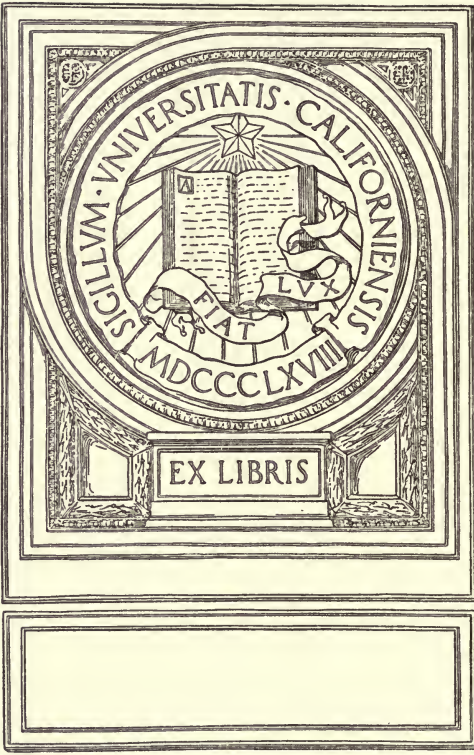




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# GEORGE MASON,

THE

## YOUNG BACKWOODSMAN;

OR

'DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP.'

A STORY OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF 'FRANCIS BERRIAN.'

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BOSTON:

HILLIARD, GRAY, LITTLE, AND WILKINS.

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1829.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT:

*District Clerk's Office.*

BE it remembered, that on the twenty-third day of January, A. D. 1829, and in the fifty-third year of the Independence of the United States of America, William Hilliard, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, viz.

“ *George Mason, the Young Backwoodsman ; or ‘ Don’t give up the Ship.’ A Story of the Mississippi. By the Author of ‘ Francis Berrian.’* ”

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JNO. W. DAVIS,

*Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.*

CAMBRIDGE :

HILLIARD, METCALF, AND CO.

# GEORGE MASON.

## CHAPTER I.

I drag alone my load of care,  
For silent, low, on beds of dust,  
Lie all, who should my sorrows share.

WIDOW, who weepst sore in the night, and whose tears are on thy cheeks, because thy young children are fatherless, and the husband of thy bosom and thy youth in the dust, dry thy tears. Remember Him, who hath promised to be the husband of the widow, and take courage. Orphan, who hast seen thy venerated father taken from thee by the rude hand of death, and whose thought is, that in the wide world, there is none to love, pity, or protect thee, forget not the gracious Being, who has promised to be a father to the orphan, and remember, that thy business in life is; not to give up to weak and enervating despondence, and waste thy strength in sorrow and tears. Life is neither an anthem nor a funeral hymn, but an assigned task of discipline and struggle, and thou hast to gird thyself, and go to thy duty in the strength of God. I write for the young, the poor, and the desolate; and the moral and the maxim which I wish to inculcate is, that we ought never to

despond, either in our religious or our temporal trials. To parents I would say, inculcate the spirit, the duties, and the hopes of religion upon your children in the *morning and the evening, in the house and by the way*. Instil decision and moral courage into their young bosoms. Teach them incessantly the grand maxim—self-respect. It will go farther to gain them respect, and render them deserving of it, than the bequeathed stores of hoarded coffers. A child, deeply imbued with self-respect, will never disgrace his parents. The inculcation of this single point includes, in my view, the best scope of education. If my powers corresponded to my wishes, I would impress these thoughts in the following brief and unpretending story. The reader will see, if he knows the country, where it is laid, as I do, that it is true to nature. He will comprehend my motive for not being more explicit on many points; and he will not turn away with indifference from the short and simple annals of the poor, for he will remember, that nine in ten of our brethren of the human race are of that class. He will not dare to despise the lowly tenants of the valley, where the Almighty, in his wisdom, has seen fit to place the great mass of our race. It has been for ages the wicked, and unfeeling, and stupid habit of writers, in selecting their scenery and their examples, to act as if they supposed that the rich, the titled, and the distinguished, who dwell in mansions, and fare sumptuously every day, were the only persons, who could display noble thinking and acting; that they were the only characters, whose loves, hopes, fortunes, sufferings, and deeds had any thing in them, worthy of interest, or sympathy. Who, in reading about these favorites of fortune, remembers that they constitute but one in ten thousand of the species? Even those of humble name and fortunes have finally caught the debasing and enslaving prejudice themselves, and exult in the actions, and shed tears of sympathy over the sorrows of the titled and the great, which, had they been recorded of

those in their own walk of life, would have been viewed either with indifference or disgust. I well know that the poor can act as nobly, and suffer as bitterly and keenly as the rich. There is as much strength and force and truth of affection in cottages as in palaces. I am a man, and as such, am affected with the noble actions, the joys and sorrows, the love and death of the obscure, as much as of the great. If there be any difference, the deeds, affections, fortunes, and sufferings of the former have more interest; for they are unprompted by vanity, unblazoned by fame, unobscured by affectation, unalloyed by pride and avarice. The actings of the heart are sincere, simple, single. God alone has touched the pendulum with his finger, and the vibrations are invariably true to the purpose of Him who made the movement. If, therefore, reader, you feel with me, you will not turn away with indifference from this, my tale, because you are forewarned, that none of the personages are rich or distinguished. You will believe, that a noble heart can swell in a bosom clad in the meanest habiliments. You will admit the truth as well as the beauty of the poet's declaration, respecting the gems of the sea, and the roses that "waste their sweetness on the desert air;" and you will believe, that incidents, full of tender and solemn interest, have occurred in a log cabin in the forests of the Mississippi.

In the year 1816, the Rev. George Mason arrived towards sunset at a settlement, eight miles south of the Iron Banks, in what is commonly called the Jackson Purchase, on the lower Mississippi. The family had emigrated from New-England, and consisted of this gentleman, a man of dignified appearance, though indicating fatigue, exhaustion, and feeble health, and turned of forty years; his lady, with a complexion which had originally been as fair as a lily, but now browned by the suns of a long journey, in the warmer days of Autumn, and with an expression of sweetness, rendered

interesting by a strong touch of care and sorrow, and whose age, from appearance, might be thirty-five; and five children, four sons and a daughter. George, the hero of this story, was a fair, white-headed, blue-eyed boy of fourteen; Eliza, a sweet little girl of twelve, with a keen black eye, a face of Italian contour, and slightly olive. Glossy ringlets of black hair curled in her neck. A shrinking and timid manner evidenced natural sensibility, the seclusion and retirement, in which she had been reared, and the rough people, from whom she had recently shrunk, on a journey of sixteen hundred miles. Henry, Thomas, and William were eight, six, and four years old. It was a group, in which the parents were of uncommon interest, and the children lovely, beyond what I wish to describe; because I would avoid expressions, that might seem extravagant. They had that singular expression of mingled pride and lowliness, which is apt to be marked upon the countenance and manner of the children of ministers, who constitute the connecting link between the rich and the poor; their education, and the standing annexed to the profession, placing them on a level with the rich; and the scantiness and precariousness of their subsistence placing them distinctly on the footing of the poor. It was obvious, from their fatigued and weather-beaten appearance, and their being apparently much exhausted, that they had travelled a long way. A slight inspection of their dress, and the hired wagon that had brought them and their effects from the banks of the Mississippi, where they had debarked from a flat boat, manifested that one of their trials had been want of sufficient money to bring them comfortably over such a long way, by such a tedious and expensive route. There was a shyness about them, too, which marked, however they disguised it externally, that their hearts revolted from the outlandish and foreign aspect of the tall planters, dressed in deer-skin hunting-shirts, with fringed epaulets of leather on



their shoulders, a knit sash of red, green, and blue about their waists, buck-skin pantaloons and moccasins, a rifle on their shoulders, five or six dogs attending each one of them, and a dozen ragged and listless negroes lounging behind them. Real dignity, however, is an internal thing, and belongs only to the mind. A family could not have been reared, as they had been, where self-respect had been inculcated every day, and every hour, both by precept and example, without showing the influence of their discipline, be their dress and appearance in other respects, as they might. There was a look of decency, uprightness, and calm assertion of their standing, a certain indescribable, but easily felt manner impressed upon the whole family, which manifested at a glance, that it was the family of a gentleman. It at once awed and repressed rude and impertinent curiosity, and made the vulgar rich, for there were three or four such, who had come to be spectators of the arrival of this family, shrink from the manifestation of that unfeeling and insulting superiority, which such people are apt to evince in the presence of those, who are poorer than themselves. Mr. Pindell, the owner of twenty-five negroes, and Mr. Gorvin, the owner of fifteen, were among the dozen nearest settlers who had come professedly to welcome them to their cabin in the woods. There was much rough but well intended complimenting, and proffer of aid and courtesy, and desire that they might be better acquainted; in short, all the kindly meant ceremonial, customary among such people on such occasions. After an acquaintance of two years, it would have been pleasant to Mr. Mason and his family. At present the dim shades of twilight gathering over the boundless woods, the savage aspect of these huntsmen and their negroes, even the joyous evening yell of the hounds, the unwonted and strange terms of welcome, the foreign look of every thing about them, all this was of a character to inspire dismay and homesickness in the hearts of people, recently transferred from a pleas-

ant New-England village. Way-worn, and but slenderly furnished with the means of simple subsistence, whether they looked around them upon the new society, in the midst of which their lot was cast, upon the dark and sterile woods, whose leaves were falling about them, or into the roofless and unfloored cabin, where they were to shelter for the night; the whole scene was desolate and chilling. God is a shade, a shelter, and a high tower of defence in such cases. The young children had wept with weariness, had thrown themselves on a blanket, and were asleep under the open sky. The neighbours saw that their newly arrived friends were weary, and wished to be by themselves. They had considerably provided plenty of such provisions, as the settlement afforded; spread bear skins on the sward in the interior of the cabin, and left a black woman to cook supper and breakfast for them. In that mild season, and cloudless weather, there was nothing formidable to them, in the idea of leaving the family to repose on bear skins under the open canopy. One after the other, with the significant Western salutation, "I wish you well," left them to themselves. The younger children were too soundly asleep to be awakened to supper. The parents and George and Eliza took a hasty supper, provided for them by the black woman, and soon forgot their cares and slept as deeply as if they had been reposing on down, in the most magnificent dwelling.

Mr. Mason, on report only, and without having seen it, had purchased, as an asylum and a shelter from the approaching winter, this unfinished log-house, in the midst of a clearing of three acres, cut out of the deep forest, in this settlement, eight miles from the river. The nearest habitation was distant two miles. Beyond that, there was a considerable settlement, recently established in the forests. Some of the planters, as we have remarked, were comparatively opulent, and had a considerable number of slaves. The neighbours, of

whom we have spoken, had visited them, as is customary, to welcome them to the settlement, and to proffer their acquaintance and their aid.

