of his friend would lower his spirits; surely Frances could not have given him the letter."

On hearing the first exclamation of the Captain, Birch arose from his seat, and approached cautiously to the brow of the hill, taking care to keep his body in the shadow of the rocks, so as to be unseen at any distance, and earnestly reconnoitred the passing group of horsemen. He continued listening, until their quick footsteps were no longer audible, and then quietly returned to his seat, and with incomparable coolness resumed his meal. "You have a long walk, and a tiresome one, before you, Captain Wharton; you had better do as I do—you were eager for food at the hut above Fishkill, but travelling seems to have worn down your appetite."

"I thought myself safe then, but the information of my sister fills me with uneasiness, and I cannot eat."

"You have less reason to be troubled now than at any time since the night before you were taken, when you refused my advice and offer to see you in safety," returned the pedler. "Major Dunwoodie is not a man to laugh and be gay, when his friend is in difficulty. Come, then, and eat, for no horse will be in our way, if we can hold our legs for four hours longer, and the sun keeps behind the hills as long as common."

There was a composure in the pedler's manner that inspired the youth, and having once determined to submit to Harvey's government, he suffered himself to be persuaded into a tolerable

supper, if the quantity be considered without any reference to the quality. After completing their repast, the pedler again resumed his journey. Henry followed in blind submission to his will. For two hours more they struggled with the difficult and dangerous passes of the Highlands, without road, or any other guide than the moon, which was travelling the heavens, now wading through the flying clouds, and now shining upon objects with a brilliancy second only to her great source of light. At length they arrived where the mountains sunk into rough and unequal hillocks, and passed at once from the barren sterility of the precipices, to the imperfect culture of the neutral ground. The pedler now became more guarded in the manner in which they proceeded, and took divers precautions to prevent meeting any moving parties of the Americans. With their stationary posts he was too familiar to endanger his falling upon them unawares. He wound among the hills and vales, now keeping the highways and now avoiding them, with a precision that seemed instinctive. There was nothing elastic in his tread, but he glided over the ground with enormous strides, and a body bent forward, without appearing to use exertion, or know weariness.

The moon had set, and a faint streak of light was beginning to show itself in the east. Captain Wharton ventured to express a sense of fatigue, and to inquire if they were not yet arrived at a part of the country where it might be safe to apply at some of the farm-houses for admission.

"See here," said the pedler, pointing to a hill at a short distance in their rear; "do you not see a man walking on the point of that rock? Turn more, so as to bring the daylight in the range—notice, now he moves, and seems to be looking earnestly at something to the eastward. That is a royal sentinel, and two hundred of the rig'lar troops lay on that hill, no doubt sleeping on their arms."

"Then" cried Henry, "let us join them, and our danger is at once ended."

"Softly, softly, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, dryly; "you've once been in the midst of three hundred of them, but there was a man who could take you out; see you not yon dark body on the side of the opposite hill, just above the corn stalks? There are the—the rebels—waiting only for day, to see who will be master of the ground." "Nay, then," exclaimed the fiery youth, "I will join the troops of my prince, and share their fortune, be it good or be it bad."

"You forget that you fight with a halter around your neck; no, no—I have promised one whom I must not disappoint, to carry you safe in; and unless you forget what I have already done, and what I have risked for you, Captain Wharton, you will turn and follow me to Haerlem."

To this appeal the youth felt unwillingly obliged to submit,

and they continued their course towards the city. It was not long before they gained the banks of the Hudson. After searching for a short time under the shore, the pedler discovered a skiff, that from its movements appeared to be an old acquaintance; and entering it with his companion, he landed him on the south side of the Croton. Here Birch declared they were in safety; for the royal troops held the continentals at bay, and the former were out in too great strength, for the light parties of the latter to trust themselves below that river, on the immediate banks of the Hudson, from a dread of having their retreat cut off. Throughout the whole of this arduous flight, the pedler had manifested a coolness and presence of mind that nothing appeared to disturb. All his faculties seemed to be of more than usual perfection, and the infirmities of nature to have no dominion over him. Henry had followed him like a child in leading strings, and he now reaped his reward, as he felt a bound of pleasure at his heart, on hearing that he was relieved from apprehension, and permitted to banish every doubt of his security. A steep and laborious ascent brought them from the level of the tide-waters to the high lands, that form, in this part of the river, the eastern banks of the Hudson. Retiring a little from the highway, under the shelter of a thicket of cedars, the pedler threw his form on a flat rock, and announced to his companion, that the hour for rest and refreshment was at length arrived. The day was now opened, and objects could be seen in the distance with distinctness. Beneath them lay the Hudson, stretching to the south in a straight line as far as the eye could reach. To the north, the broken fragments of the Highlands threw upwards their lofty heads, above the masses of fog that hung over the water, and by which the course of the river could be traced into the bosom of the hills, whose conical summits were grouping together, one behind another, in that disorder which might be supposed to succeed their mighty, but fruitless, efforts to stop the progress of the flood. Emerging from these confused piles, the river, as if rejoicing at its release from the struggle, expanded into a wide bay, which was ornamented by a few fertile and low points that jugged humbly into its broad basin. On the opposite or western shore, the rocks of Jersey were gathered into an array that has obtained for them the name of the "*palisadoes*," elevating themselves for many hundred feet, as if to protect the rich country in their rear from the inroads of the conqueror; but, disdaining such an enemy, the river swept proudly by their feet, and held its undeviating way to the ocean. A ray of the rising sun darted upon the slight cloud that hung over the placid river, and at once the whole scene was in motion, changing and assuming new forms, and exhibiting fresh objects to the view in each successive moment. At the daily rising of this great curtain of nature, at the present time, scores of white sails and slug-



gish vessels are seen thickening on the water, with that air of life which denotes the neighbourhood to the metropolis of a great and flourishing empire; but to Henry and the pedler it displayed only the square yards and lofty masts of a vessel of war, riding a few miles below them. Before the fog had begun to move, the tall spars were seen above it, and from one of them a long pendant was feebly borne abroad in the current of night air that still quivered along the river; but as the smoke arose, the black hull, the crowded and complicated mass of rigging, and the heavy yards and booms, spreading their arms afar, were successfully brought into view.

“There, Captain Wharton,” said the pedler, “there is a safe resting place for you; America has no arm that can reach you, if once you gain the deck of that ship. She is sent up to cover the foragers, and support the troops; the rig’lar officers are over fond of the sound of cannon from their shipping.” Without condescending to reply to the sarcasm conveyed in this speech, or perhaps not noticing it, Henry joyfully acquiesced in the proposal, and it was accordingly arranged between them, that, so soon as they were refreshed, he should endeavour to get on board the vessel.

While busily occupied in the very indispensable operation of breaking their fast, our adventures were startled with the sound of distant fire-arms. At first a few scattering shots were fired, which were succeeded by a long and animated roll of musketry, and then quick and heavy volleys followed each other. “Your prophecy is made good,” cried the English officer, springing upon his feet. “Our troops and the rebels are at it;—I would give six months’ pay to see the charge.”

“Umph!” returned his companion, without ceasing his meal; “they do very well to look at from a distance; but I can’t say but the company of this bacon, cold as it is, is more to my taste, just now, than a hot fire from the continentals.”

“The discharges are heavy for so small a force; but the fire seems irregular.” “The scattering guns are from the Connecticut militia,” said Harvey, raising his head to listen; “they rattle it off finely, and are no fools at a mark. The volleys are the rig’lars, who, you know, fire by word—as long as they can.”

