THE SPY;

A TALE OF

THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land.—"

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "PRECAUTION."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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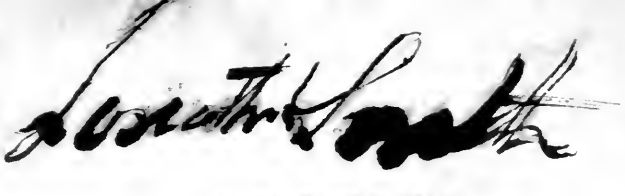

THE SPY:

A TALE OF

THE NEUTRAL GROUND.

CHAPTER I.

"—— 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 pedlar, 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 every thing of any value, and the searching eyes of Betty Flanagan selected this spot, on her arrival, as the store house 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 deposite 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 trust-worthy 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 pedlar 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 around 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 pedlar. 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 pedlar's feelings—accordingly he proceeded in what he conceived to be the offices of consolation.

"If there's any thing 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar gave the dragoon more of his attention, fixing on his sun-burnt 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 pedlar.

"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 county 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, 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."

"What safeguard?" asked the sergeant, with awakened curiosity.

"'Tis nothing," replied the pedlar, 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 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.

"See," said the pedlar, 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, and 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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, or 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, after communicating his orders, while he was retiring exclaimed to his successor—

"You may keep yourself warm by dancing, John; the pedlar 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 blackguard?" sputtered Betty, her whole frame shaking with the violence of her rage; "and is it so yee would sarve a dacent famale that a man must be put to sleep in the room wid her, yee rapscallion."

"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 its 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 riprobate villain, and bring him here to see me righted—he will punish yee all, for imposing on a dacent widow'd 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 pedlar. who, to the astonishment of the sentinel, continued apparently, by his breathing, to manifest how little the gallows could affect his slumbers.

CHAPTER II.

"A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!—
O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!"
Merchant of Venice.

The Skinners 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 Major Dunwoodie has the good opinion of Washington?" continued the skinner 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 pedlar 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 skinner, 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.

"Certain—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.

"O! 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 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 skinners 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 proscribed 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 skinners to replace their own clothes, and to mount their horses, for they were a party who had

been detailed for the purpose of patroling lower down in the county.

"You see, my friend," said the captain to the leader of the skinners, 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, every thing 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 in the next instant. The bullet 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 Law-

ton 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 patrole 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 skinners had retired, caught his eye, and, wheeling on his heel, the cautious partizan 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 suttler in her native accent, and reeling in a manner that made it difficult for her to raise her head, "its 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 skinners 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 skinners, 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 county 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 given 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 of 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 aloud—

"This way, Captain Jack—here are the rascals ating by a fire—this way, and murder the tieves where the sit—quick, lave 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 skinners 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 III.

"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 skinners' 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 an 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 was stopped in his walk by arriving at the base of those rocks which had protected the skinners 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 discovered, to his astonishment, that it was the pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 controul.

"None," continued the pedlar, 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 patroles—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 pedlar 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 patrole 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 he 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 pedlar.

"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 utter amazement of the honest veteran, he found the room in no little disorder—the coat of the pedlar 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 yee 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've helped that damn'd pedlar to escape."

"Jade, back agin in yeer teeth, and damn'd pedlar, too, Mister Sargeant," cried Betty, who was easily roused; "what have I to do with pedlars or escapes? I might have been a pedlar'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 vete-

ran, 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 ind—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 his exculpation; "would yee slanderize a lone 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 riccommind 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 or justice in the land."

"Examine your pocket," 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 pedlar—long life and a 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 frinds 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 troop was 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, discrate man, Mister Hollister, and would be a helpmate indeed."

"Why, Mrs. Flanagan," said the veteran, with great solemnity, "I've tarried to speak on a subject that lies heavy at my heart, and will now open my mind, if you've leisure to listen."

"Is it listen?" cried the impatient woman; "and I'd listen to you, sargeant, if the officers never ate another mouthful—but take another drop, dear—and it will incourage you to spake 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 Pedlar-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 Belzebub, disguised as the pedlar, and them fellows we thought to be skinners were his imps;" said the sergeant, with a most portentious gravity in his countenance.