A bright morning sun, slanting its beams through the forests, at this season delightfully rich with all the mellow colors of autumn, a plentiful breakfast provided for the family, before they were awake, by the black woman, and to which she awaked them, the devouring appetite of the children, refreshed by their sleep, the air, prospects, and cheerful sounds of the morning, rendered the scene before them as different from that of the evening, as can be imagined. Every member of the family was cheerful, and the sole theme was, how they should render the habitation comfortable, and lay in a sufficient quantity of the provisions, which the settlement furnished, for the approaching winter. We have remarked, that Mr. Mason was in feeble health. He suffered, also, from nervousness, and a temperament, probably resulting from that habit, inclining to dejection and despondency. But his was a wisely religious family, which had been taught by constant training; that despondency, indulged and allowed, under any circumstances, is a sin, implying dishonoring and distrustful views of God, and particularly so, when it hinders the desponding from exertions, which they might otherwise make, to better their condition.

The depression of Mr. Mason was that of feebleness of health and the physical nature, and not that of the mind. Immediately after breakfast, and the departure of the black woman, the father was seen in company with George, making mortar from the clay, and exerting himself to fill up the intervals between the logs, in the language of the country, "daubing" the house, and in all the common expedients of the country, to render the habitation a warm and secure shelter from the frosts and rains of the approaching winter. Though his neighbours were rough, some of them were kind in their way, and they came in and aided him. He saw in

their mode of managing the business, that there is a dexterity in every business, to be acquired only by practice, and that they knew infinitely better than he did how to "daub and chink" a log cabin. In a couple of days, which fortunately continued fair, the house had a roof, which would shed the rain, though the covering was of cypress-splits, secured in their place by logs, laid at right angles over them, and a chimney, which did not smoke, although it was made of clefts, plastered with clay-mortar, in which, as the material was abundant, there was no lack of thickness of coating. The intervals between the logs were tightly closed with chinking, well covered with the same material. A partition of small and straight timbers, with an opening cut through one end for a door, divided the area of the cabin into two apartments, one of which contained one, and the other two husk mattresses. The neighbours assisted him to raise another smaller cabin, in the language of the country, a "logpen," covered and daubed in the same manner, but without a chimney, and here was another mattress, in which George and Henry slept. These mattresses, thanks to the cheapness of bleached cottons in our country, though coarsely covered, had an appearance of coolness and neatness, which spread a charm round the precincts of the rustic, but neat cabin. A draft was necessarily made upon the small sum of money, that remained to the family, and which was reserved for the most pressing emergencies, to purchase a supply of winter provisions. These consisted of the substantial materials of a west countryman's diet, corn, bacon, and sweet potatoes. Such are the appointments with which a hundred thousand families have commenced in the Western country, and with which they have, probably, been more contented and happy than their posterity will be when dwelling in spacious mansions.

When the first white frosts of November rendered an evening fire necessary; when a bright one was kindled

on their broad clay hearth; when their "puncheon" shutters, for glass they had none, had excluded the uncertain light and the chill air of evening; when the broad table, made with an adz from white poplar clefts, was spread before this fire; when the repast of smoking corn loaf, sweet potatoes, and fried bacon were arranged on it; when the fragrant tea was added, in remembrance of New-England, for they still retained a few pounds, brought all the way from that country; and when the whole was seasoned by cheerful conversation, and that appetite, which is felt in such cabins, and by industrious backwoodsmen in the highest perfection, the guests at this humble feast had no need to envy those of any other. A brilliant blaze, kindled with dry wood, enlightened the whole interior structure of this fresh-looking, rough-cast, timbered apartment. The faithful dog, that had followed them all the way from their late home, and now doubly dear to them, as associated with their fond remembrances of that country, sat beside the table, looking earnestly upon its contents, apparently as hungry, and as happy, as the children, wagging his tail, and occasionally interpolating a yelp of joy, as an interjection in the pauses of the gay conversation. The prolonged and distant howl of the wolves, the ludicrous and almost terrific noises of a hundred owls, the scream of other nocturnal animals, the measured creaking of the crickets and *catadeds*, and the gathering roar of autumnal winds along the forest, only sweetened a sense of present protection to the children, and rendered the brightness and shelter of the scene within more delightful, by contrast with the boundless and savage forest without. Such are the scenes, where narratives of the incidents of common life have their highest zest and charm. Such are the scenes, where the confidence and affection of children towards their parents root deep and strong in the heart, and have no touch of mercenary and selfish expectation mixed with them. I have never passed, and I never expect to pass, happier hours,

than I have spent, while an inmate of such a cabin. It has seemed to me, that a woodsman's cabin that has just risen in the forests, rendered happy by innocence, competence, contentment, and prayer, concentrates affection, and produces some singular and undescribed associations of contrast, that render it the chosen and hallowed abode of that unassuming happiness, which is the most durable and satisfying, that we can feel here below. I have delightful remembrances of my long sojourn in such places; and as they return to my thoughts, I earnestly invoke the blessing of God upon the dwellers in cabins.

The children, each one of whom inherited a sprinkling of romance from their parents, were charmed with these first essays of the life of a backwoodsman. Poor things! They had as yet seen but the romance and the illusion of the picture. Long may they remain under this pleasant spell, which charms the woods and this new condition for them. A circumstance contributed to heighten the charm. The sixth day after their arrival, a deer strayed so near the cabin, that George shot it from the door. The same day the father and son, in exploring the grounds directly about them, in relation to commencing a clearing, started a bear from the cane brake. He retreated slowly, and growling from their path, and made his retreat upon a prodigious sycamore. A passing neighbour came to the place. Two or three dogs surrounded the tree, and made the woods ring with cries, which indicated, to a knowing huntsman, that fear was mingled with their joy. A few rifle-shots brought the savage to the ground. There was something less wounding to their feelings in the slaughter of such a ferocious animal, than in that of an inoffensive deer. Apart from the noble and spirit-stirring sport of bringing down a large and fat bear, the meat, which is excellent, and easily preserved, was a matter of no small consideration to a family like this. Even the skin is an important item in the arrangement of a backwoods

cabin. I can scarcely imagine more ample materials for pleasant evening conversation and amusement, than were furnished by the hunting of the day. Tender pieces of venison and bear's-meat smoked on the table. The fortunes of that day seemed to promise, that there would be no danger of want of meat, while they possessed a rifle, powder, and lead. The black eyes of the charming Eliza glistened with intense interest, as she contemplated the terrible claws and teeth of the savage animal, with an involuntary shudder, observing, that much as she longed to gather the wild flowers, she should always tremble to go in woods, where such terrible beasts were common. George exulted in the spirit of a little Nimrod, as he related the circumstances of bringing down the bear to his younger brothers, who had not been permitted to be in at the death. The misfortune of this pleasant circle was, that there were generally two or three speakers chattering at a time. None, but a canine Lavater, would have comprehended all the visible satisfaction of the dog, who was evidently listening with all his ears, and probably regretting the want of speech, that he could not disclose his thoughts among the rest. Even the head of this family turned a countenance, brightening from its common dejection, on Mrs. Mason, who, it would appear, had been averse to this immigration. "Eliza," said he, with an air of quiet triumph in his eye, "are you sorry now, that we have brought our dear ones here?"

How often has my heart been glad in view of scenes like these! How often have I thanked God, that the world was not made for a favored few! How often have I felt a religious gladness, in thinking, that calm, simple, pure, and natural enjoyments were thus accessible to the tenants of such habitations! An unenvious spirit of contentment, industry, and prayer rests upon you, ye dwellers in this lowly habitation. Only know your happiness, and you need not envy the tenants of

palaces. Mrs. Mason herself, as she pressed the hand of her husband, admitted, that the first samples of their new ways of life were more pleasant, than she had anticipated. To say the truth, though she never remonstrated against the plans of her husband, she had entertained in her heart the most gloomy forebodings, in reference to a new existence in such a distant and unknown country.



## CHAPTER II.

“ Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys and destiny obscure.”

It would too long detach me from the thread of my narrative, if I were to go minutely into the relation of the causes which brought such a family, as that of Mr. Mason's, from the condition of a New-England minister's place and duties, to the forests of the lower Mississippi, and a society, for which they were evidently so little assorted. Few of my readers would comprehend the peculiar trials of a minister in such a place, or would be able to understand the complication of minute difficulties and vexations, which, during a ministry of sixteen years, in a country village, had broken down his health and spirits, and finally induced him to ask a dismissal from his people, and to move to this distant and unknown country. His parish comprehended every shade of opinion in religion and politics. Embittered parties and eternal disputations were the consequence. In attempting to keep clear of all, the pastor became embroiled with all. Both himself and his wife had been reared delicately. The salary was small, and the family increasing. He became poor, and obnoxious both to the religious and political parties; and after sixteen years of the prime of his life spent among them, admitting, the while, that he was exemplary, of good feelings, learned and eloquent, they refused him, in town-meeting, a request to add something to his salary. In disgust he asked a dismissal, and it was granted.

To account for his thoughts taking this direction, as a place where to fix himself and family, it would be necessary to explain something of the peculiar texture of his mind and his thoughts. In the progress of his vexations in his parish, he had become, perhaps I ought

to say, unreasonably disgusted with the condition of a minister in that country. His health and spirits had failed, and while his lady earnestly wished him to make the experiment of trying to settle again, he had become determined never to be resettled in the ministry. While she would have preferred his trying any other expedient for a livelihood than agriculture, a pursuit for which he was so little fitted, he had been accustomed for years to allow his thoughts to expatiate in fabricating the romance of pastoral enjoyments and pursuits. By accident the romances of Imlay and Chateaubriand, and other writers equally historical, presenting such illusive pictures of the southern and western country, had fallen into his hands. During the long winter evenings,

“ When fast came down the snow,  
And keenly o’er the wide heath the bitter blast did blow,”

this romance of freedom from the vexations of a minister’s life, and the miseries of political and religious altercation in a populous village, and escape from the inclement climate, to a country where he might find health, freedom, solitude, rich land, and independence, formed in his imagination. Once formed there, all his reading and reasonings, all the opposing arguments, all the remonstrances of his friends, and each renewed vexation, embellished his romance, and confirmed his purpose. His wife, at first, argued gently against the plan; but she loved her husband, and his often repeated, and eloquently painted views of his romance, finally presented it to her mind as a reality.

I need not describe the departure of this family from their New-England home. As he was leaving them, the villagers, some of them at least, seemed to relent, and to understand and feel their loss. Many tears were shed upon all sides. Mr. Mason himself found it was a different thing from his imaginings, to break away from such a place, where he had so long identified his feelings with the joys and sorrows of the people; where

he had prayed with so many sick, and followed so many dead to their long home. His fair and loved wife, pale, shrinking, and in tears, kissed her mother. The children kissed their schoolmates. Old people said, "Good bye, Mr. Mason; pray for us; we shall never see you again." The children, their eyes red and swollen with weeping, were packed along with Mrs. Mason, with the dilapidated but bulky baggage, into a two-horse wagon. Young George sat forward, as driver. Amidst suppressed weeping, and almost inaudible farewells, with his hat drawn over his eyes, George started his team. The family dog saw that matters went wrong, and whined piteously, as he followed the lingering steps of his master, who walked behind the wagon, to indulge in the sad luxury of the last look at his church-spire glittering in the sun-beams of a bright morning in autumn.