“I like not the warmth of what you call a scattering fire,” exclaimed the Captain, moving about with uneasiness; “it is more like the roll of a drum than the pop-gun shooting of skirmishers.”

“No, no; I said not skimmagers,” returned the other, raising himself upon his knees, and ceasing to eat; “so long as they’ll stand, they are too good for the best troops in the royal army. Each man does his work as if fighting by the job; and then they think while they fight, and don’t send bullets among the clouds, that were meant to kill men upon earth.”

"You talk and look, sir, as if you wished them success," cried Henry, sternly. "I wish success to the good cause only, Captain Wharton," returned the pedler, suddenly changing his air of exultation to an abstracted manner. "I thought you knew me too well, to be uncertain which party I favoured." "Oh! you are reputed loyal, Mr. Birch," said the youth, with a little contempt;—"but, by Heavens! the volleys have ceased!"

They both now listened intently, for a little while, during which the irregular reports became less brisk, and suddenly heavy and repeated volleys followed. "They've been at the baggonet," said the pedler; "the rig'lars have tried the baggonet, and have drove the rebels." "Ay! Mr. Birch, the bayonet is the thing for the British soldier, after all!" shouted Henry with exultation. "They delight in the bayonet!"

"Well, to my notion," said the pedler, "there's but little delight to be taken in any such pokerish thing. But I dare say the militia are of my mind, for half of them don't carry the ugly things.—Lord! Lord! Captain, I wish you'd go with me once into the rebel camp, and hear what lies the men will tell about Bunker hill and Burg'yne: you'd think they loved the baggonet as much as they do their dinner."

There was an inward chuckle, and singular air of affected innocence about his companion, while speaking, that rather annoyed Henry, and he deigned no reply to his remarks.

The firing now became desultory, occasionally intermingled with heavy volleys. Both of the fugitives were standing, listening with much anxiety, when a man, armed with a musket, was seen stealing towards them under the shelter of the cedar bushes that partially covered the hill. Henry first noticed this suspiciously looking stranger, and instantly pointed him out to his companion. Birch started, and certainly made an indication of sudden flight; but recollecting himself, he stood, in sullen silence, until the stranger was within a few yards of them. "'Tis friends," said the fellow, clubbing his gun, but yet apparently afraid to venture nearer. "You had better be off," cried Birch, in a loud voice, "here's rig'lars enough at hand to take care of you; we are not near Dunwoodie's horse now, and you will not easily get me again."

"Damn Major Dunwoodie and his horse," cried the leader of the skimmers, (for it was he), "God bless king George! and a speedy end to the rebellion, say I. If you would just show me the safe way in to the refugees, Mr. Birch, I'll pay you well, and ever after stand your friend in the bargain."

"The road is as open to you as to me," said Birch, turning from him in ill-concealed disgust; "if you want to find the refugees, you know well where they lay."

"Ay, but I'm a little afear'd of going in upon them by myself;

now you are well known to them all, and it will be no detriment to you just to let me go in with you."

Henry interfered, and after holding a short dialogue with the fellow, entered into a compact with him, that on condition of surrendering his arms, he might join their party. The man complied instantly, and Birch received his gun with eagerness, nor did he lay it upon his shoulder to renew their march, before he had carefully examined the priming, and ascertained, to his satisfaction, that it contained a good dry ball-cartridge. As soon as this engagement was completed, they commenced their journey anew. By following the bank of the river, Birch led the way free from observation, until they reached the point opposite to the frigate, when, by making a signal, a boat was induced to approach. Some time was spent, and much precaution used, before the seamen would trust themselves ashore; but Henry having finally succeeded in making the officer, who commanded the party, credit his assertions, he was able to rejoin his companions in arms in safety. Before taking leave of Birch, the Captain handed him his purse, which was tolerably well supplied for the times: the pedler received it, and watching an opportunity, he conveyed it, unnoticed by the skinner, to a part of his dress that was ingeniously contrived to hold such treasures. The boat pulled from the shore, and Birch turned on his heel, drawing a sigh of vast relief, and shot up the hills with the enormous strides for which he was famous. The skinner followed, and each party pursued their common course, casting frequent and suspicious glances at the other, and both maintaining a most impenetrable silence. Wagons were moving along the river road, and occasional parties of horse were seen, escorting the fruits of their excursion towards the city. As the pedler had views of his own, he rather avoided falling in with any of these patrols, than sought their protection. But, after travelling for a few miles, on the immediate banks of the river, during which, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the skinner to establish something like sociability, he maintained a most determined silence, keeping a firm hold of the gun, and a side glance upon his associate, the pedler suddenly struck into the highway, with an intention of crossing the hills towards Haerlem. At the moment that he gained the path, a body of horse came over a little eminence, and was upon him before he perceived them. It was too late to retreat, and after taking a view of the materials that composed this scouting party, Birch rejoiced in the rencontre, as a probable means of relieving him from his unwelcome companion. They were some eighteen or twenty men, who were mounted and equipped as dragoons, though neither their appearance nor manners denoted much of discipline. At their head rode a heavy, middle-aged man, whose features expressed as much

of animal passion, and as little of reason, as could well be imagined. He wore the dress of an officer, but there was none of that neatness in his attire, nor grace in his movements, that was usually found about the gentlemen who bore the royal commission. His limbs were firm, and not pliable, and he sat his horse with strength and confidence, but his bridle hand would have been ridiculed by the meanest rider in the Virginia regiment. As he expected, this leader instantly hailed the pedler, in a voice by no means more conciliating than his appearance.

"Hey! my gentleman, which way so fast?" he cried. "Has Washington sent you down as spies?"

"I am an innocent pedler," returned Harvey, meekly, "and am going below to lay in a fresh stock."

"And how do you expect to get below, my innocent pedler? Do you think we hold the forts at Kingsbridge to cover such peddling rascals as you in your goings in and comings out?"

"I believe I hold a pass that will carry me through," said the pedler, handing him a paper, with an air of consummate indifference.

The officer, for such he was, read it, and gave a look of extraordinary intelligence for the man, at Harvey, when he had done. Then turning fiercely to one or two of his men, who had officiously passed on and stopped the way, he cried—"Why do you stop the man? give way, and let him pass in peace: but who have we here? your name is not on the paper."

"No, sir," said the skinner, lifting his hat with humility; "I have been a poor deluded man, who has been serving in the rebel army, but, thank God, I've lived to see the error of my ways, and am now come to make reparation, by enlisting under the Lord's anointed."

"Umph! a deserter—a skinner, I'll swear, wanting to turn cow-boy. In the last brush I had with the scoundrels, I could hardly tell my own men from the enemy. We are not over well supplied with coats, and as for the faces, the rascals change sides so often, that you may as well count their faces for nothing; but trudge on, we will contrive to expend you before long."