"Well sure, sargeant, 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 pedlar Birch, and took on his appearance to gain admission to your room."

"And what should the divil be wanting of me?" cried Betty, tartly; "and is'nt there divils 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," returned 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 every where; 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 suttler 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, orders 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 pedlar, 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 a 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 sprung 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 a 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 coxcomb—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 al-

ready 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 any thing 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 dependant 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 to 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 on 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 IV.

"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 pedlar, 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 pedlar'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 every thing 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 mintioning."

"Woman," said the surgeon, in anger, "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 its 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 its fasting you must be, unless yee'l 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 this 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 pedlar," 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 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 as a present 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 diffi-

culty 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 remimber 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 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 pedlar, unless it may be in a small matter of lies and thefts, and sich wickednesses. 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 yeer 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 pedlar. 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 hem'd, 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—it 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 with 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 pricipice.*"

"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 Sitgreaves, you were wanting to dissect just now, a damn'd honest fellow."

"It was the pedlar—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 partisan. Throwing himself again from his saddle, and leaping a wall of stone, he began to ascend the hill at a place which would soon have given him a birds' 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 fullness 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 pedlar."

"'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 any thing 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 to 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 re-commenced 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 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 irretrieveable

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 drily.

"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 their 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 at 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 signifi-

cant 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 farther 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 controul 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 V.

"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 controul. She had unconsciously connected the fates of Dunwoodie and Isabella in her imagination, and felt, with all the romantic ardor 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 his 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 at 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 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 letter concluded with a compliment to his honour, zeal, and undoubted bravery.

"Extremely flattering, Major Dunwoodie," muttered the dragoon, as he threw down this epistle, and stalked across the floor of his 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 the 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 despiseables, 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 pedlar 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 where 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 uncertain, 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 visit 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 Col. 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 courtesy, 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 any thing 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 Col. 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 aver-

ted 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 every thing 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 of 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 perceiving 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 impressively 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 county. 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 any thing 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 operater paused a moment, and hem'd 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 re-

ceipt 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 for the want of rest."

By this time the surgeon had forgotten every thing 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 where 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 pendent 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; but charged with a message of such importance, he moved at first with becoming dignity, but 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 grave-yard 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 yee sargeant, dear," said Betty, removing the mug from her mouth, "'tis no rasonable to think it was any thing more than the pidlar 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 famale that she had Beelzeboob for a bedfellow."

"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 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 Capt. 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 warrm that shivering carcass of yeers by the blaze of this fire. I'm sure a Guinea nagur loves heat as much as a souldier 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 niggars are the same as our own ; how often have I heard the good Mr. Whitfield say, that there was no distinction of colour in hea-

ven. 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 you'll 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 tiplers. Cæsar fled intinctively 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 pedlar, 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 ta-

ble. 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 pediar. 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'r welcome, Mr. Pidlar, or Mister Birch, or Mister Beelzeboob, or what's yee'r name. Yee'r an honest divil any way, and I'm hoping that you found the pitticoats convanient—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 widow'd body, and my own property? And you talk of tinderness, 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 pedlar, "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 pedlar 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 an't 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,—rimiimber, 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 was'nt a bit afeard to face the divil."

"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 bury'd."

"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'r orders that yee won't mind, nor a warning given ? I'll jist git my cart and ride down and tell him that yee're 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 VI.

"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 honorable 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 sanc-

tioning 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, sprung 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 clouded 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 you to 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 circum-

stance, 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 pedlar :—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 pedlar affirmed; the room whirled round with her, and she fell lifeless into the arms of her aunt. There is an instinctive delicacy in woman, 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 pedlar to retreat with a 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 any where 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 honorable 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 and 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 sergeant 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 endeavor 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 har-

rassed 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 the fire-arms first roused 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 willingly 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 sergeant, 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 turn'd 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 burthen.

"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-skurry, 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;—horse are not very powerful in the dark, and I have a character to lose, good woman."

"Caractur!" echoed Betty, "and is'nt 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 yee 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, any 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 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 folly 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 chace, 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-frolick;—well, I'll jist hitch the mare to this bit of a fence, and walk down and see the sport, afoot—it's no rasonable 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 marauder 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 Cæ-

sar, 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 firm-

ness 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 endeavoring 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 horridly: 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 bitterness 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 woodwork 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 perceived, to his astonishment, that it was the surgeon and the body of one of the skinners 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 pedlar.