I trust there are few readers who cannot fill out the picture of the feelings, trials, and accidents of such a family, in their journey to the western hills. They can imagine, how often the horses gave out, the harness broke, and the carriage escaped upsetting. They can imagine, how often the children cried with fatigue and sleepiness at night; and how fresh, alert, and gay they were, when setting out, after a full breakfast, on a bright sunny morning; how often they were brought in contact with rough and unfeeling people; how often, in their tavern bills, and bills for repairs, they dealt with harpies, eager to wrest from them an unjust claim upon their scanty pittance. But if they met with many painful occurrences on this long route, there were many pleasant ones too. If the gullied road, or the rain-washed precipices rendered the way almost impassable to their wagon, in other places they found many miles in succession of pleasant travelling. On the whole, there were many more fair days than stormy ones. George proved himself, for a boy of his years, a firm and an admirable driver. While he was whistling on the front of the wagon, and cheering his horses, and the children were asleep among the

baggage, the husband and wife walked many a pleasant mile, seating themselves occasionally for rest on the breezy side of a hill or a mountain, and tracing back as on a map, the dusty road, the river, the villages, spires, mansions and groves, by which they had passed. Nor will the feeling and experienced traveller in this emigrating march, fail to add to the picture the dog, reposing at their feet, whenever they rested. There is a charm in the evershifting mountain and valley scenery, on such a long route, that Mr. Mason felt in all its delight.

In due time, and with the common experience of the mixture of bitter and pleasant things, they had labored over the last of the Alleghany hills; had descended to the Ohio; had sold, if sale it might be called, their wagon and team; had purchased a flat boat, and were floating down the beautiful Ohio, which happened this Autumn to be in an uncommonly fine stage for boating. They had been wafted down that beautiful river, had admired the forests, the vallies and bluffs, and the incipient towns and villages, as they alternated on its long course; had encountered the sweeping and turbid current of the Mississippi; had debarked at the Iron Banks, and had hired a wagon to carry them out to the settlement, where, as we have seen, Mr. Mason had purchased the cabin and clearing, which he now inhabited.

Mr. Pindall and Mr. Garvin; from their wealth, the number of their slaves, and from their possessing, along with a drove of horses, four-wheeled carriages, which were called coaches, were by estimation the distinguished inhabitants of the settlement. Illiterate and rude as they were, they perceived, and felt the character of their new neighbours. An unpleasant sense of mental inferiority at first awed them to a respectful kindness of manner towards them; and they evinced no little pride in showing the new family, with their comparatively polished manners, and their bright and beautiful

faces, as their guests. They gave them dinners, in which there was no want of substantial good cheer; nor any deficiency of custards, delicious sweet potatoe pies, and various wild fruits. Aware, that whiskey would not be the beverage of Mr. Mason's choice, even generous foreign wines were spread on the board. All this was painful to the family; for they were conscious that it was not in their power to return the invitations in kind, and that they could not expect long to preserve the respect of such people, in this visible manifestation of inferiority, in a point, which they would deem of so much importance. It is, in fact, an unfortunate trait in the character of people of that class, that they are unduly delighted with every thing that is new; and caress recent emigrants for a while. As soon as they become thoroughly acquainted with them, they discover something, which awakens envy, or comparison, and begin to find fault with them; circulate unfavorable reports of them, and especially, if they are poor, combine to keep them down, and prevent their emerging from their humiliation and poverty.

This view of the character of the settlers about them soon began to disclose itself, and convince them that there were babbling and disagreeable people else where, than in New England. But their general circumstances were so pleasant, and the romance of their condition still so fresh, during the winter that succeeded their arrival, that Mr. Mason pronounced himself quite as well satisfied with his new condition, as he had anticipated. Young George became at once a hunter of considerable expertness. It is true, neither he nor his father, in the phrase of the country, were "quite up" to the mystery of hunting bears and deer. But, during this winter, whatever the neighbours said of them in private, they were externally kind, and sent them, in presents, more venison and bear's-meat, than they could consume. Whenever they chose, by rambling a few hours, they could at any time bring home, for variety in

their fare, wild ducks, squirrels, opossums, and rabbits. The tea, coffee, and sugar, which they had brought with them, it is true, were soon exhausted, and it did not suit their scanty resources to replenish these articles. The want at first, from the power of habit, was felt as a trying and painful privation. As a substitute, the milk of a couple of cows, which they had purchased, and which fed in the rich range near the house, furnished a beverage more healthful and nutritive, if not so pleasant, as that which they were compelled to renounce.

We have seen, that from ill health and discouragement Mr. Mason, when he left New England, had determined finally to renounce the public duties of his profession. While he was still fresh in the acquaintance and respect of the people in his new residence, in their zeal to hear a new preacher, they wearied him with solicitations to preach, until finally he consented. A "preaching," as it is called, that creates any excitement, is there not unlike an ordination in New England. There is a simultaneous rush from all quarters, within ten miles, to the spectacle. Mrs. Mason, who perceived from the excitement, what a show it was like to prove, was compelled, poor woman, to task her utmost powers, to fit up the sabbath dresses for the dear children, so as to enable them to make any tolerable appearance, beside those of her rich neighbours. Eliza would have been the pride of any mother. It went to the heart of this mother to find, that, do all she could, in the way of turning and mending, and contriving, the sweet child of her pride and her heart would show a beautiful face and form under the disadvantage of a mean and faded dress. Mr. Mason had comprehended the tone of public feeling, and wished not to distinguish himself by a dress for this occasion different from the common one. In this single respect Mrs. Mason showed, that she felt on this subject, as a woman. Forth came the gorgeous and flowing silk cassock and surplice, and about his neck were the large and well starched bands.

The important Sabbath dawned at length, and the people were seen, some on horseback, some on foot, some in dearborns, and some in carriages, emerging from the deep woods, in every direction, where an alley had been opened through them. Mr. Mason and every member of his family made their way on foot to the place of worship, distant two miles and a half. It was a large log building, on the verge of a gentle bluff, whence issued two or three springs, which were enclosed in unheaded casks, and amply provided with gourd shells for drinking vessels. The building within was rough and capacious, and had an aspect, which I should describe to no purpose to one, who has not seen such a church. I shall only mention one peculiarity of the structure. It was so contrived that in the cold weather of winter, logs, sixteen feet in length, could be drawn, or, as it is technically phrased, *snaked* into church and placed parallel to the mud-daubed wall, and a fire kindled along the whole length.

The church was full to overflowing, and the display of scarlet and coquelico dresses and artificial wreaths and roses, contrasted their barbaric splendor strangely with the huge logs in their native forms and dimensions, that composed the walls; and, in the mind of Mrs. Mason, with the cotton jackets of her boys, patched until the original cloth could hardly be distinguished. But had she been able to fathom the hearts of the collected multitude, she would have discovered, that display of dress is no passport to the hearts, if it is to the admiration of beholders. She would have discovered, that her idolized little girl, in her plain and faded calico robe, shrinking with modesty, and blushing like the morn, was a hundred times more an object of interest, than she would have been in all the glaring finery of the rest. The uncommon beauty of the children, so habited, excited no envy, and made itself more conspicuous by contrast. The brawny bosoms of Hercules Pindall and Jethro Garvin, Sabbath though it was, were

transfixed with the first look of this sweet girl of twelve years, now just expanding like an opening rose-bud, into the mature splendor of beauty. Well had it been for Mr. Mason, too, if his ill fated cassock, surplice, and bands had never been seen in that church. The naughty woman of Babylon, in all her meretricious trappings, could not have excited a more general and unpleasant revulsion of feeling. The sermon, in fact, was settled before hand. The audience, it is true, said nothing on the spot; but they looked with all their eyes, and like the parrot, "thought the more." Mr. Mason was, what we consider, a charming preacher. He had voice, gesture, manner, tone, pathos, unctious, and deep thought. His heart was full in his discourses, and a strain of solemn and earnest tenderness ran through them, that deeply affects my heart in such an exercise. The sermon, which he now delivered, was one of his best. But he fought with the air, and afforded a proof, that what is good and delightful in one place, may be an abomination in another. The audience expected, that before the close of his discourse, he would have made the woods echo. They expected some of those strong, coarse, and vehement appeals to their feelings, interlarded with figures and colloquial phrases and allusions, that were familiar to them, and their peculiar ways of life. Mr. Mason was himself affected with his own earnestness, and his eye moistened, but none of his audience caught the infectious feeling. They heard him patiently to the end, and dispersed, with their thoughts and words on a kind of grumbling key. I am not sure that it would subserve the cause of criticism, if I were able to relate all the judgments that were passed upon the services, as the people made their way home. Some said, that every thing in the sermon was mixed up, like mush and milk. Others said, that if that was college-learning preaching, give them, for their money, old Mr. Dawson, emphatically denominated, "Thunderlungs." Some said, there



were too many long words, or, as they called them, "Booktionary" words in it. Others said, that it was not a searching discourse, and had no heart religion in it. Others, and they were the most numerous class of critics, said, it was a "mighty proud" sermon; and one and all agreed, that the cassock, and gown, &c. were right Roman concerns, and most of them concluded, that he was a Roman Catholic. In short, every one found fault with it in some way. An itinerant preacher had been of the audience, too, and had most faithfully espied out, and reported the nakedness of the land.

Mr. Mason was but a man, and as such, had expected, no doubt, a very different result from this labored effort. The real judgment of the audience made its way slowly, but effectually, to him. He saw it in the manifest coolness of the people, whom he met in the ensuing week. A shrewd free mulatto woman, who knew every body, and heard all that was going, called upon Mrs. Mason, affecting some slight errand, but really to undo the budget, and let her know the whole amount of the comments upon her husband's preaching. The mind of Mr. Mason was fixed at once, in regard to his duty. He had been wearied into the effort by solicitation. He had done his best; and he determined never to expose himself and his cause to the same humiliation again. A few books and a favorite work, which he was preparing for the press, afforded sufficient occupation for all his leisure hours within, when the weather, or other circumstances, forbade his working abroad.

In his own family, as a substitute for public worship on the Sabbath, he adopted a private course of worship, blending interest and amusement with religious instruction; associating the highest exercises of the understanding and the best affections of the heart, with the tranquillizing and elevating pleasures of religion. Prayers, instructions, select readings from the scriptures, tales calculated to excite moral reflection, and to

foster tender and benevolent feelings, were read first by the father, then the mother, and the children in succession. Their understandings were exercised by questions. The hearts were improved by representations of the baseness and self-torment of pride, envy, and the bad passions in general. One grand aim, in this worship, was to represent the Almighty in that amiable character, in which He shows himself in his word, and in his works, and sedulously to shield their minds from any associations with his being and providence, but those of love, mercy, justice, goodness, and truth. It closed with a kind of court of inquest, in which the parents were judges, and the children witnesses. The general tenor of the children's deportment, words, and actions, during the past week, underwent a solemn review. The facts were proved. The character and tendency of the actions pointed out; the source whence they had arisen, explained; and if matter of reprehension existed, what ought to have been said or done, in the case, declared; and, finally, praise and blame were distributed, according to the merits of the actions. None but those who have tested this discipline know its admirable effects.