Ungracious as was this reception, if you could judge of the skinner's feelings from his manner, it nevertheless delighted him hugely. He moved with alacrity towards the city, and really was so happy to escape the brutal looks and frightful manner of his interrogator, as to lose sight of all other considerations. But the man who performed the functions of orderly in the irregular troop rode up to the side of his commander, and commenced a close and apparently confidential discourse with his principal. They spoke in whispers, and cast frequent and searching glances at the skinner, until the fellow began to think himself an object of more than common attention. His satisfaction at this distinction was somewhat heightened, at observing a smile on the face of the

Captain, which, although it might be thought grim, certainly denoted much inward delight. This pantomime occupied the time they were passing a hollow, and concluded as they rose another hill. Here the Captain and his sergeant both dismounted, and ordered the party to halt. The warriors each took a pistol from his holster, a movement that excited no suspicion or alarm, as it was a precaution always observed, and beckoned to the pedler and the skinner to follow. A short walk brought them to where the hill overhung the river, the ground falling nearly perpendicularly to the shore. On the brow of the eminence stood a deserted and dilapidated building, that had been a barn. Many of the boards that had formed its covering were torn from their places, and its wide doors were lying, the one in front of the building, and the other half way down the precipice, whither the wind had east it. Entering this desolate spot, the refugee officer very coolly took from his pocket a short pipe, whose colour might once have been white, but which now, from long use, had acquired not only the hue but the gloss of ebony, a tobacco box, and a small roll of leather, that contained steel, flint, and tinder. With this apparatus, he soon furnished his mouth with a companion, that habit had long rendered necessary to extraordinary reflection in its owner. So soon as a large column of smoke arose from this arrangement, the Captain significantly held forth his hand towards his assistant. A small cord was produced from the pocket of the sergeant, and handed to the other. Now, indeed, appeared a moment of deep care in the refugee, who threw out vast puffs of smoke until nearly all his head was obscured, and looked around the building with an anxious and inquisitive eye. At length he removed the pipe, and inhaling a draught of pure air, returned it to its domicile, and proceeded to business at once. There was a heavy piece of timber laid across the girths of the barn but a little way from the southern door, which opened directly upon a full view of the river, as it stretched far away towards the bay of New York. Over this timber the refugee threw one end of the rope, and regaining it, joined the two parts in his hand. A small and weak barrel, that wanted a head, the staves of which were loose, and at one end standing apart, was left on the floor, probably as useless to the owner. This was brought by the sergeant, in obedience to a look from his officer, and placed beneath the beam. All of these arrangements were made with immovable composure, and now seemed completed to the officer's perfect satisfaction.

"Come," he said coolly to the skinner, who, amazed with the preparations, had stood both a close and silent spectator of their progress. He obeyed; and it was not until he found his neck-cloth removed, and hat thrown aside, that he took the alarm. But he had so often resorted to a similar expedient to extort information or plunder, that he by no means felt the terror an un-

practised man would have suffered, at these ominous movements. The rope was adjusted to his neck with the same coolness that formed the characteristic of the whole movement, and a fragment of board being laid upon the barrel, he was ordered to mount it.

"But it may fall," said the skinner, for the first time beginning to tremble. "I will tell you anything—even how to surprise our party at the Pond, without this trouble, and it is commanded by my own brother."

"I want no information," returned his executioner, (for such he now seemed really to be) as he threw the rope repeatedly over the beam, first drawing it tight so as to annoy the skinner a little, and then casting the end from him, far beyond the reach of any one.

"This is joking too far," cried the skinner, in a tone of remonstrance, and raising himself on his toes, with the vain hope of releasing himself from the cord, by slipping his head through the noose. But the caution and experience of the refugee officer had guarded against this escape.

"What did you with the horse you stole from me rascal?" he cried, throwing out extraordinary columns of smoke while he waited for a reply.

"He broke down in the chase," replied the skinner, quickly; "but I can tell you where one is to be found, that is worth him and his sire."

"Liar! I will help myself when I want one; but you had better call upon God for aid, as your hour is short." On concluding this consoling advice, he struck the barrel a violent blow with his heavy foot, and the slender staves flew in every direction, leaving the skinner whirling in the air. As his hands were unconfined, he threw them upwards, and held himself suspended by main strength.

"Come, Captain," he said, coaxingly, a little huskiness creeping into his voice, and his knees beginning to shake with a slight tremor, "just end the joke; 'tis enough to make a laugh, and my arms begin to tire—indeed I can't hold on much longer."

"Harkee, Mr. Pedler," said the refugee, in a voice that would not be denied, "I want not your company. Through that door lies your road—march! offer to touch that dog, and you'll swing in his place, if twenty Sir Henrys wanted your services." So saying, he retired to the road with the Sergeant, as the pedler precipitately retreated down the bank.

Birch went no farther than a bush that opportunely offered itself, as a skreen to conceal his person, while he yielded to an unconquerable desire to witness the termination of this extraordinary scene. Left thus alone, the skinner began to throw fearful glances around, to espy the hiding places of his tormentors. For the first time, the horrid idea seemed to shoot through his brain,

that something serious was intended by the Cow-boy. He called entreatingly to be released, and made rapid and incoherent promises of important information, mingled with affected pleasantry at their conceit, which he would hardly admit to himself could mean anything so dreadful as it seemed. But as he heard the tread of the horses moving on their course, and in vain looked around for human aid, violent trembling seized his limbs, and his eyes began to start from his head with terror. He made a desperate effort to reach the beam; but, too much exhausted with his previous exertions, he caught the rope in his teeth, in a vain effort to sever the cord, and fell to the whole length of his arms. Here his cries were turned into shrieks—

“ Help! cut the rope! Captain!—Birch! good pedler! Down with the Congress!—Sergeant!—for God’s sake, help! Hurrah for the King!—Oh God! oh God!—mercy—mercy—mercy.”—As his voice became suppressed, one of his hands endeavoured to make its way between the rope and his neck, and partially succeeded, but the other fell quivering by his side. A convulsive shuddering passed over his whole frame, and he hung a hideous livid corse. Birch continued gazing on this scene with a kind of infatuation, and at its close he placed his hands to his ears, rushing towards the highway; but still the cries of mercy rung through his brain, and it was many weeks before his memory ceased to dwell on the horrid event. The Cow-boys rode steadily on their route, as if nothing had occurred, and the body was left swinging in the wind, until chance directed the footsteps of some stragglers to the place.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

“ Green be the turf above thee,  
Friend of my better days—  
None knew thee but to love thee,  
Nor nam’d thee but to praise.”—*Halleck.*

WHILE the scenes and events that we have recorded were occurring, Captain Lawton led his small party, by slow and wary marches, from the Four Corners to the front of a body of the enemy; where he so successfully manœuvred, for a time, as completely to elude all their efforts to entrap him, and yet so disguised his own force, as to excite the constant apprehension of an attack from his Americans. This forbearing policy, on the side of the partisan, was owing to orders that he had received from the commander. When Dunwoodie left his detachment, the enemy were known to be slowly advancing, and he directed Lawton to hover around them until his own return, and the arrival of a body of foot, which might aid in intercepting their retreat. The trooper discharged his duty to the letter, but with no

little of the impatience that made part of his character, when restrained from the attack.

During these movements, Betty Flanagan guided her little cart with indefatigable zeal among the rocks of West Chester, now discussing with the Sergeant the nature of evil spirits, and the quality of her own, and now combating with the surgeon sundry points of practice, that were hourly arising under their opposite opinions, upon the subject of stimulus. But the moment at length arrived that was to terminate their controversies, and to decide the mastery of the field. A detachment of the eastern militia moved out from their fastnesses, and approached the enemy. The junction between Lawton and his auxiliaries was made at midnight, and an immediate consultation was held between him and the leader of the foot soldiers. After listening to the statements of the partisan, who rather despised the prowess of his enemy, the commandant of the party determined to attack the British, the moment that daylight enabled him to reconnoitre their position without waiting for the aid of Dunwoodie and his horse. So soon as this decision was made, Lawton retired from the building where the consultation was held, and rejoined his own small command. The few troopers who were with the Captain had fastened their horses in a spot adjacent to a haystack, and laid their own frames under its shelter to catch a few hours' sleep. But Dr. Sitgreaves, Serjeant Hollister, and Betty Flanagan, were congregated at a short distance, by themselves, having spread a few blankets upon the dry surface of a rock. Lawton threw his huge frame by the side of the surgeon, and folding his cloak about him, leaned his head upon one hand, and appeared deeply engaged in contemplating the moon as she waded majestically through the heavens. The sergeant was sitting upright in respectful deference to the conversation that the operator was kindly dispensing, and the washerwoman was now raising her head in order to vindicate some of her favourite maxims, and now composing it on one of her gin casks, in a vain effort to sleep.