"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 pedlar 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 VII.

"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 skinners left the dragoons at liberty 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 immoveable; until the washerwoman, noticing Lawton to come round the wing of the building with Sarah, ventured by herself amongst the war-

riors. 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 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 beauteous 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 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 Betty, with a significant look; "it is no trifle that can be had by just 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 hammercloths, together with its panels 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 pedlar.

"Who have we here," said the trooper, "rising like a phœnix 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 household 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 Jinitt, 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 Capt. Singleton. The occurrences of that eventful night had produced an excitement in the young soldier, that was followed by the ordinary lassitude of re-action, 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 a-kin 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. Belzebub 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 larning that Mister Hollister has."

"He's a fool," said Katy, tartly; "Harvey mought be a man of substance, but he's so disregardful. How often have I told him, that if he did nothing but peddle, and would put his gains to use, and get married, so that things at home could be kept snug and tidy, and leave off his dealings with the rig'lars, and all sich incumberments, that he would soon be an excellent liver. Sergeant Hollister would 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 pedlar gave warning of the brush, the night, and it's no sure that Captain Jack would have got the day, but for the rinforcement."

"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 wi'd the divil on your side, I was sure of the day. I'm only wondering there's so little plunder in a business of Beelzeboob'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 think of it, till I saw the moveables on the ground, some burnt and some broke, and other some as good as new. It would be convanient 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 had'nt been staying and frighting 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 skinners."

"It's more they are thinking of themselves, then, than other people thinks of them," cried Betty; "a tief's a tief, any way, 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 burnt 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'l 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 tarms 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 woman—talk like yeerself, dear, and, it's no fool of a tongue that yee've got in yee'r 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 Catharine 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 haste 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 the 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 out-buildings 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 VIII.

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. Into 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 any thing 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 sunk 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 in-

terest 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 for me."

"Yes," said Isabella, a smile of mild pleasure beaming on her countenance; "that is a reflection which 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 sunk back on her pillow in silence. The cry of Singleton brought the rest of the party to her bed side, 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 strive 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 eye over it with the coolness of a veteran, and check-

ed his horse as he gained the spot selected by the cautious orderly, and slightly returning his salute, inquired—

"Have you seen any thing?"

"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 hoof."

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 fi the l f ar," 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 heaven! 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 up by its side; "a gala suit of the good maiden, Jeanette Peyton, wandering around its birth-place, or searching in vain for its discomfited mistress?" He leaned forward 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 infinite composure—"if it is to Dunwoodie's squadron of Virginian 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," contined 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 unsatiable, 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 y'clep'd 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 for 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 that you see the Whartons in safety, break up and join your troop. There will be good service 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 pedlar 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 forever 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. Every thing was instantly in motion. The mare of Mrs. Flanagan was again fastened to the cart;—Dr. Sitgreaves exhibited his shapeless form once more 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 skinners' 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 IX.

"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 any thing more than sojourners in the land of their nativity. Before that æra, 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 county, 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 as 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 pace 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 every thing to the government of the an-

cient proverb of "the divil 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 flighty, 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 wo that accompanied these transient gleams of reason, forced them to the dreadful alternative of wishing, at times, that she might forever 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 Peek-skill, 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 duresse, 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 of the remaining passes were guarded by the Americans.

We have already stated that the picquets 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 aban-

doned 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 tried 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 a 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'am 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 any thing 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 between 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 dealin:s with Belzebub 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 a'n'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 forehea 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—"

"Andrè," said Frances, in a melancholy tone.

"Yes. Ondree; when he was hung acrost the Tappaan, 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 skinners took it all, and now he is a beggar, or, what's the same thing, dispiseable 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 Andrè 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 declarations 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 sun-set. Another hill rose opposite to where she sat, at no great distance, along whose rugged sides nothing was to be seen but shapeless rocks, and oaks whose stinted 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 partial 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 be-

neath. 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, 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 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 to come to the conclusion that it was ideal, and that what she saw was 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 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 farmhouse, which the care of Dunwoodie had already prepared for their reception, and where Captain Wharton was anxiously expecting their arrival.