When these services were concluded, instead of holding the children in durance, as a penal expiation to the sanctity of the Sabbath, and weaving in their young minds associations with it of austerity and gloom, as soon as the ardors of the sun were quenched by his descent behind the forests, they walked together into the woods. Every object in these walks was at once a source of amusement and instruction, and a theme, whence Mr. Mason did not fail to deduce new proofs of the wisdom, mercy, and power of Him, who has formed every thing by weight and by measure. The moss, or the evergreen at the foot of the sycamore, the parroquets settling on their branches to feed, the partridge flitting from their path, the eagle screaming in the blue far above the summits of the trees, the car-

tion vultures, sailing round, and at times to the eye seeming to lie still in the air, as they scented intensely, in the heights of the firmament, for their appropriate food; the squirrels skipping, and displaying themselves in gambols, or evincing the impotent sauciness of their pride; the rabbit, starting from the cane-brake; the variety of trees and shrubs in the wide forest; the prodigious grape-vines, that climbed to their highest tops; the violets, even now at the commencement of winter, starting into bloom; the diversified seed capsules of flowers, that had already come to maturity; the various starry forms of the gossamer down of seeds, sailing slowly in the breeze; in fine, every object, with which they met, was sufficient to arrest the attention and interest of the family, and furnish a theme for a lecture on natural history, or a warm and home-felt sermon on the goodness and wisdom of the Almighty. The dissipated people of fashionable life do not await the return of their nightly gaieties with more earnest expectation than did this humble and lonely family their Sabbath evening's walk in the woods. It is thus that minds rightly constituted and trained, find everywhere amusement and instruction.

Though they had delightful Sabbath walks in the woods; though it was a source of constant amusement to the parents to answer the thousand questions of their children, raised by the novelty of the objects in their walks; though the illusive veil, which imagination spreads over an unexplored region, still rested upon the country, we must not infer that they were all the time happy, and had not an abundant mixture of bitter with their pleasant things. It belongs to earth to have this mixture, and they were not exempt from the portion of man everywhere under the sun. On their return from this evening walk, there was no tea, no coffee, to exhilarate their evening conversations, and to satisfy the cravings of long habit. The family often visited their neighbours by invitation. The rustic abundance and

the varied comforts, which were seen there, the result of a rich soil, and the labor of slaves, contrasted but unfavorably with their own stinted resources. Mrs. Mason was herself still young and pretty, and her fading dress showed to greater disadvantage, beside the gaudy expensiveness of the appearance of their host. Eliza, now beginning to feel conscious upon these points, was dragged to these visits as to a sacrifice. Her very heart ached to introduce her barefooted little ones among the creole children, who instinctively held up their red morocco shoes to provoke a comparison. It was now palpable, too, that if there were parties and divisions and heart-burnings in New-England from one cause, there were here the same evils in a different and more aggravated form. The same innate seeds of evil temper produced the same kind of trials, the more galling, because they were not yet broken to them as they had been to the other.

In this climate, every one has remarked the human form, intellect, and passions develop more early than in the north. Vacant lands of the greatest fertility can be had at pleasure. All that is necessary for the commencement of a new married couple is, teams, implements of agriculture, and a few servants. To build the houses, quarters, and stables of the establishment, is but the work of a few days, and the foundation is laid for rustic opulence and indolence. The amusements of the husbands are hunting, shooting at a mark, horse-racing, elections, cards, and drinking; and of the wives, dances, parties, and *tracasserie*. Education and mental discipline, so far from being necessary or in request, are in the few cases, where they occur, matters to excite envy and ridicule. Of course, having nothing to learn, and little to acquire, they marry early. I have, more than once, seen mothers of fourteen. It need not, therefore, be matter of surprise, that Hercules Pindall did not conceal his fondness for Eliza Mason, considered by her parents no more than a child. Nor will those

who know the ways of the country, admire, that this young giant completely ruled his father, who ruled the settlement. It soon came to the ears of Mrs. Mason that this enamoured Cyclops would make proposals for her daughter. This supposed good fortune was matter of envy to the other mothers and daughters, nor did it occur to them that she would be disposed, or even dare to reject this alliance, should it be proposed. The prospect that it would be, was a source of serious apprehension to them.

## CHAPTER III.

“ For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;  
No children run to lisp their sire’s return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.”

To meet these evils they had one grand resource beside religion. We would to God that every family in the world had the same. Nearly one half of the misery of our earth comes from selfishness and disunion in families. The heads care not for each other or their children. The members have no sympathies in common. The voice of angry jangling, dispute, and separate interest is heard in the family dwelling. Good angels scatter not their blessings in such habitations. Such was not this family. Their evening union was one of peace, love, and joy. Every one, even to their youngest boy, brought love and good feeling to the common stock. From the heads to the youngest member, whoever touched one touched the whole. There was no one of the number that had been taught to sit down and brood over his selfish joys by himself. The bright evening fire was kindled. The Bible was read. They prayed together, and each one of these affectionate inmates loved each other one, as he loved his own soul. This mutual affection shone in every look and action. The mother loved her husband and her children with an affection almost guilty and idolatrous. Nor were protestations of similar feelings on the part of the husband and the father at all necessary. The unity and beauty of this mutual attraction, if the comparison might not seem too learned, was like that of the sun for all the planets in our system, which, in their turn, and according to their size and importance, exercise an attraction back again upon their centre. When the members of a family really and sincerely love one another,

this alone is food and raiment, and society, and cheerfulness, and every thing. To such a family external sorrows and troubles are what weight is, pressing upon an arch, the strength of which increases with the amount of pressure applied. But when to poverty and trouble and evil report and sickness, are added selfishness, jarring, disputing, and quarrelling within, I know not how the members of such a family can sustain life.

With this resource, notwithstanding their passing inquietudes and vexations, the winter wore away comfortably and pleasantly. On every fine sunshine day Mr. Mason was seen along with young George before the sunbeams had dispersed the frost, girdling the trees. The latter had his little axe and grubbing-hoe, cutting down the smaller trees, and grubbing up the shrubs by their roots, delighted with the mellow appearance and the healthy smell of the virgin mould. A hundred times his delight was excited by seeing the gray and black squirrels skip away from the trees which he began to fell. The parroquets, in their splendid livery of green and gold, were fluttering about among the sycamores, raising their shrill scream, as disagreeable as their plumage is brilliant, and seemed to be scolding at these meddlers with the freshness of their empire. The red-bird, springing away from the briar copse, which he began to disturb with his grubbing-hoe; the powerful mocking-bird seated at its leisure on a dead branch, and pouring its gay song, and imitating every noise that was heard; the loud and joyous bark of the family dog, as he was pursuing his own sport beside them, digging for an opossum; the morning crow of the cock; the distant cry of the hounds in the settlement, ringing through the forests; the morning mists, lying like the finest drapery of muslin, spread over the tops of the trees; these, and a thousand mingled and joyous morning cries of animals in the woods, filled his young and susceptible heart with the purest joy. Excitement and the fulness of joy often arrested his axe and his grubbing-hoe. The

father once saw him musing in this way, and asked him of what he was thinking.

"I cannot tell you," replied George, laying his hand upon his bosom, "how glad I feel here, this morning. When I see the sun slanting his light along the white arms of the sycamores, and hear the birds sing, and every thing so gay, I cannot tell you how happy I am. How different is all this from January in New-England! Yet, glad as I feel here, I cannot forget the old church and the grave-yard, and the school-house, and my school-mates. Oh! if one could be here, and there at the same time! Before the people came here it was all woods, without people. Yet, I suppose, the birds sung as sweetly then as now."

"Undoubtedly, my son," answered the father. "This forest was a temple of God as soon as the waters flowed, and the trees were green, as much as now. All these joyous sounds, which you hear, were the morning praises of the Almighty. Who knows but His angels feel the same joy at contemplating these green solitudes which we do? There may be eyes to see, and ears to hear in these forests, which we cannot behold."

In such conversations and such pursuits passed away the morning, until breakfast.

When the labor of clearing was resumed after breakfast, the mother and Eliza came out, attended by the younger children, and looked on the work as they sat knitting on the logs beside the clearing. The crash of a falling tree was a grand object of awaited excitement and terror to them. Henry, a fine stout boy of ten, had already obtained permission to take his share in these labors. Not unfrequently the whole group of laborers would suspend their toils from laughter, to see him tug upon the branch of a shrub, catching by its points upon others and pulling him back, delighted to see his little cheeks flush with pride and exercise, and to note the promise of future perseverance in seeing him tug until he had overcome the resistance and added it to the pile.



After sunset it was a high treat to the children to fire the huge piles of dry bushes and logs, heaped for burning, and see the flames rising above the tops of the highest trees, gleaming in the forests, enlightening every object as far as they could see, and disturbing the owls and roosting birds from their retreats. The noise of the bursting cane-stalks was like the report of a thousand guns, and they called these evening fires their celebrations. Not but there were discouragements and difficulties even in this work of clearing. Mr. Mason was both unused to labor and feeble in health. A single Mississippi sycamore of the larger size, afforded three days' occupation for his best exertions to cut down. Of course he was compelled to allow all the larger trees to stand in his clearing, only deadening them by girdling. His taste on this as on every subject, was severe to a morbid excess. How it grieved him to see his rich and level field marred in its appearance by a hundred huge, standing, dead trees, and the broken limbs and branches, that the wind was constantly detaching from them to the ground. It was trying to his pride, too, to have one of his coarse neighbour planters regard his work with a sneer of affected pity, expressed in conversation something like this: "Why, doctor, if you do not get a greater force you will have a field hardly large enough for a *truck patch*. One of my negroes will cut away more trees in a day than you would in a month. Doctor, you want some negroes." But he generally took especial care not to offer their services.

But the severest of the whole experiment was splitting rails. This was a task absolutely beyond the strength of young George. The kind-hearted boy was assiduous to hand the wedges and the maul to his exhausted father. In this most laborious business there is a dexterity to be learned only by practice. Many a tree, cut down with great labor, would not split at all. It was long before Mr. Mason, with his utmost exer-

tions, could make twenty-five in a day. It did not help the matter to be told by those who looked on his work, that one hundred and fifty a day was the regular task of each one of their negroes. At night the father's hands were one blister. Poor George could count his blisters too. Mrs. Mason bound up their sore hands, and turned away her face to conceal her tears. The severe toil, too, caused Mr. Mason rheumatic pains and sleepless nights. He found, moreover, when stormy weather confined him to the house, that a body full of the pains of exhausting labor, would not allow scope to his thoughts, when he sat down to his great work with his pen. Unremitting toil, in such a frame, blunts the sensibilities, suspends the exercise of the imagination and fancy, and after a fruitless effort to stir up his thoughts, he was compelled to admit, that severe labor and writing are incompatible. But neither the voice of complaining nor of dejection was heard; for in this family there was union, mutual affection, prayer, confidence in God, and the hope of immortality.