"So, Sergeant," continued the operator, after pausing a moment while Lawton took the position which we have described, "if you cut upwards, the blow, by losing the additional momentum of your weight, will be less destructive, and at the same time effect the true purpose of war, that of disabling your enemy." "Pooh! pooh! Sergeant dear," said the washerwoman, raising her head from the blanket; "where's the harm of taking a life jist in the way of battle? Is it the rig'lars who'll show favour, and they fighting? Ask Captain Jaek, there, if the country could get the liberty, and the boy no strike their might. Pooh! I wouldn't have them disparagé the whiskey so much."

"It is not to be expected, that an ignorant female like yourself,



Mrs. Flanagan," returned the operator, with ineffable disdain, "can comprehend the distinctions of surgical science; neither are you accomplished in the sword exercise; so that dissertations upon the judicious use of that weapon could avail you nothing, either in theory or practice." "It's but little I care, any way, for such botherments," said Betty, sinking her head under her blanket again; "but fighting is no play, and a body shouldn't be partic'lar how they strike, or who they hit, so it's the inimy."

"Are we likely to have a warm day, Captain Lawton?" said the surgeon, turning from the washerwoman with vast contempt. "'Tis more than probable," replied the trooper, in a voice that startled his companion; "these militia seldom fail of making a bloody field, either by their cowardice or their ignorance. And the real soldier is made to suffer for their bad conduct."

"Are you ill, John?" said the surgeon, passing his hand along the arm of the Captain, until it instinctively settled on his pulse! but the steady, even beat, announced neither bodily nor mental malady. "Sick at heart, Archibald, at the folly of our rulers, in believing that battles are to be fought, and victories won, by fellows who handle a musket as they would a flail; lads who wink when they pull a trigger, and form a line like a hoop-pole. It is the dependence we place on these men that spills the best blood of the country."

The surgeon listened to his philippic with amazement. It was not the matter, but the manner, that surprised him. The trooper had uniformly exhibited, on the eve of battle, an animation and eagerness to engage, that was directly at variance with the admirable coolness of his manner at other times. But now there was a despondency in the tones of his voice, and a listlessness in his air, that was entirely different. The operator hesitated a moment, to reflect in what manner he could render this change of service in furthering his favourite system, and then continued—"It would be wise, John, to advise the Colonel to keep at long shot; a spent ball will disable—" "No!" exclaimed the trooper impatiently; "let the rascals sing their whiskers at the muzzles of the British muskets, if they can be driven there; but enough of them. Archibald, do you deem that moon to be a world like this, and containing creatures like ourselves?" "Nothing more probable, dear John; we know its size, and, reasoning from analogy, may easily conjecture its use. Whether or not its inhabitants have attained to that perfection in the sciences which we have acquired, must depend greatly on the state of its society, and in some measure upon its physical influences."

"I care nothing about their learning, Archibald; but 'tis a wonderful power that can create such worlds, and control them in their wanderings. I know not why, but there is a feeling of melancholy excited within me, as I gaze on that body of light,

shaded as it is by your fancied sea and land. It seems to be the resting-place of departed spirits!"

"Take a drop, darling," said Betty, raising her head once more, and proffering her own bottle, "'tis the night damps that chills the blood—and then the talk with the cursed militia is no good for a fiery temper; take a drop, darling, and yee'l sleep 'till the morning. I fed Roanoke myself, for I thought yee might need hard riding the morrow."

"'Tis a glorious heaven to look upon," continued the trooper, in the same tone, and utterly disregarding the offer of Betty; "and 'tis a thousand pities, that such worms as men should let their vile passions deface such goodly work."

"You speak the truth, dear John; there is room for all to live and enjoy themselves in peace, if each could be satisfied with his own. Still war has its advantages; it particularly promotes the knowledge of surgery; and"—

"There is a star," continued Lawton, still bent on his own ideas, "struggling to glitter through a few driving clouds; perhaps that too is a world, and contains creatures endowed with reason like ourselves; think you, that they know of war and bloodshed?"

"If I might be so bold," said Sergeant Hollister mechanically raising his hand to his cap, "'tis mentioned in the good book, that the Lord made the sun stand still, while Joshua was charging the enemy, in order, do you see, sir, as I suppose, that they might have day-light to turn their flank, or perhaps make a feint in the rear, or some such matter. Now, if the Lord would lend them a hand, fighting cannot be sinful. I have often been non-plussed, though, to find that they used them chariots instead of heavy dragoons, who are, in all comparison, better to break a line of infantry, and who, for the matter of that, could turn such wheel carriages, and getting in the rear, play the very devil with them, horses and all." "It is because you do not understand the construction of those vehicles of war, Sergeant Hollister, that you judge of them so erroneously," said the surgeon. "They were armed with sharp weapons that protruded from their wheels, and which broke the columns of foot, like the dismembered particles of matter. I doubt not, if similar instruments were affixed to the cart of Mrs. Flanagan, that great confusion might be carried into the ranks of the enemy thereby, this very day."

"It's but little that the mare would go, and the rig'lars firing at her," grumbled Betty from under her blanket; "when we got the plunder, the time we drove them through the Jarseys it was, I had to back the baste up to the dead, the divil the foot would she move, forenent the firing, wiä her eyes open. Roanoke and Captain Jack are good enough for the red coats, letting alone myself and the mare."

A long roll of the drums from the hill occupied by the British, announced that they were on the alert, and a corresponding sig-

nal was immediately heard from the Americans. The bugle of the Virginians struck up its martial tones, and in a few moments, both the hills, the one held by the royal troops, and the other by their enemies, were alive with armed men. Day had begun to dawn and preparations were making by either party, to give and to receive the attack. In numbers the Americans had greatly the advantage, but in discipline and equipments, the superiority was entirely with their enemies. The arrangements for the battle were brief, and by the time that the sun had risen, the militia moved forward to the attack. The ground did not admit of the movements of the horse, and the only duty that could be assigned to the dragoons was to watch the moment of victory, and endeavour to improve the success to the utmost. Lawton soon got his warriors into the saddle, and leaving them to the charge of Hollister, he rode himself along the line of foot, who, in varied dresses, and imperfectly armed, were formed in a shape that in some degree resembled a martial array. A scornful smile lowered about the lip of the trooper, as he guided Roanoke with a skilful hand through the windings of their ranks; and when the word was given to march, he turned the flank of the regiment, and followed close in the rear. The Americans had to descend into a little hollow, and rise a hill on its opposite side, to approach the enemy. The descent was made with tolerable steadiness until near the foot of the hill, when the royal troops advanced in a beautiful line, with their flanks protected by the formation of the ground. The appearance of the British drew a fire from the militia, which was given with good effect, and for a moment staggered the regulars. But they were rallied by their officers, and threw in volley after volley, with great steadiness. For a short time the fire was warm and destructive, until the English advanced with the bayonet. This assault the militia had not sufficient discipline to withstand. Their line wavered, then paused, and finally broke into companies, and fragments of companies, keeping up at the same time a scattering and desultory fire.