CHAPTER X.

"These limbs are strengthen'd 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 that 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 out-building 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 com-

manding 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 demeanor, 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 around 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 Thompson'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 piquets 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 limited, the proof so obvious, and the penalty so well established, that escape at once seemed impossible. But Henry replied, with earnest grace—

"That I passed your piquets, 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 mo-

tives 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 unauthorized 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 immoveable 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 paus-

ing a moment in respect to 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 that 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 any thing 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 immoveable 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 Andrè have deserted a field of battle, Major Dunwoodie, had he encountered such an event near Tarry-town?" 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—our's 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 misshapen 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 dare 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 pedlar 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 through which her lover had disappeared.

"Harvey Birch! echoed all the judges. The two immoveable members of the court exchanged significant looks, and threw many an inquisitive glance at their prisnoer.

"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 piquets; 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 pedlar 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 Andrè. 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 choaked; "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. "O! 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 swollen 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 that 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, sunk 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 nece-sary instructions to the officer in command, and despatching a courier to headquarters 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 XI.

"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 deliberataly 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, accoutered 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 never have 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 headquarters," 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 entrust 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 prisoner. 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 was 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 weeping 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 any thing 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 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 every thing 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 declarations 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, endeavoring 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 barries of rocks 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 forma-

tion, 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 pedlar. 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 chord 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 pro-

ceeded. 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 XII.

"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 exhortations 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 either 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 anticipa-

tion 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 sooth 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 convorsation, 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 Fish-kill 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 down-hill 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 endeavoring to conquer, and the stranger himself drawing forth occasional sighs and groans, that threatened a dissolution of the unequal connexion between his sublimated soul and its ungainly tenement. During this death-like 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 in 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—by 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 chosen.' It is easier to talk of humility, than to feel it. Are you so humbled, vile worm, as to wish to glorify God by your own damnation? If not, away with you for a publican and a pharisee."

Such gross fanaticism was uncommon in America, and Miss Peyton began to imbibe the impression that the guest was deranged: but remember-

ing that he had been 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 the spectacles, and exhibiting his piercing eyes shining under a pair of false eyebrows.

"Good Heavens!—Harvey!"

"Silence!" said the pedlar 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 halters 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 I now 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 pedlar, 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 unasked 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 a 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 superintendance of the pedlar, 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 extract 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar in their 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 pedlar, 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 sprung 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."

"Every thing but your leg," said the pedlar, 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 color'd man an't got a tongue like oder folk," grumbled the black, as he took the station assigned to him.

Every thing now was arranged for action, and the pedlar 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 humbler 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 sunk 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 pedlar; "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," con-

tinued he, with an air of pride, "that now is the moment when every thing 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 pedlar, with that wild incoherency which often crossed his manner. "But I have promised *one* to save you, and to him I never yet have broken my word."

"And who is he?" said Henry with awakened interest.

"No one," returned the pedlar.

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 faithful 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 pedlar 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."

"Aye—aye, 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 pedlar 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 immoveable, 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 pedlar 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 rase 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 stair-way 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 ex-

amining 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 every thing 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 thunder-cloud. 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 works 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 that 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 Pedlar 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 XIII.

"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 pedlar 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 pedlar.

"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, 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 pedlar. 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 pedlar; "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 laying 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 pedlar; "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 pedlar, 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 pedlar 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 be-

hind, 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 forgotton 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 pedlar 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 pedlar'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 pedlar 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 pedlar not to desert him. Harvey instantly drew up and suffered his companion to run along side of his own horse. The cocked hat and wig of the pedlar 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 pedlar—"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 pedlar; "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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 his example.

The pedlar 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 pedlar, and make an end of him."

Henry felt his companion gripe his arm hard, as he listened in a great tremor 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, 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 amongst the rocks and caverns of the mountain.

The conjecture of the pedlar 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 trail on such ground as might enable the horse to pursue, when one of the party descried the pedlar 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 rascal 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 Harlaem 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 pedlar?" asked one of the men, drawing his pistol from the holster.

"Aye, startle the birds from their perch—let us see how they can use the wing." The man fired the 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 par-

ty 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 patroles 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 XIV.