The middle of March was soon at hand; and in this climate it is the dawn of Spring. The wilderness began to be gay. The Red Bud in a thousand places was one compact tuft of peach-blow flowers. The umbrella tops of the Dogwoods were covered with their large blossoms of brilliant white. At every step the feet trampled on clusters of violets. The swelling buds and the half formed leaves diffused on every side the delicious aroma of Spring. The labors of Mr. Mason had been slow and painful, but they had been constant and persevering. A little every day soon makes a great result. In four months the clearing was increased from six to nine acres, which were well fenced and prepared for planting. The surface of the soil was black, rich, and perfectly tender. It was a pleasant novelty to him to plant corn without ploughing, and among thick deadened trees, reaching almost to the clouds. The field was laid out in rows in right lines,

by taking sight from one tree to another. The father went before, making a hole for the corn with his hoe. George followed dropping the corn, and covering it with his. Eliza, with her face shaded by her large sun bonnet, and Henry with his broad straw hat, with little bags pinned to their sides, walked beside George and his father. They carried beans, the seeds of pumpkins, squashes, cucumbers, and the different kinds of melons, to hand to each, where a place offered, that seemed suitable to these seeds. A garden, or, as the people call it, *a truck patch*, was also prepared, and sowed, and planted with such seeds and transplanted vegetables as their more considerate neighbours taught them, were congenial to the soil and climate, or would be luxuries in the summer, or capable of being preserved through the winter.

The violent thunderstorms of that climate and season were at first a source of alarm to the family. They trembled as they heard the thunder echoing through the forests, and saw the lightning firing the high, dead trees. They soon perceived that the thunderbolts fell harmless to the earth. Their ears became accustomed to the crash, and the beautiful mornings, that ensued, hailed by all the birds of spring, and embalming the air with the mingled ambrosia of the forest, more than compensated for the passing terrors of the night. There are a few, and I could wish there were many lovers of nature, who will be able to comprehend the enjoyment of this family, on visiting their field the first Sabbath after their crop had fully come up. It is a delightful spectacle to any one that has eyes and a heart. But this family loved nature with a keen relish for her pleasures. It was the promise of future support to a family that had nothing else on which to depend. It promised future subsistence and comfort to all they loved on earth. It was cultivated vegetation, just sprung up on the wild soil, where nothing but weeds and bushes had flourished from the creation. I enter into their

delight, as their eye caught the straight stems of the corn, rising in lines that already marked the rows with a strength of vegetation and a depth of verdure, which they had never seen corn wear before. Parents and children gazed with unsated eagerness upon the melons and cucumbers, starting up with leaves broader and fresher than any they had ever beheld in New-England. There they required great care in preparing the hills, and laborious attention to the kind and amount of the manure. Here they were barely deposited in the virgin soil. There, in March, the ground was still covered with snow. Here, these vegetables had already thrown out the second leaves. The inspection of the sweet potatoe patch, which was large, and the hills of which had been prepared with great care, was a source of still more gratifying curiosity. The family were exceedingly fond of this nutritious vegetable, and had never seen it growing. There are some minds so constituted, as to imagine with what gratified observation, they watched the unfolding stem, and the first development of the leaves of this beautiful creeper.

The season was favorable, and their crop came forward to their utmost hopes. To watch its daily advance was a constant source of amusement. But the sad leaven of sorrow and discouragement remained at the botom of the cup. The high heats of the new climate began to make themselves felt early in April. The lassitude that ensued was a new sensation to the family, at first scarcely unpleasant. But the increase of this lassitude, as the season and the heat advanced, became a source of disheartening apprehension to Mr. Mason. A half an hour's labor in his field, after the sun was fully up, completely drenched him in perspiration, and left him powerless to renew his labor, until after he had rested an hour on his mattrass. The reasoning of his inward apprehension was, If such be the effect of an April sun, what will be that of July and August? Had he been aware of the wise and kind

plan of Providence, in the process of *acclimation*, he would have dismissed all fears upon this head, and would have so accommodated himself to the imperceptible change of the season, as to have been prepared to meet the high heats of July and August with as little inconvenience as he felt from those of April.

Their neighbours, now grown familiar with them, had broken through the first unconscious restraint, arising from feeling the difference of their education and character. The respect extorted from them by this comparison, once laid aside, their feelings naturally vibrated to the other extreme. The natural dignity of their manner was now called pride and self-importance. "If they were such great people," it was remarked, "that nobody must speak to them, except with such respect, why did such poor folks come away from a country, where people knew what was due to them? Strange, that they, who had to work like negroes, should hold their heads so high! It was mighty pretty to see Mrs. Mason and Eliza look so grand, merely because they were a little fairer than the creoles." When Mr. Mason did preach, he was proud of his college learning, and had no religion; and when he did not preach, it was because he was lazy, and never cared any thing about it from the first. There were two or three wicked babblers among them, who answered in this settlement the purposes of newspapers elsewhere, who began to whisper stories, "that the old man," as they called Mr. Mason, "had been driven out of the country for slandering the President and passing counterfeit money!" The effect of these conversations was soon visible to the family, in the cool contemptuousness and the rude familiarity of their manners toward them. Many an hour did the family spend in vain conjectures what could be the cause of this. As these stories remained uncontradicted, the propagators began to gather boldness. One of them, aware that the family knew not the specific charges against them, and desiring that

they should have a full taste of the bitterness, officiously pretending kindness and sincerity, divulged the whole story, and told them with many an ingenious added comment of his own, all that was said of them.

It does not need much knowledge of human nature to know what kind of torment the general circulation of such reports would naturally create in the bosoms of a high-minded family, with a keen sense of honor. They had a long debate in conclave upon the question, what was proper to be done in the case, and whether it was better to take any steps to vindicate themselves. In the close of the argument upon which Mr. and Madam Mason, and George, and Eliza, had each given an opinion, it was unanimously settled, that people, who could invent and circulate such falsehoods, would invent and circulate another brood if these were refuted, and that it was wise and right to treat the whole affair with silent contempt. All said that the inventors were people not worth the trouble of attempting to disprove what they said. The meeting broke up by a mutual agreement of each member, to meet the propagators of these stories as before, and to think and to care nothing about the slanders. But while we are in the flesh, we shall always feel as in the flesh. These high-spirited children promised to forget, and the more they attempted to do it the more deeply the remembrance and the humiliation rankled in their bosoms. Time is the only efficacious remedy for such evils.

Midsummer already furnished their table with green corn and the common table vegetables of the season in ample abundance. But their joy in view of the prospects of their crops was damped by observing, that as the summer heats advanced, the health of Mr. Mason more visibly sunk under the influence of the season. He could no longer labor abroad more than an hour in the day, and that must be in the morning before the sun was above the trees. The heavy dews which lay like rain upon the leaves of the corn, and the rank

weeds, were found scarcely less noxious to his health, when necessarily drenched by them, than the heats of the sun. Young George, fully comprehending the case, labored from morning until night to spare his father, and to keep down the weeds. It discouraged him to see, that more grew up in a night, than he could cut down in a day.

In attempting to work with his son in the sweet-potatoe patch on the fourteenth of July, under the influence of a powerful sun, Mr. Mason experienced a sun-stroke, and was aided to his bed by the united exertions of his whole family. For three hours he was not expected to survive from one moment to another. I do not design, nor wish to attempt, to describe the agony of the family, during this interval. He, who knows how they loved one another, can imagine it. There are events, too, which bring upon the mind the stupefaction of a thunder-stroke, and it was only when Mr. Mason exhibited manifest signs of being out of immediate danger, that tears were shed in this family.

He slowly revived until the evening. At the hour in which he had been accustomed to lead in evening prayers, after informing the children that he was too weak to do it this evening, he requested them to retire into George's house, as the smaller cabin was called. He then held a long and solemn conversation with Mrs. Mason alone. A thousand of those tender things, which are appropriate to such conversations, were said upon both sides. They were such things as such a husband would naturally say, in such circumstances, to a wife so loved, and who had been for so many years the faithful and inseparable companion of his toils, who was the mother of his children, who was at once so destitute and helpless, and whom he felt he was about to leave to the sole care of his five children. I know that such circumstances are occurring somewhere every hour; but if the bare recounting them does not make my reader feel the situation of Mr. Mason, I am aware,

that nothing, which I can say, will do it. Having made many of those remarks, touching his situation, and hers, and his wishes in regard to her and the children for the future, she rallied fortitude to ask, why he chose to make such remarks at this time.

“Because, Eliza,” he replied calmly, and taking her hand, “I am convinced I shall never rise from the illness which this disaster has occasioned me.”

Mrs. Mason answered him with tears, embraces, and denials, and an extravagance of grief, which soon spent itself by its own excess. He replied calmly, that, “rational beings were bound by every consideration to take a forecasting contemplation of great changes of condition that were certainly before them, and that it much more became such persons as they were, to foresee the evils before them, and forearm themselves against them, than to shut their eyes, like children, upon consequences, and shrink from duty, through the enervating influence of grief.” He inculcated again and again upon his wife, sobbing upon his bosom, that he now felt it had been the fault of them both, that they had fostered a morbid and shrinking temperament, the effect of which had been to unnerve them, and unfit them for the sterner duties of life. He solemnly insisted upon an absolute trust in the sustaining and gracious care of the Almighty, and he placed before her the guilt of distrusting the love and the mercy of Him, “*who noteth the fall of a sparrow, and heareth the young ravens, when they cry!*”

“Dear Eliza,” he continued, “I am aware that after I am first gone, it will be to no purpose, to expect you to be wise and firm at once. You know where I am to rest, under the sycamore. Come there, and think of the days which we have spent together, and give scope to the first bursts of grief. The wise and the unchangeable laws of Providence will prevent my being visible to you. But I feel that in whatever place and in whatever manner the All Gracious and All Good



shall dispose of me, this mind and this heart must lose their identity, if I should cease to love you and my children less than I do now. Nor will He, who gave me this spirit, so imprison it as that I shall not be able to descend to the summits of the forest, to look in upon you in the morning, and to cheer you to the duty of watching over our children. I cannot now foresee what you will do for subsistence, or how you will be able to rear our dear helpless children among these rough and wicked people. But I have seen a thousand times that God never forsakes them, who do not forsake themselves. You know my motto, "*Nil desperandum.*" You have heard me repeat it a thousand times. I am fully conscious that I have acted too little in the spirit of this motto myself. I have prayed God a hundred times, that my children, and especially my dear George, may be of a firmer spirit than I have had. Perhaps I have done wrong to bring you here. It is useless now to spend time in mourning over what is irretrievable. Besides, at the time of coming to the decision, to bring you here, I called in aid all the reason and forecast that I possessed to the deliberation. With my temperament and under the same circumstances, I should, probably, come to the same determination again. I know you are too kind not to forgive what was done for the best, even if it were wrong. I think, too, had it pleased God to spare me a few years, that I should have become comfortable in my circumstances, and should have felt, that I had done wisely in seeking independence in this way. As regards the future, I thank God, that my mind is fixed and settled. I shall resign my spirit in humble confidence to Him who gave it, thanking Him, that through his dear Son, my Saviour, I have not an anxiety about it; but am humbly confident, that in His own gracious way, and in the mansion fitted for it, He will render me happy."

To such conversations, which, to say the truth, so far as respected his impressions, that he should not re-

cover, she had often listened before, Mrs. Mason could only reply, that she had frequently seen him discouraged in the same way, and that she had found him recover notwithstanding; that she did not allow herself to doubt for a moment, that he would recover now; that she was ready to promise, if she survived him, that she would do the best she could; and that she was very sure, that the best would be so unworthily, that he had much better live, and see to the management of the family himself. Thus this solemn conversation terminated; he assuring her, that he felt his present case different from any thing he had ever experienced before; and she, the more earnestly she was urged to promise him to be courageous and resigned after he was gone, returning to the beaten track of former thought and conversation, and warning him that the only way to give her courage was, to promise her to get well.