Lawton witnessed these operations in silence, nor opened his mouth to speak, until the field was covered with parties of the flying Americans. Then, indeed, he seemed stung with the disgrace that was thus heaped upon the arms of his country. Spurring Roanoke along the side of the hill, he called to the fugitives in all the strength of his powerful voice. He pointed to the enemy, and assured his countrymen that they had mistaken the way. There was such a mixture of indifference and irony in his exhortations, that a few paused in surprise—more joined them, until, roused by the example of the trooper, and stimulated by their own spirits, they demanded to be led against their foe once more.

“Come on, then, my brave friends!” shouted the trooper, turning his horse’s head towards the British line, one flank of

which was very near him ; “ come on, and hold your fire until it will scorch their eye-brows.” The men sprang forward, and followed his example, neither giving nor receiving a fire, until they had reached to within a very short distance of the enemy. An English sergeant, who had been concealed by a rock, enraged with the audacity of the officer who thus dared their arms, stepped from behind his cover, and advancing within a few yards of the trooper, levelled his musket—“ Fire, and you die !” cried Lawton, spurring his charger, who sprang forward at the instant. The action and the tone of his voice shook the nerves of the Englishman, who drew his trigger with an uncertain aim. Roanoke sprang with all his feet from the earth, and, plunging, fell headlong and lifeless at the feet of his destroyer. Lawton kept his feet, and stood face to face with his enemy, who presented his bayonet, and made a desperate thrust at the trooper’s heart. The steel of their weapons emitted sparks of fire, and the bayonet flew fifty feet in the air. At the next moment its owner lay a quivering corpse.

“ Come on,” shouted the trooper, as a body of English appeared on the rock, and threw in a close fire ; “ come on,” he repeated, and brandished his sabre fiercely. His gigantic form fell backward, like a majestic pine that was yielding to the axe ; but still, as he slowly fell, he continued to wield his sabre, and once more the deep tones of his voice were heard uttering, “ come on.” The advancing Americans paused aghast, as they witnessed the fate of their new leader, and then turning, they left to the royal troops the victory. It was neither the intention nor the policy of the English commander to pursue his success, for he well knew that strong parties of the Americans would soon arrive ; accordingly, he only tarried to collect his wounded, and forming in a square, he commenced his retreat towards their shipping. Within twenty minutes of the fall of Lawton, the ground was deserted by both English and Americans.

When the inhabitants of the country were called upon to enter the field, they were necessarily attended by such surgical advisers, as were furnished by the low state of the profession in the interior at that day. Dr. Sitgreaves entertained quite as profound a contempt for the medical attendants of the militia, as the captain did of the troops themselves. He wandered, therefore, around the field, casting many an expressive glance of disapprobation at the slight operations that came under his eye ; but when, among the flying troop, he found that his comrade and friend was no where to be seen, he hastened back to the spot at which Hollister was posted, to inquire if the trooper was returned. Of course, the answer he received was in the negative. Filled with a thousand uneasy conjectures, the surgeon, without regarding, or indeed without at all reflecting upon any dangers that might lie in his way, strode over the ground at an enormous rate, to the point where he knew had been the final struggle. Once before the

surgeon had rescued his friend from death, in a similar situation, as he supposed, and felt a secret joy in his own conscious skill, as he perceived Betty Flanagan seated on the ground, holding in her lap the head of a man, whose size and dress he knew could only belong to the trooper. As he approached the spot, the surgeon became alarmed at the aspect of the washerwoman. Her little black bonnet was thrown aside, and her hair, which was already streaked with grey, hung around her face in disorder.

“John! dear John,” said the doctor, tenderly, as he bent and laid his hand upon the senseless wrist of the trooper, from which it recoiled with an intuitive knowledge of his fate; “John! dear John, where are you hurt?—can I help you?”

“Yee talk to the senseless clay,” said Betty, rocking her body, and unconsciously playing with the raven ringlets of the trooper’s hair; “it’s no more will he hear, and it’s but little will he mind yee’r probes and yee’r med’cines. Och hone! och hone!—and where will be the liberty now? or who will there be to fight the battle, or gain the day?”

“John!” repeated the surgeon, still unwilling to believe the evidence of his unerring senses, “dear John, speak to me; say what you will, so that you do but speak. Oh, God!” exclaimed the surgeon, giving way to his emotions, “he is dead; would that I had died with him!”

“There is but little use in living and fighting now,” said Betty; “both him and the baste! see, there is the poor cratur, and here is the master. I fed the horse with my own hands, the day, and the last meal that *he* ate, was of my own cooking. Och hone! och hone!—that Captain Jack should live to be killed by the rig’lars?”

“John! my dear John!” said the surgeon, with convulsive sobs, “thy hour has come, and many a more prudent man survives thee; but none better, nor braver. Oh! John, thou wert to me a kind friend, and very dear; it is unphilosophical to grieve; but for thee, John, I must weep, even in bitterness of heart!”

The Doctor buried his face in his hands, and for several minutes sat yielding to an ungovernable burst of sorrow; while the washerwoman gave vent to her grief in words; moving her body in a kind of writhing, and playing with different parts of her favourite’s dress with her fingers.

“And who’ll there be to encourage the boys now?” she said; “oh! Captain Jack! Captain Jack! yee was the sowl of the troop, and it was but little we know’d of the danger, and yee fighting. Och! he was no maly mouth’d, that quarrelled wid a widowed woman, for the matter of a burn in the mate, or the want of a breakfast. Taste a drop, darling, and it may be, ’twill revive yee. Och! and he’ll nivir taste agin; here’s the Doctor, honey, him ye used to blarney wid, wapeing as if the poor sowl would die for yee. Och! he’s gone, he’s gone; and the liberty is gone wid him.”

A heavy and thundering sound of horses' feet came rolling along the road which led near the place where Lawton lay, and directly the whole body of Virginians appeared, with Dunwoodie at their head. The news of the Captain's fate had reached him; for the instant that he noticed the body, he halted the squadron, and dismounting, approached the spot. The countenance of Lawton was not in the least distorted, but the angry frown which had lowered over his brow, during the battle, was fixed even in death. His frame was composed, and stretched as if in sleep. Dunwoodie took hold of his hand, and gazed a moment in silence; his own dark eye began to flash, and the paleness which had overspread his features was succeeded by a spot of deep red in either cheek. "With his own sword will I avenge him!" he cried, endeavouring to take the weapon from the hand of Lawton; but the grasp resisted his utmost strength. "It shall be buried with him: Sitgreaves, take care of our friend, while I revenge his death." The Major hastened back to his charger, and led the way in pursuit of the enemy. While Dunwoodie had been thus engaged, the body of Lawton lay in open view to the whole squadron. He was an universal favourite, and the sight inflamed the men to the utmost; neither officers nor soldiers possessed that coolness which is necessary to ensure success to military operations, but they spurred ardently after their enemies, burning with a single wish for vengeance.

The English were formed in a hollow square, which contained their wounded, who were far from numerous, and were marching steadily across a very uneven country, as the dragoons approached. The horse charged in column, and were led by Dunwoodie, who, burning with revenge, thought to ride through their ranks, and scatter them at a blow; but the enemy knew their own safety too well, and standing firm, received the charge on the points of their bayonets. The horses of the Virginians recoiled, and the rear rank of the foot throwing in a close fire, the Major, with a few of his men, fell. The English continued their retreat the moment they were extricated from their assailants, and Dunwoodie, who was severely, but not dangerously wounded, recalled his men from further attempts, which, in that stony country, must necessarily be fruitless. A sad duty remained to be fulfilled. The dragoons retired slowly through the hills, conveying their wounded commander, and the body of Lawton. The latter they interred under the ramparts of one of the Highland forts, and the former they consigned to the tender care of his afflicted bride.