"And here, forlorn and lost, I tread,
With fainting steps, and slow;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length'ning 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 pedlar. 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 enterprize. 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 pedlar

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 officers, 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 their 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 he-

roine 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 incertitude, 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 briars 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 briars, 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 of 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 pedlar. 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 carelessly rested on its guard. The tall stature of this unexpected tenant of the hut, and his form, much more athletic than that of either Har-

vey 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 pedlar, 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 recognized 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 car-

dinal 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 controul 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 piquets 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 pedlar, 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 last two days, and I crave some of the cheer that you mentioned."

"Hem"—said the pedlar, 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 fire-light, 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, in her passage through the Highlands, as well as her view of him on that day, and her immediate conjecture that the fugi-

tives 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 fervor; "your secret is safe with me."

"Major Dunwoodie—" said the pedlar, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar; 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 their departure had ceased, Harper re-appeared. 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 abiiity 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 his hand impressively upon her head. The maid turned her face to-

wards him, and the hood again falling back, exposed her lovely features to the fulness of the moon-beams. A tear was glistening on either cheek, and her mild blue eyes were gazing upon him in 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 XV.

"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 the 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 pedlar 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 not 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 in 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 he 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 distrusted 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 hands."

"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 conscious integrity; "it is not my country, but my honour, that requires the sacrifice. Has he not fled from a 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 mildy; "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 tremor 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 nor 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 stigmatised 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 sunk 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 every thing 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 counte-

nance 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, by 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 forever."

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 within finite 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 awaken 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 will 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 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 endeavor 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 with 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 bachelor's children. We will leave them, and return to Captain Wharton and Harvey Birch.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Allow him not a parting word;
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!"
Rokeby.

The pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar informed his companion, in order to avoid the parties who constantly patroled 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 opening 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, 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 yourself, 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 was 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 was taken, when you refused my advice and offer to see you in safety," returned the pedlar. "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 pedlar'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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, drily; "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? These are the—the rebels—waiting only for day, to see who will be the master of the ground."

"Nay, then," exclaimed the fiery youth, "I will join the troops of my prince, and share their fortunes, 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 pedlar discovered a skiff, that, from his movements, appeared to be an old acquaintance; and entering it with his compaion, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 jutted humbly into its broad basin. On the opposite or western shore, the rocks of Jersey were gathered in 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 sluggish 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 pedlar 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 successively brought into view.

"There, Captain Wharton," said the pedlar, 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 adventurers 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 skrimmagers," 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar; "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 pedlar, "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 innocency 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 skinners, (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 afeard 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 pedlar 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 pedlar had views of his own, he rather avoided falling in with any of these patroles, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar," returned Harvey, meekly, "and am going below to lay in a fresh stock."

"And how do you expect to get below, my innocent pedlar? 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 pedlar, 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 one 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 ob-

served, and beckoned to the pedlar 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 was down the precipice, whither the wind had cast 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 of 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 domicil, 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 immoveable 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 unpractised 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 begining to tremble. "I will tell you any thing—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. Pedlar," 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 pedlar 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 torments. 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 any thing 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 pedlar—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 for 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 XVII.

"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 short 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 the Americans. This forbearing policy, on the side of the partisan, was owing to orders that he had received from his 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 hay-stack, and laid their own frames under its shelter to catch a few hours sleep But Dr. Sitgreaves, Sergeant 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 favorite 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 purposes of war, that of disabling your enemy."

"Pooh! pooh! sargeant, 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 Jack, there, if the country could get the liberty, and the boys no strike their might.—Pooh! I wouldn't have them disparage 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 bothers, ments," 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 singe 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'll 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 to 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 nonplushed 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 for 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, wid 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 signal 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 Ame

ricans 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 endeavor 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, stept 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 into 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 troops, 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 he 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 belong only 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 gray, 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, 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 male 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 favorite's dress with her fingers.

"And who'll there be to incourage 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 yee 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, endeavoring 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 favorite, 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. Capt. 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 XVIII.

"Midst urs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green.
The centre of the glittering ring;
And Snowdown'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 honorable 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 royal 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 forever we must be strangers."