This event occurred on Saturday. During that night he was feverish and restless. Although, as she remarked, Mrs. Mason had often heard him assert, in his periodical turns of ill health and discouragement, that he should never recover, she felt this night more than usually alarmed respecting him. While he lay delirious, and breathing thick and pantingly, in short and disturbed slumbers, the dreadful thought presented itself to her, for the first time, that the husband of her youth was about to leave her. The loneliness and destitution of her case, in such a country, and with the care of so many helpless children, came upon her mind in all the gloom and dismay of the scene. Those deep and bitter meditations, with which strangers do not intermeddle, passed rapidly within. - There is but one abiding resource in cases like these. Happy, and thrice happy they, who can resort to it with humble boldness. Mrs. Mason had that happiness. She often and earnestly wrestled with God for her dear husband, if it were possible, that the *cup of death might pass from*

*him.* For herself she prayed, "Our Father, who art in heaven! in this my extreme distress and dismay, Thou only canst help. My husband, each of my dear children, and myself, owe Thee a death. Give us resignation and confidence, meekly to pay it in thine own time and way. Only do Thou, in thy great mercy, sustain us, while we are here, and when we depart, do Thou save our souls."

Next day Mr. Mason had strong fever and shortness of breathing, and was wholly unable to rise from his bed. The heat of the season was intense, and the exhausting ardors of the dog-star were in the sky. The paleness of foreboding anxiety was spread over every countenance in the family. The physician resided at the distance of eight miles, and Mr. Mason affirmed, that his complaint was of a kind to receive no advantage from his aid, and he was wholly unwilling that they should incur the useless expense of sending for him. Mrs. Mason allowed him to believe that his wishes should be fulfilled, and resorted to the innocent deception of sending for a physician, without apprising him of it. George promptly offered to take the trace through the woods to the bank of the Mississippi, where the physician resided. Henry begged to be allowed to attend him. A pretext was invented, to account to Mr. Mason for their absence through the day. A maternal tear stood in the eye of Mrs. Mason as she kissed them, and bade them make haste, and not return without bringing the doctor. A trip of sixteen miles, through dark forests, in which they would not pass a single house, was an exploit sufficiently daunting for two such young and inexperienced boys. Love triumphs over fear and death; and these boys so dearly loved their father, that nothing was formidable to them, which they could do for him. Such conversations passed between these affectionate boys, as might be expected from their years, their errand, and the forests through which they passed. Little Henry was afraid of the wolves, bears, and pan-

thers. More than once he cried with the soreness of his feet. Their thoughts naturally tended to despondence. Once they lost their way, mistaking a cow-path for their trace. None can tell, if they would not have wandered into the inextricable tangle of the swamps, and have perished, had they not providentially been met by a man hunting his cattle on horseback. He, seeing them wandering on towards the swamps, naturally comprehended their mistake, and led them back, and put them on the right way. They arrived at length on the banks of the river, and told their tale of distress. The physician was absent, not to return until night. They received the promise, that he should be sent on immediately upon his return. The people of the house, where the doctor boarded, pitied them, and received them kindly. They gave them a glass of milk and a slice of corn bread. But nothing could induce the affectionate children to tarry longer than half an hour. They insisted upon starting back to see how their dear father was. The hour of their return was that of burning noon; but their road was one continued covert of shade. Besides, such children as these always find the road home easier to travel, than that from home. The loneliness of the way, and their apprehensions from the wild beasts, and their fears of getting lost again, took from them the disposition to converse much on the way. They pushed on at the extent of their walking speed, casting fearful glances among the bushes, as birds, or small animals disturbed them. They had arrived in this way, as they judged, within three miles of home, when the fatigue of the way, and exhaustion from the heat, compelled them to sit down and rest themselves.

They reclined themselves on a patch of wild grass at the foot of a tree. The cheering thought, that they were so near home, restored to them courage and a disposition to converse, and the following conversation passed between them.

*Henry.* "My feet are not half so sore coming back,

as they were on the way out to the river. Why should they ache less now, than they did then?"

*George.* "It must be because we love home and the folks there so dearly, that love pushes us on, and keeps us from feeling the soreness."

*Henry.* "Yes; that is just the case. Dear George, I am forced to shut my eyes, whenever I think how papa looked. I never saw him look so before, nor mama seem so strange. Do you know what is the matter?"

*George.* "Indeed I do not. But I heard him tell mother last night, that he was certainly going to die."

*Henry,* (beginning to cry.) "Father shan't die. If he does, Henry will die too. How came he to come away to this wicked country to die? When he dies, we shall all starve to death here in the woods, and the wolves will come into the house, and eat us. I am sure the wicked people that talked against papa, would not give us a slice of bread, to keep us from starving."

*George.* "Henry, don't talk so to me. I feel it in my heart to hate the people there in New-England, that drove us away to this wild country. I could speak just such words about them, as the wicked people used in the boat, when we came down the river. Oh! it is too bad, to think what will become of dear little Bill and Tom, and mother, sister and all, when father dies. I should rather a thousand times we might all die together."

The boys were tired. The evening and the hour of discouragement was coming upon them. Henry sobbed, as if his heart would break. George, too, who had been praised in the family for his strength of character, was unnerved, to see his brother cry, and the tears coursed one another down his cheeks. They had both indulged in this way for some time, when George, summoning courage, sprang on his feet, kissed his brother, and wiped his eyes. "Get up, Henry, and leave off crying. We can't die but once, thank God. How

often has father said over his Latin words to us, which mean, 'Don't give up the ship.' I am getting strong, you see. I feel that I am to be a man. I love my dear father better than my eyes. But, you know, he is always sick. It is a hard thing to think, that my poor father must die; but then he will be sick no more, and will be happy in heaven. Never fear. I will take care of all, when he is gone. To take care of mother, and the rest of you, I would work like a slave, and be stronger than a lion. Don't cry any more, Henry; father will get well, when the doctor comes. While he is sick, I will work harder, and take care of you all." Saying this, he looked cheerful, and took his brother by the hand, and raised him up, embraced him, and kissed him again and again, and talked to him in a voice so firm and cheering, that Henry caught something of his courage and cheerfulness, and rose up, and they resumed their way, taking each other by the hand. Shortly after they arrived safely at home.

The physician in due time arrived, and expressed no certain opinion in reference to the case of his patient. Hope and fear alternately swayed the family for some days, and they endured the wearing agony of suspense. Mr. Mason was sometimes better, and sometimes worse, and as happens to nervous people, was elevated, or depressed in his mind, according to his passing feelings: Sometimes he was encouraged to think he might recover speedily; and in an hour afterwards was in complete despondency. Perhaps he might have recovered, had he been able to obtain the common comforts which his case required. But the depressing heat of the season was against him. Affection and ingenuity devised every thing that the field, the garden, or the woods could yield, in the way of sustenance, or medicine. But neither affection nor ingenuity can create from nothing; and a hundred things, so necessary to the comfort and recovery of a sick man, like him, were absolutely out of the question in that place. Every one of the family

seemed completely vanquished with grief and dejection, but George. Since his return from the river to procure the physician, his character appeared to have undergone an entire transformation. He alone shed no tears. He looked thoughtful, but was always calm. It was sufficiently evident, at the same time, that this apparently strange conduct, in an inexperienced boy of fourteen, who had been hitherto supposed to possess the keenest sensibility, did not at all result from want of feeling; but from a high purpose, and a fixed determination, not to allow grief and discouragement to unnerve him from his duty. His thoughts appeared constantly occupied in inventing some kind of food, or drink, that might be strengthening or pleasant to his father. He seemed at once to be endowed with courage, vigilance, and patience for watching with him, and the skill and management of a nurse to take care of him. It was affecting, to see with what heroism, zeal, and tenderness this noble boy discharged offices, sometimes laborious, sometimes disagreeable, and always trying to the patience and fortitude even of professed attendants upon the sick. It was love that taught him, and every where, and in all trials, love can teach every thing, and, like faith, can remove mountains.

The love of Mr. Mason, for this son, had not been visibly partial, but he had been the helper and the companion of his father. The firmness of the child exactly matched with the ever-changing spirits of the parent. It will be manifest, that this display of such new and untried proofs of character in the son, on such an occasion, would not abate the affection and confidence of the father. The rest, the mother, Eliza, and Henry, took their turn, indeed, in watching; but nothing ever kept George long from his station beside the bed, by night and by day. There sat the one holding the hand of his father, and looking steadily on his pale and emaciated face. The look that was every moment returned, was that undescribed gaze, that explains all that

can be explained, of the bitterness of parting, and the dreaded mystery of death. Whenever George was for a moment away, and the father startled from sleep in his absence, the first thing that his eye sought was this cherished son. When George returned, resumed his place, and asked what he could do, the reply, as his satisfied countenance rested upon his son, was, "Nothing."

The sickness of Mr. Mason had taken the form of a gradual, and almost imperceptible, but fixed, and incurable decay. The physician came a few times, and then assured Mrs. Mason, in private, that he could do nothing more for him. It would be to us an affecting, as it might be to others a useful history, to relate how suspense in this family settled into the conviction, that nothing could save him, and that they must prepare to part with him. Words go but a little way, in explaining this process, every stage of which is agony. The heart of the reader may not be affected with it, as he says, "It is the order of things every where. It has taken place in uncounted millions of cases, and will so continue to the end of time." True; but to this family, alone in the woods, it was as hard and as trying to think of laying that venerated form in the silence of death in the ground, as though it were the only case of the kind, that could ever happen on the earth.

We ought to record for the honor of human nature, that the neighbours, although seemingly insensible, felt that there was misery in this family. Towards the close of his sickness, their slaves were sent every day to watch, and aid the family, and to bring to it such food and comforts as their case required. They performed, also, all the laborious duties of preparation for harvest, and left the family no cares but to watch over its dying head. No grief arrests the steady course of nature. The field ripened. The family gradually reached the conviction, that their head must be taken away, and were still snatching at the hope, that it would be a long time be-



fore he would wear out. Thus it is, that like children in the dark, we contrive to shut our eyes upon events, and as one bubble bursts, grasp at another.

For some days, before the scene closed, Mr. Mason was lethargic, arousing only at intervals to transient fits of distress, and turning from side to side. He spoke little more, than to call for water. The hand of George was instantly clasped in his, and his satisfied look told, that he had then obtained all that he wanted. His lips would often move for a moment, and perhaps a tear or two would roll down his cheeks, and he dozed again.