Many weeks were gone, before the Major was restored to sufficient strength to be removed; during those weeks, how often did he bless the moment that gave him a right to the services of his beautiful nurse! She hung around his couch with fond attention; administered, with her own hands, every prescription of the indefatigable Sitgreaves; and grew each hour in the affections

and esteem of her husband. An order from Washington soon sent the troops into winter quarters, and permission was given to Dunwoodie to repair to his own plantation, with the rank of Lieut.-Colonel, in order to complete the restoration of his health. Captain Singleton made one of the party; and the whole family retired from the active scenes of the war to the ease and plenty of the Major's own estate. Before leaving Fishkill, however, letters were conveyed to them through an unknown hand, acquainting them with Henry's safety and good health; and also that Colonel Wellmere had left the continent for his native island, lowered in the estimation of every honest man in the royal army. It was a happy winter for Dunwoodie, and smiles once more began to play around the lovely mouth of Frances.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ 'Midst furs, and silks, and jewels shewn,  
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,  
The centre of the glittering ring;  
And Snowdon's knight is Scotland's King !”

*Lady of the Lake.*

THE commencement of the following year was passed, on the part of the Americans, in making great preparations, in conjunction with their allies, to bring the war to a close. In the south, Greene and Rawdon made a bloody campaign, that was highly honourable to the troops of the latter, and which, by terminating entirely to the advantage of the former, proved him to be the better general of the two. New York was the point that was threatened by the allied armies, and Washington, by exciting a constant apprehension for the safety of that city, prevented such reinforcements from being sent to Cornwallis, as would have enabled him to improve his success. At length, as autumn approached, every indication was given that the final moment had arrived. The French forces drew near to the royal lines, passing through the Neutral Ground, and threatened an attack in the direction of Kingsbridge, while large bodies of the Americans were acting in concert, by hovering around the British posts, and drawing nigh in the Jerseys, they seemed to threaten the naval forces from that quarter also. The preparations partook both of the nature of a siege and a storm. But Sir Henry Clinton, in the possession of intercepted letters from Washington, rested securely within his lines, and cautiously disregarded the solicitations of Cornwallis for succour.

It was at the close of a stormy day in the month of September, that a large assemblage of officers was collected near the door of a building, that was situated in the heart of the American troops, who held the Jerseys. The age, the dress, and the dignity of deportment, of most of these warriors, indicated them to be of high rank; but to one in particular was paid a deference

and obedience, that announced him to be of the highest. His dress was plain, but bore the usual military distinctions of command. He was mounted on a noble animal of a deep bay, and a group of young men, in gayer attire, evidently awaited his pleasure, and did his bidding. Many a hat was lifted, as its owner addressed this officer; and when he spoke, a profound attention, exceeding the respect of mere professional etiquette, was exhibited on every countenance. At length the General raised his own hat, and bowed gravely to all around him. The salute was returned, and the party dispersed, leaving the officer without a single attendant, except his body servants, and one aid-de-camp. Dismounting, he stepped back a few paces, and for a moment, viewed the condition of his horse with the eye of one who well understood the animal, and then casting a brief but expressive glance at his aid, he retired into the building, followed by that gentleman. On entering an apartment that was apparently fitted for his reception, he took a seat, and continued for a long time in a thoughtful attitude, as one who was in the habit of communing much with himself. During this silence, the aid-de-camp stood in respectful expectation of his orders. At length the General raised his eyes, and spoke in those low, placid tones that seemed natural to him. "Has the man whom I wished to see arrived, sir?" "He waits the pleasure of your Excellency." "I will receive him here, and alone, if you please." The aid bowed and withdrew. In a few minutes the door again opened, and a figure glided into the apartment, and stood modestly at a distance from the General, without speaking. His entrance was unheard by the officer, who sat gazing at the fire, deeply absorbed in his own meditations. Several minutes passed, when he spoke to himself in an under tone—"To-morrow we must raise the curtain, and expose our plans. May heaven prosper them."

A slight movement made by the stranger at the sound of his voice, caught his ear, and he turned his head, and saw that he was not alone. He pointed silently to the fire, towards which the figure advanced, although the multitude of his garments, which seemed more calculated for disguise than comfort, rendered its warmth unnecessary. A second mild and courteous gesture motioned to a vacant chair, but the stranger refused it with a modest acknowledgment. Another pause followed, and continued for some time. At length the officer arose, and opening a desk that was laid upon the table near which he sat, took from it a small but apparently heavy bag. "Harvey Birch," he said, turning to the stranger, "the time has arrived when our connexion must cease; henceforth and for ever we must be strangers."

The pedler dropped the folds of the great coat that concealed his features, and gazed for a moment wildly at the face of the speaker, and then, dropping his head upon his bosom, said meekly—"If it is your Excellency's pleasure."



“It is necessary. Since I have filled the station which I now hold, it has become my duty to know many men, who, like yourself, have been my instruments in procuring intelligence. You have I trusted more than all; I early saw in you a regard to truth and principle that, I am pleased to say, has never deceived me—you alone know my secret agents in the city, and on your fidelity depend, not only their fortunes, but their lives.”

He paused, as if to reflect, in order that full justice might be done to the pedler, and then continued—“I believe you are one of the very few that I have employed, who have acted faithfully to our cause; and while you have passed as a spy of the enemy, have never given intelligence that you were not permitted to divulge. To me, and to me only of all the world, you seem to have acted with a strong attachment to the liberties of America.”

During this address, Harvey gradually raised his head from his bosom, until it reached the highest point of elevation; a faint tinge gathered in his cheeks, and, as the officer concluded, it was diffused over his whole countenance in a deep glow, while he stood proudly swelling with his emotions, but with eyes that humbly sought the feet of the speaker.

“It is now my duty to pay you for your services; hitherto you have postponed receiving your reward, and the debt has become a heavy one—I wish not to undervalue your dangers; here are an hundred joes; you will remember the poverty of our country, and attribute to it the smallness of your pay.”

The pedler raised his eyes to the countenance of the speaker with amazement, and as the other held forth the money, he moved back as if from contagion.

“It is not much for your services and risks, I acknowledge,” said the general, “but it is all that I have to offer; at the end of the campaign, it may be in my power to increase it.”

“Never!” said Birch, speaking out; “was it for money that I did all this?” “If not for money, what then?”

“What has brought your Excellency into the field? For what do you daily and hourly expose your precious life to battle and the halter? What is there about me to mourn, when such men as your Excellency risk their all for our country? No—no—no—not a dollar of your gold will I touch; poor America has need of it all!”

The bag dropped from the hand of the officer, and fell at the feet of the pedler, where it lay neglected during the remainder of their interview. The officer looked steadily at the face of his companion, and continued—“There are many motives which might govern me, that to you are unknown. Our situations are different; I am known as the leader of armies—but you must descend into the grave with the reputation of a foe to your native land. Remember that the veil which conceals your true character cannot be raised in years—perhaps never.”

Birch again lowered his face, but there was no yielding of the soul betrayed in the movement.

"You will soon be old; the prime of your days is already past; what have you to subsist on?"

"These!" said the pedler, stretching forth his hands, that were already embrowned with toil.

"But those may fail you; take enough to secure a support to your age. Remember your risks and cares. I have told you, that the characters of men, who are much esteemed in life, depend upon your secrecy; what pledge can I give them of your fidelity?"