The pedlar 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 depends, not only their fortunes, but their lives."

He paused, as if to reflect, in order that full justice might be done to the pedlar, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar, 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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 serviceable to your children."

"Children!" exclaimed the pedlar. "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 pedlar 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 pedlar 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 pedlar was again heard of.

CHAPTER XIX.

"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 ardor 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 favored 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 plains," 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 demeanor, 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 could find either; for nearly half of our army have marched down the road, and may be, by this time, under the walls of Fort George, for any thing 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 a 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 replied 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 there are some who add, that your old great-aunt helps his suit."

"Aunt Jeannette!" 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 housekeeper of your mother's took me into the pantry, and said that the Colonel was no dispiseable 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 that 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 uncle, 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 married.—My mother was—"

"An angel!" interrupted the old man, in a voice that startled the young soldiers by its abruptness and energy.

"Did you know her?" cried the son, with a bright glow of pleasure on his cheek.

The reply of the stranger was interrupted by sudden and heavy explosions of artillery, which were immediately followed by continued volleys of small arms, and in a few minutes the air was filled with the tumult of a warm and well contested battle.

The two soldiers hastened with precipitation towards their camp, accompanied by their new acquaintance. The excitement and anxiety created by the approaching fight, prevented a continuance of the conversation, and the three held their way to the army, making occasional conjectures on the cause of the fire and the probability of a general engagement. During their short and hurried walk, Captain Dunwoodie, however, threw several friendly glances at the old man, who moved over the ground with astonishing energy

for his years, for the heart of the youth was warmed by an eulogium on a mother that he adored.—In a short time, they joined the regiment to which the officers belonged, when the captain squeezing the stranger's hand, earnestly begged that he would make inquiries after him on the following morning, and that he might see him in his own tent. Here they separated.

Every thing in the American camp announced an approaching struggle. At a distance of a few miles the sound of cannon and musketry, was heard above even the roar of the cataract. The troops were soon in motion, and a movement made to support that division of the army which was already engaged. Night had set in before the reserve and irregulars reached the foot of Lundy's Lane, a road that diverged from the river and crossed a conical eminence, at no great distance from the Niagara highway. The summit of this hill was crowned with the cannon of the British, and in the flat beneath was the remnant of Scott's gallant brigade, which had for a long time held an unequal contest, with distinguished bravery. A new line was interposed, and one column of the Americans directed to charge up the hill, parallel to the road. This column took the English in flank, and, bayonetting their artillerists, gained possession of the cannon. They were immediately joined by their comrades and the enemy was swept from the hill. But large reinforcements were joining the English general momentarily, and their troops were too brave to rest easy under the defeat. Repeated and bloody charges were made to recover the guns, but in all they were repulsed with slaughter. During the last of these struggles, the ardor of the youthful captain whom we have mentioned, urged him to lead his men some distance in advance, to scatter a dar-

ing party of the enemy—he succeeded, but in returning to the line missed his lieutenant from the station that he ought to have occupied. Soon after this repulse, which was the last, orders were given to the shattered troops to return to the camp. The British were no where 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 fuse, 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 smoke 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 honorable burial—lift him, and let him be carried in; his bones shall rest on native soil."

The men approached to obey. He was lying on his back, with his face exposed to the glaring light of the fuse; his eyes were closed, as if in slumber;—his lips, sunken with years, were slightly moved from their natural position, but it seemed more like a smile than a convulsion, which

caused the change. A soldier's musket lay near him, where it had fallen from his grasp; his hands were both pressed upon his breast, and one of them contained a substance that glittered like silver. Dunwoodie stooped, and removing the limbs, perceived the place where the bullet had found a passage to his heart. The subject of his last care was a tin box, through which the fatal lead had gone; and the dying moments of the old man must have passed in drawing it from his bosom. Dunwoodie opened it, and found a paper, in which, to his astonishment, he read the following:

"Circumstances of political importance, which involve the lives and fortunes of many, have hitherto kept secret what this paper now reveals. Harvey Birch has for years been a faithful and unrequited servant of his country. Though man does not, may God reward him for his conduct.

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

It was the SPY OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND, who died as he had lived, devoted to his country, and a martyr to her liberties.