Such was the order of things until the twenty-fifth of September. It was Sabbath evening, and a glorious sunset. The sun was sinking behind the trees into the misty veil of Indian summer. The turtle-doves were cooing mournfully in the woods, as though sad at the departure of day. Mr. Mason aroused, and instead of relapsing, as usual, into lethargic drowsiness, seemed to revive to unwonted consciousness. It was the mysterious but common and sublime effort of the conscious spirit, about to take its final flight. He requested that his family might assemble about his bed. The whole family, even to the youngest member, was instantly about him, in that speechless awe, in that mute and unutterable excitement of love, astonishment, and terror, which presses too hard upon the whole nature, to allow scope to any individual feeling. They were there to hear his last words and to witness his last struggles with mortality. In his left hand was a hand of each of the children; in his right, that of the worn, pale, and speechless companion of his toils. His eyes were turned upwards, and his lips moved evidently in silent prayer. In noticing what passed across his brow, any one might have seen the earnestness of his pleading with Him, *who heareth prayer*. It was obvious, that the last movements of his spirit were those of agonizing wrestlings with the Angel of the covenant, and the solemn words of mingled faith, humility, and confidence in God, "I

will not let Thee go, until Thou bless them." When he had finished this sublime and speechless communion of a dying father with his Maker, in a firm and distinct voice he uttered the following words :

"The last twelve years of my life have been a succession of days of pain and sorrow. I have a thousand times anticipated all the circumstances of this hour. For myself, I should rejoice to be gone. Death is but the pang of a moment. All that is terrible in this hour is, in leaving you behind. Love of you has such entire possession of this heart, that it seems to me, as if it could not grow cold. Eliza, my wife, you need strength, and while you implore it of God, struggle for it yourself. We are not here in sin and tears, to melt in sorrow, but to conflict firmly with trial, temptation, and at last with death. My last charge to you is, to shed as few tears for me, as may be, after I am gone, and to strive to associate pleasant instead of painful remembrances with the intercourse we have had together and with this parting. Gird up the loins of your mind, and strengthen yourself in the strength of God for your duty. Above all, look to God, and never despair. Will you promise your dying husband this ? "

A shuddering movement of her head gave consent.

"For you, George," he continued, "I see the firmness of duty in your eye. God has endowed you, as by a miracle, with the strength of mind necessary to take care of this helpless family. You are to labor, and to pray, that you may become, as of iron, that you may have no sensibilities, no fountains of tears ; that you may act with the singleness of firm and wise judgment for these dear ones, that I now commit, under God, to your care. In the management of them, will you be faithful, wise, affectionate, and what I, your father, have not been, firm ? You are young, to take such a charge, and make such a promise."

A slight spasm passed over the beautiful and sunburnt face of the noble boy, which indicated, that the

machinery of tears was in operation. It was the struggle of but a moment. He bent down, and kissed his father's forehead, and uttered in a firm and unfaltering voice, "Dear father, think only of yourself. I promise all." The father convulsively grasped his hand, looked eagerly, and intently in his face, and said in a low and expiring voice, "*Now, Lord, lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace.*"

My reader has been over the dying bed of a father, departing from the midst of his family. I leave it to his thoughts to supply what followed. If the holy angels are affected with aught that belongs to mortality, it is with a scene like this. It is sufficient to say, that no sobbing, no tears, no holding to this earthly prop retained his spirit in its flight. After the sad example of all before him, he heaved his last sigh. The bosom, which still preserved the semblance of what had been the seat of passion and sorrow, sunk to the stillness of other inanimate matter.

## CHAPTER IV.

He clothes the lily—notes a sparrow's fall,  
And looks, intent, on man, his handy work.

A WOMAN, accustomed to those duties in the settlement, with the aid of two or three slaves, robed and prepared the body for its last sleep. Nor, while these painful duties were performing, were they interrupted by the cries and shrieks, to which, on such occasions, they were accustomed. These mourners remembered the promise, so recently given, and they walked backwards and forwards in the paleness of death; but there were no words, no audible lamentings. The children clung to their mother with an expression of terror and awe, but were not heard to cry. Silent respect and sympathy were on the countenances of the neighbours. The passing slaves stopped, took off their hats, and gazed respectfully for a moment on the face of the dead, and passed on. Slander had been busy with the name of the deceased, while living; but the claims of truth and justice are every where felt to a certain degree. The manner of these people told more eloquently than any words, they could have used, what had been their real thoughts of him, while living. Of the case of the mourners we need say nothing. The Author of nature called them to endure it. My reader knows, as I know, that this is no distress of fiction; but that we have each in our turn to be actors in the same scene. There is as much truth as poetry in the figure which calls this earth "a vale of tears."

I may remark in passing, that it is the character of people, such as those among whom Mr. Mason deceased, to be deeply moved with such scenes of distress, as these. Whatever appeals directly to their senses powerfully affects them. They forgot their envy and

slander of the living, and were saying in an under tone among themselves, what a wise and learned man he had been, and how they pitied his poor and helpless family. They were considerate and unequivocal in the offer of the aid of servants, provisions, and all the little decencies, and mournful preparations for such a funeral as the customs of that region prescribed. There was no white person at that time within thirty miles, who was accustomed to perform the usual religious duties on that occasion. This circumstance was stated to Mrs. Mason. It aroused her feelings from the stupefaction of her distress to think that the remains of her dear husband, who had so many hundred times uttered the voice of prayer over the lifeless bodies of others, should be carried to their long home without prayer. Pompey, a converted methodist slave of Mr. Garvin, was in the habit of preaching to the negroes, and of praying at their funerals. Mrs. Mason very properly preferred, that he should perform the funeral solemnities of her husband, rather than to have none on the occasion. Through a pardonable remain of former passions, and the feelings which had been nurtured in another country and another order of things. Mrs. Mason chose that the body of her deceased husband should be placed in the coffin, robed in the gown and bands, the insignia of his former office and standing.

I should be glad to give my youthful reader as distinct an image, as I have myself of this rustic funeral in the Mississippi forest. I see the two solitary cabins standing in the midst of the corn, the smaller cabin overtopped by the height of the surrounding corn. I see the high and zig-zag fence ten rails high, that surrounds the field, and the hewn puncheon steps in the form of crosses, by which the people crossed over the fence into the enclosure; the smooth and beaten foot-path amidst the weeds, that leads through the corn-field to the cabins. I see the dead trees throwing aloft, their naked stems from amidst the corn. I mark the square and

compact enclosure of the deep green forest, which limits the prospect to the summits of the corn-stalks, the forest, and the sky. A path is cut through the corn a few feet wide to a huge sycamore left in its full verdure in one corner of the field, where Mr. Mason used to repose with George, when he was weary, and where he had expressed a wish, during his sickness, that he might be buried. Under that tree is the open grave. Before the door of the cabin, and shaded by the western slope of the sun behind it, is the unpainted coffin, wanting the covering plank. In it is the lifeless form of the pastor, the cheek blanched to the color of the bands about the neck, and contrasting so strongly with the full and flowing black silk robe, in which, in the far country of his birth, he had been accustomed to go up to the house of the Lord. I see the white mothers, their children, and a considerable number of blacks, who had been permitted to attend the funeral in consideration of the service, which was to be performed by one of their number. I see the tall and swarthy planters with the sternness and authority of the rude-despotism, which they exercise over their slaves, and their conscious feeling of their standing and importance, impressed upon their countenances. I see the pale and subdued faces of the little group of mourners, struggling hard with nature against lamentations and tears. They could not have, and they needed not, the expensive and sable trappings, which fashion has required for the show of grief. Their faded weeds, and their mended dresses were in perfect keeping with the utter despondency in their countenances, and their forlorn and desolate prospects.

The assembled group was summoned to prayer. The black, who officiated, by the contributions of his fellow-servants of the whole settlement, was dressed in a garb as near like that of the methodist ministers, who were in habit of preaching in the settlement, as the case would admit. The position was to him one of novelty

and of awe. His honest and simple heart was affected at once with the extreme distress of the mourners and the trying position, in which he was placed. He began at first in awkward and unsuccessful attempts to imitate the language and manner of educated ministers. He soon felt the hopelessness of the effort; and poured out the earnest, simple, and spontaneous effusions of real prayer in the tones of the heart, and in language not less impressive from being uttered in the dialect of a negro. He dissolved into tears from his own earnestness, and while the honest and sable faces of his fellow-servants were bathed in tears, the contagion of sympathy extended through the audience, producing a general burst of grief. I should despair of being able at all to catch the living peculiarities and dialect of the discourse, or exhortation, which followed. Nevertheless, I shall attempt an outline of the beginning, which may fairly serve as a sample of the rest.

“White Massas and people, please to hark, and hear the poor words of Pompey. Great God let white men bring poor Pompey over the sea, and make him work hard in field. Great God good, when he seem hard with us. He send good men to turn Pompey’s heart, and make him christian. Strange things God work. Here Massa Mason, great Yankee preacher, know all tongues, read all books, wear the grand gown, you see there in coffin, preach in big meetin. He come way off here to Massaseepe to die, die in the woods. Nobody pray over him, but poor Pompey. Well. Me think all one thing fore God. Me feel here, when me die, me go to heaven. God no turn me out, cause me no got book-learning. Massa Mason he die, he go to heaven. Oh! Lord God, touch Pompey’s lips, that he speak a word in season to poor Missis, and the dear children. Oh! Missis! you see heaven, you no want him back. No sin, no labor, no tears.”

And the poor, earnest slave proceeded to pour forth from the fulness of his heart, all the motives of resig-

nation, patience, and hope, that his retentive memory, and the excitement of his feelings, enabled him to utter. For me, I have often heard the cold and studied words of doctors, learned, and famed in the schools, with less effect, than the heart-felt preaching of this devout slave. The audience melted anew into tears, as he proceeded; and those of Mrs. Mason, and those of her children, who were able to comprehend, were tears of resignation and religion. When the service was finished, he recited, in his peculiar accent and dialect, those beautiful verses of a methodist funeral hymn, which he had so often heard repeated, as to have committed to memory.

“Those eyes he so seldom could close,  
By sorrow forbidden to sleep,” &c.

I have never heard voices so sweet, as of some female blacks on such occasions. The thrilling tones will remain on my memory, while I live. To me, too, there is something affecting in that sacred music in which the whole congregation join. Every one joined in this hymn, and it seemed to be a general wail sent up from the woods to heaven.

When the hymn was closed, the man, who officiated as master of ceremonies on the occasion, proposed to those, who wished to take a last look at the deceased, to come forward. It is a common custom in that country for widows, who affect refinement, to shut themselves in retirement from the funeral solemnities of their husbands. Such was not the way, in which Mrs. Mason expressed her grief, and her affection. She walked firmly to the coffin, and all her children came round her. They looked long, and without tears, at the pale and care-worn countenance, and the deep and sunken eye of the husband, the father, the being who had been, next to God, their stay and their dependence. Well might the widow remember the day, when in the prime of youth, love, and hope, in the same robes of office, in



which his body was now lying before her in the coffin, he had led her to the church, the sabbath after their marriage. Oh! there are views and reflections of a moment, that fill remembrances of years. The look of unutterable thoughts and feelings was over. The unpainted cover was applied to the coffin, and the nails were driven. Twelve of the most substantial planters were the bearers. The mourners walked directly behind the coffin, and the whole mass followed through the corn-field in a crowd. The coffin was let down into the grave, and the fresh and black soil was heaped upon it. According to the affecting and universal custom of that region, each one present gathered up a handful of earth, and threw into the grave. A couple of stakes were planted, the one at the head, and the other at the foot of the grave; and the neighbours dispersed to their several abodes, and the widow and her children returned to their desolate dwelling.