"Tell them," said Birch, advancing, and unconsciously resting one foot on the bag, "tell them that I would not take the gold."

The composed features of the officer relaxed into a fine smile of benevolence, and he grasped the hand of the pedler firmly.

"Now, indeed, I know you; and although the same reasons which have hitherto compelled me to expose your valuable life, will still exist, and prevent my openly asserting your character, in private I can always be your friend; fail not to apply to me when in want or suffering, and so long as God giveth to me, so long will I freely share with a man who feels so nobly and acts so well. If sickness or want should ever assail you, and peace once more smiles upon our efforts, seek the gate of him whom you have often met as Harper, and he will not blush to acknowledge you in his true character."

"It is little that I need in this life," said Harvey, the glow still mantling over his features—"so long as God gives me health and honest industry, I can never want in this happy country; but to know that your Excellency is my friend, is a blessing that I prize more than all the gold of England's treasury."

The officer stood for a few moments in the attitude of intense thought. He then drew to him the desk, and wrote a few lines on a piece of paper, and gave it to the pedler as he addressed him—"That providence destines this country to some great and glorious fate I must believe, while I witness the patriotism that pervades the bosoms of her lowest citizens. It must be dreadful to a mind like yours to descend into the grave, branded as a foe to liberty; but you already know the lives that would be sacrificed should your real character be revealed. It is impossible to do you justice now, but I fearlessly entrust you with this certificate; should we never meet again, it may be servicable to your children."

"Children!" exclaimed the pedler, "can I give to a family the infamy of my name!"

The officer gazed at the strong emotion he exhibited with painful amazement, and made a slight movement towards the gold; but it was arrested by the proud expression of his companion's face. Harvey saw the intention, and shook his head, as

he continued more mildly, and with an air of deep respect—"It is, indeed, a treasure that your Excellency gives me; it is safe too. There are them living who could say, that my life was nothing to me, compared to your secrets. The paper that I told you was lost, I swallowed when taken last by the Virginians. It was the only time I ever deceived your Excellency, and it shall be the last; yes, this is, indeed, a treasure to me; perhaps," he continued with a melancholy smile, "it may be known after my death who was my friend, and if it should not, there are none to grieve for me."

"Remember," said the officer, with strong emotion, "that in me you will always have a secret friend; but openly I cannot know you."

"I know it, I know it," said Birch, "I knew it when I took the service. 'Tis probably the last time that I shall ever see your Excellency. May God pour down his choicest blessings on your head." He paused, and moved towards the door. The officer followed him with eyes that expressed powerful interest. Once more the pedler turned, and seemed to gaze on the placid, but commanding features of the General, with regret and reverence, and then, bowing low, he withdrew.

The armies of America and France were led by their illustrious commander against the enemy under Cornwallis, and terminated a campaign in triumph, that had commenced in difficulties. Great Britain soon after became disgusted with the war, and the independence of the States was acknowledged. As years rolled by, it became a subject of pride to the different actors in the war, and their descendants, to boast of their efforts in the cause which had confessedly heaped so many blessings upon their country; but the name of Harvey Birch died away among the multitude of agents who were thought to have laboured in secret against the rights of their countrymen. His image, however, was often present to the mind of the powerful chief, who alone knew his true character, and several times did he cause secret inquiries to be made into the other's fate, one of which only resulted in any success. By this he learnt, that a pedler of a different name, but similar appearance, was toiling through the new settlements that were springing up in every direction, and that he was struggling with the advance of years, and apparent poverty. Death prevented further inquiries on the part of the officer, and a long period passed before the pedler was again heard of.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

"Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood—  
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest;  
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood."—*Gray.*

It was thirty-three years after the interview which we have just

related, that an American army was once more arrayed against the country of their ancestors; but the scene was transferred from the banks of the Hudson, to those of the Niagara. The body of Washington had long lain mouldering in the tomb; but as time was fast obliterating the slight impressions of political enmity or personal envy, his name was hourly receiving new lustre, and his worth and integrity each moment became more visible, not only to his countrymen, but to the world. He was already the acknowledged hero of an age of reason and truth; and many a young heart, amongst those who formed the pride of our army in 1814, was glowing with the recollection of the one great name of America, and inwardly beating with the sanguine expectation of emulating, in some degree, its renown. In no one were these virtuous hopes more vivid, than in the bosom of a young officer, who stood on the table-rock, contemplating the great cataract, on the evening of the 25th of July of that bloody year. The person of this youth was tall and finely moulded, indicating a just proportion between strength and activity; his deep black eyes were of a searching and dazzling brightness. At times, as they gazed upon the flood of waters that rushed tumultuously at his feet, there was a stern and daring look that flashed from them, which denoted the ardour of an enthusiast. But this proud expression was softened by the lines of a mouth, around which there played a suppressed archness, that partook of feminine beauty. His hair shone in the setting sun like ringlets of gold, as the air from the falls gently moved the rich curls from a forehead, whose whiteness showed that exposure and heat alone had given their darker hue to a face glowing with health. There was another officer standing by the side of this favoured youth, and both seemed, by the interest that they betrayed, to be gazing for the first time at this wonder of the western world. A profound silence was observed by each of the soldiers, until the companion of the officer that we have described suddenly started, and pointing eagerly with his sword into the abyss beneath, exclaimed—"See! Wharton, there is a man crossing in the very eddies of the cataract, and in a skiff no bigger than an egg-shell." "He has a knapsack, and is probably a soldier," returned the other. "Let us meet him at the ladder, Mason, and learn his tidings."

Some time was expended in reaching the spot where the adventurer was intercepted. Contrary to the expectations of the young soldiers, he proved to be a man far advanced in life, and evidently no follower of the camp. His years might be seventy, and were indicated more by the thin hairs of silver that lay scattered over his wrinkled brow, than by any apparent failure of his system. His frame was meagre and bent; but it was the attitude of habit, for his sinews were strung with the toil of half

a century. His dress was mean, and manifested the economy of its owner, by the number and nature of its repairs. On his back was a scantily furnished pack, that had led to the mistake in his profession. A few words of salutation, and, on the part of the young men, of surprise, that one so aged should venture so near the whirlpools of the cataract, were exchanged; when the old man inquired, with a voice that began to manifest the tremor of age, the news from the contending armies. "We whipt the red-coats here the other day, among the grass on the Chippewa plans," said the one who was called Mason; "since when, old daddy, we have been playing hide-and-go-peep with the ships; but we are now marching back from where we started, shaking our heads, and as surly as the devil."

"Perhaps you have a son among the soldiers," said his companion, with a more polished demeanour, and an air of kindness; "if so, tell me his name and regiment, and I will take you to him." The old man shook his head, and, passing his hand over his silver locks, with an air of meek resignation cast his eyes for a moment to heaven, and answered—"No; I am alone in the world!"

"You should have added, Captain Dunwoodie," cried his careless comrade, "if you can find either; for nearly half our army have marched down the road, and may be by this time, under the walls of Fort George, for anything that we know to the contrary." The old man stopped suddenly, and looked earnestly from one of his companions to the other; the action being noticed by the soldiers, they paused also.

"Did I hear right?" at length the stranger uttered, raising his hand to skreen his eyes from the rays of the setting sun; "what did he call you?" "My name is Wharton Dunwoodie," replied the youth, smiling.

The stranger motioned silently for him to remove his hat, which the youth did accordingly, and his fair hair blew aside like curls of silk, and opened the whole of his ingenuous countenance to the inspection of the other. "'Tis like our native land!" exclaimed the old man with a vehemence that astonished his companions, "improving with time; God has blessed both."

"Why do you stare thus, Lieutenant Mason?" cried Captain Dunwoodie, laughing and blushing a little; "you show more astonishment than when you saw the falls."

"Oh, the falls!—they are the thing to be looked at on a moonshiny night, by your aunt Sarah, and that gay old bachelor, Colonel Singleton; but a fellow like myself never shows surprise, unless it may be at such a touch as this."

The extraordinary vehemence of the stranger's manner had passed away as suddenly as it was exhibited, but he listened to this speech apparently with deep interest, while Dunwoodie re-

plied a little gravely—"Come, come, Tom, no jokes about my good aunt, I beg; she is kind and attentive to me, and I have heard it whispered that her youth was not altogether happy."

"Why, as to rumour," said Mason, "there goes one in Accomac, that Colonel Singleton offers himself to her regularly every Valentine's day; and therefore some who add, that your old great-aunt helps his suit."

"Aunt Jeanette!" said Dunwoodie, laughing; "dear good soul, she thinks but little of marriage in any shape, I believe, since the death of Dr. Sitgreaves. There were some whispers of a courtship between them formerly, but it ended in nothing but civilities, and I suspect that the whole story arises from the intimacy of Colonel Singleton and my father. You know they were comrades in the horse, as was your own father." "I know all that, of course: but you must not tell me that the particular, prim bachelor, goes so often to General Dunwoodie's plantation merely for the sake of talking old soldier with your father. The last time I was there, that yellow, sharp-nosed kind of a house-keeper of your mother's, took me into the pantry, and said that the Colonel was no despiseable match, as she called it, and how the sale of his plantation in Georgia had brought him—oh, Lord! I don't know how much."

"Quite likely," returned the Captain; "Katy Haynes is a famous calculator." They had stopped during this conversation in a kind of uncertainty, whether their new companion was to be left or not. The old man listened to each word as it was uttered, with the most intense interest; but towards the conclusion of the dialogue, the earnest attention of his countenance changed to a kind of inward smile. He shook his head, and passing his hand over his forehead, seemed to be thinking of other times. Mason paid but little attention to the expression of his features, and continued—"Yes—she is all that; for herself too, I believe, sometimes."

"Her selfishness does but little harm," returned Dunwoodie, smiling, as if in recollection of past scenes. "One of her greatest difficulties is her aversion to the blacks. She says she never saw but one that she liked." "And who was he?" "His name was Cæsar; he was a house servant of my late grandfather Wharton. You don't remember him, I believe; he died the same year with his master, while we were children. Katy yearly sings his requiem, and, upon my word, I believe he deserved it. I have heard something of his helping my English unele, as we call General Wharton, in some difficulty that occurred in the old war. My mother always speaks of him with great affection. Both Cæsar and Katy came to Virginia with my mother when she was married. My mother was—" "An angel!" interrupted the old man, in a voice that startled the young soldiers by its abruptness and energy.



nowhere to be seen, and preparations were made to take in such of the wounded as could be moved. At this moment Wharton Dunwoodie, impelled by affection for his friend, seized a lighted fusee, and taking two of his men, went himself in quest of his body, where he was supposed to have fallen. Mason was found on the side of the hill, seated with great composure, but unable to walk from a fractured leg. Dunwoodie saw and flew to the side of his comrade, exclaiming—"Ah! dear Tom, I knew I should find you the nearest man to the enemy."

"Softly, softly; handle me tenderly," replied the Lieutenant: "no, there is a brave fellow still nearer than myself, and who he can be I know not. He rushed out of our smother near my platoon, to make a prisoner or some such thing, but, poor fellow, he never came back; there he lies just over the hillock. I have spoken to him several times, but I fancy he is past answering."

Dunwoodie went to the spot, and to his astonishment beheld the aged stranger.

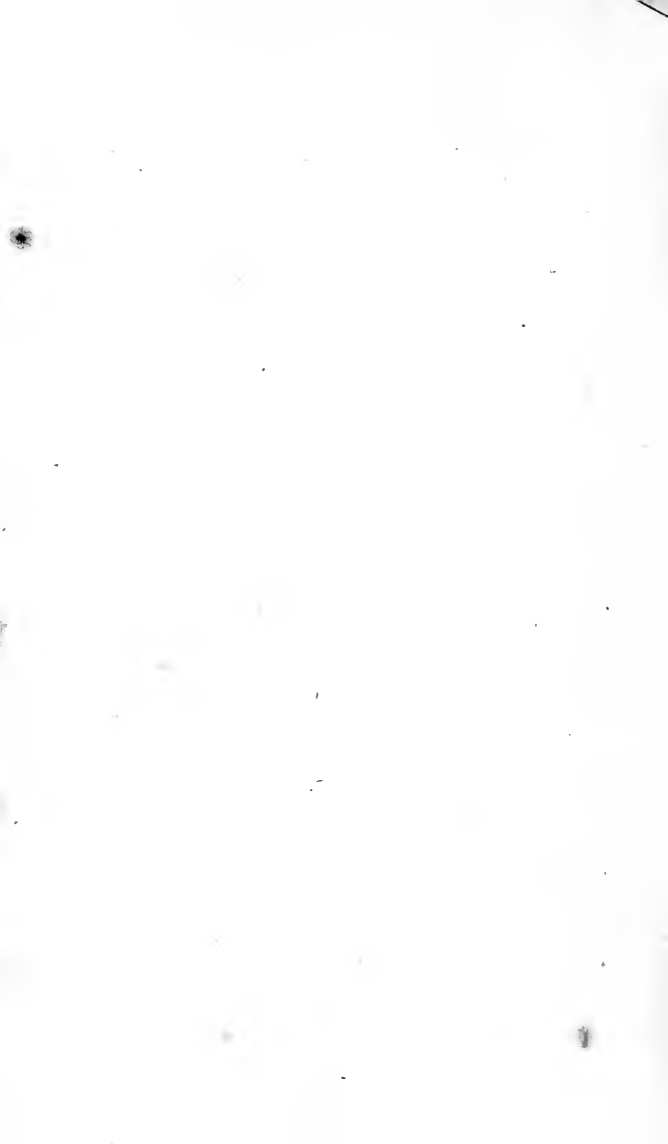
"It is the old man who knew my mother!" cried the youth: "for her sake he shall have honourable burial; lift him, and let him be carried in; his bones shall rest on native soil." At his back

The men approached to obey. He was lying on his back with his face exposed to the glaring light of the sun with years, were were closed, as if in slumber;—his lips, sunken, but it seemed more slightly moved from their natural position. All the change. A smile-like a smile than a convulsion which caused him to fall from his grasp; di'er's musket lay near him, where it had been breast, and one of them his hands were both pressed upon his forehead like silver. Dunwoodie contained a substance that glittered, he perceived the place where the stooped, and removing the limbs, he felt the place where the fatal bullet had found a passage to his heart. The subject of his last care was a tin box, through which man must have passed in drawing the dying moments of the old man. He opened it, and found a paper, in it from his bosom. Dunwoodie read the following:

which, to his astonishment, political importance, which involve the "Circumstances of many, have hitherto kept secret what his lives and fortunes of. Harvey Birch has for years been a faithful paper now revealed servant of his country. Though man does not and unrequited reward him for his conduct. "GEO. WASHINGTON" may God rest the soul of the SPY OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND, who died as he had lived, devoted to his country, and a martyr to her liberties.

THE END.







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