I feel a chill pass over me, as in imagination I look in this evening upon this desolate family. I mark the empty chair, where the deceased had been used to sit. I observe his vacant place at the rustic table, and the supper removed untouched. I remark the deeper sense of desertion and loneliness, when Mrs. Mason took down the family Bible at the accustomed hour of evening prayer, and gave it to George. The noble boy remembered, that his dying father had delegated to him the responsible and patriarchal authority of head of the family, and had warned him against giving way to sorrow and tears. He opened the Bible at that sublime and pathetic chapter of Job, which begins, "*Man, that is born of a woman, is but of few days, and full of trouble:*" a strain of poetry so deep, pathetic, and sublime, that it reads in my ear, like a funeral hymn, with the accompaniments of an organ. He had reduced to writing his father's evening prayer, as he remembered it, and in a firm and distinct voice he read it. He sung sweetly, and had long been accustomed to raise the

evening hymn. It was an effort beyond his firmness, and instead of the customary concert of voices, was met by a general burst of grief. I need not describe, how dark this night looked to the children, as it settled on the forests, nor describe the thrill, with which the long and dismal howl of the wolves, echoing through the woods, came upon their ears; nor need I mention the convulsive shudder, with which her orphan daughter lay down with her upon the mattress, on which her father had died.

The days that followed, seemed to them of immeasurable length. George and William went to the field, as they had been wont, when their father was alive—for on the first morning after the funeral, it was agreed, that to proceed to their duties, as usual, was the proper construction of his dying charge. Resolution in a well-principled mind can do much. But the heart knoweth, and will feel, its own bitterness. The boys dreamed at their task, or thought too intently of something beside it, to make much progress. Days, however prolonged by sorrow, came and went to them, as though they had been in joy. For a few days the neighbours looked in upon them, with countenances of sympathy for their distress; but in a fortnight all this was to them, as though it had not been, and the bereaved family was regarded with as much indifference, as the dead trees about the dwelling. After that, had it not been for the connexion of some of their own selfish feelings with their case, whether they were naked or clothed, whether they were hungry or fed full, whether their hearts ached or were glad, would have been known only to themselves and God.

It is not with the idle desire to sadden my youthful reader with the relation of the details of a funeral, that I have recorded the above minute delineation of this. We all know, that man is born to die, and that these things belong to our mortal condition. We know, too, that sympathy with distress is one of the purest and best

feelings of our nature. It is never excited, without rendering the subject of it better. I have wished to inspire sympathy in the young bosom of my reader. I have wished, above all, to furnish, by example, lessons of duty, exertion, firmness, and industry under the utmost pressure of bereavement and poverty.

I do not purpose very particularly to narrate the subsequent fortunes of this bereaved family, any farther, than as their deportment is calculated to furnish these lessons. I have more particularly in view to develop the character and conduct of George. It is only necessary to say, that for the present the family were amply supplied with corn, and the common vegetables from their field, which nature had been beneficently ripening for them, during their utmost distress. They might, therefore, behold the approach of winter without any immediate apprehension of starving. But a family may suffer, and suffer acutely, from poverty, after the fear of the immediate want of food is removed. The clothes, which they had brought with them from New-England, were wearing out, and there were no means remaining to them to replace them. The deer-skin dress, so common in the country, was still more expensive to purchase, than the cheap domestic articles of the country. Either were alike beyond her means, which, as regarded money, by the sickness and death of Mr. Mason were entirely exhausted. There are many resorts and expedients in such cases to which backwoods people are accustomed, which this family had yet to learn. The decent pride of the mother had hitherto kept the clothes of her children whole, by patching and mending. But this could not be possible much longer. It is the real pinching and misery of poverty, for such a family, to see one another becoming ragged, and an object of scorn to the rude and undistinguishing passengers. There are severe frosts even in that climate. Nor could five children be always confined to the narrow precincts of a log-house. In the bright and delightful

frosty mornings of the first of winter, it is natural, that children should feel the cheering elasticity and invigorating influence of the frosts, as other animals. They soon, like the domestic fowls and animals, became accustomed to running abroad unshod. But, when they returned from their excursions, to hover round the fire, their feet, red, inflamed, and smarting to agony, with the reaction of the fire, the tender mother felt the inflammation as keenly as though it had been on her own heart. She saw, also, with humiliation and bitterness, rather than the natural maternal pride, the ripening beauty of her daughter, so strongly opposed to the forlornness of her dress and condition. Her own troubles of the same sort were as nothing in the comparison.

The mode, in which herself and daughter obtained a partial and present relief from these difficulties, was scarcely less embarrassing than the difficulties themselves. Their utter destitution and inability to remedy it, were matter of common conversation among their neighbours. To some it was a theme of mere indifferent conversation. To some, who regarded their imagined pretensions to something above them, it was a subject of envious gratification. From Hercules Pindall and Jethro Garvin it effectually excluded the view of Eliza Mason. She was invited to their junkets, their holiday amusements, and their Sabbath meetings, by their sisters to no purpose, and their ingenuity readily assigned the reason. The influence, which these Herculean rustics possessed with their parents, induced them, with no small degree of parade, since they found it must be done, to present the mother and daughter each with a new dress. The articles presented were not in many respects such, as they would have chosen, nor such, as befitted their condition. But necessity, such as theirs, they thought, ought not to know the laws of pride or taste. The mothers of these young men presented the articles, not forgetting their way of emblazoning their own charity and good feelings in the

case, not manifesting much delicacy, in touching upon their known poverty, nor failing to leave broad hints, that they expected that the mother and daughter, thus clad, would show themselves abroad, and not sit there moping at home, mourning for one, who could never return to them. Of Eliza, they said, it was a pity, that she should always be shut up in the cabin, and not learn any thing of the pleasures and fashions of the world. They expected, that she would come and see their daughters; and particularly invited Mrs. Mason to bring her and George to a party, and a nut-gathering, which was to take place at the house of Mrs. Pindall in a few days, stating, as a particular accommodation of considerate feeling, that out of regard to their case, as mourners, there was to be no dancing, which would otherwise have made a part of the amusements on the occasion.

Mrs. Mason's mind was placed in a state of painful doubt and perplexity, whether she ought, under such circumstances, to accept the presents at all. Necessity, and scruples of conscience, which arose from fear that pride would dictate the refusal, induced her to accept the offered presents. She stated, however, and that distinctly, that she should not be understood, by accepting them, to lay herself or her daughter under any obligations of any kind, but those of gratitude, and that she thought her peculiar troubles were too recent to allow her properly to go to such a place, on such an occasion, but that she would take the matter into consideration, and give them such an answer, as should be thought right, after such deliberation. I hope my reader will never be placed in a situation like that of this mother, needing such assistance, and yet dreading the pride, that would refuse it, and the obligations to be incurred by receiving it; recoiling from any intimate connexion with the donors, yet, out of tender regard to those dearer than life, dreading to provoke their wrath, and the weight of their power, by showing a manifest

purpose to avoid them. Such was precisely the relation of Mrs. Mason with these neighbours, whose good will, she was aware, was absolutely essential to her.

While the family deliberated upon the impropriety of going to a party, in such a place, in six weeks from the time of the decease of its head, the other family, anticipating the view, which they would take of the affair, changed the name of it to a "preaching," against which they foresaw no objection could lie. This settled the case, and she became convinced, that duty and interest called on her to accept the invitation. So, arming her daughter with all the preparatory cautions, which she could devise, how to conduct with the young people, when they should be by themselves, she sent a note, signifying, that she would accept their invitation, and spend the day and the evening with them, as requested.

When the important day arrived, George was left to keep house with the care of the younger children, while the mother and daughter, in their new dresses, with hearts aching with apprehension, were helped into the carriage, which Mr. Pindall had sent, in great form, to convey them to the feast. When they arrived, they found the table spread in a very large hall, the walls of which were of fresh hewn logs, decked everywhere with evergreens, and the last flowers of the season. This hall answered alternately the purpose of a ball-room and a church. The company was a selection of all the considerable planters for ten miles round. The number was twenty, with twice as many sons and daughters. The latter, if not generally beautiful in person, were tall, graceful, and powerful in form. Six yellow women, and as many yellow men, waited at table in liveries. The planters and their wives were dressed in their best, and their daughters, as flaunty, as red, coquelico, and crimson could make them.

The preaching, as we have remarked, was the pre-  
tence for the dinner, and answered, besides, the purpose of satisfying a multitude of the settlement, that

could not be invited to the dinner. To have received from such rich people an invitation to come there, and feast upon the good word, sent them away satisfied. The preaching was of course the first in order. The minister was ignorant and heavy, and withal smelt the flavor of the preparing dinner so keenly, that he hurried through his reluctant services as fast as possible, curtailing every part of them, but the burst of noise and passion at the close. The good man finished the short campaign, as Bonaparte said, "with a clap of thunder." The lesser people, who might not abide the dinner, retired, apparently well satisfied with their penny-worth; and the preacher made his way to the dinner-table, as glad to leave the services as the people were to hear him say, Amen.

The important matter of arranging the parties at table was next to be settled. It might have been a point of as much difficulty and delay as occurred between the duke and Don Quixote, on a similar occasion, had it not been announced, that this was the freedom dinner of young Mr Hercules Pindall, and that he had of course the privilege of assigning places at the table as he pleased. The young man, dressed in his freedom suit of rich blue broadcloth, and a splendid scarlet sash about his waist, and with all his "blushing honors thick upon him," proceeded immediately to discharge his delegated duties. I am only interested to mention, that Mrs. Mason was seated high in honor, on the right hand of the head of the table, and her daughter opposite her on the left. Mr. Hercules took the head himself, and his mother was at the foot. These important preliminaries settled, the remainder of the company, old and young, arranged themselves at their choice. The table groaned with turkeys, venison, beef, pork, peas, vegetables, and all the foreign luxuries, which the steam-boats brought from New-Orleans; in short every thing, that the country could furnish, or the luxury of cooking in that region prepare. The clatter of knives

and forks followed, and the gay and good-natured conversation, inspired by the sight of beauty, and the palpable relish of good cheer, still further aided by the artificial excitement of wine and whiskey-punch, produced that Babel mixture of sounds, that every one, who has been at such a place, so well remembers. Nor let those, who have had the honor to be present at great and given dinners, among the men of power, place, and opulence in cities, vainly think, that elegance, and wisdom, and wit, will die with them. There was as much smirking and showing off here as there. There were as many attempts at wit, and a much greater amount of laughter. There was as much concealed passion of every sort. In short, there was at this table a sample of every thing that has been seen in pavilions and palaces, on a like occasion. The grand *git* of the merriment, however, was the happy era of the arrival at majority of Mr. Hercules, and a great many broad allusions to a supposed union, that was contemplated between the tall and powerful young heir, and the sweet and blushing child, who sat in her weeds on his left. Her exquisite beauty drew from these hearty fellows the strong terms of encomium, in which backwoodsmen know so well how to express themselves. Hercules, too, elevated by his new dignity, and warmed by the occasion and a glass of wine above fear, made love to the shrinking Eliza in direct and strong terms, and in a style and language so new and curious, that, child and inexperienced as she was, in another situation, and under other circumstances, it could not but have drawn smiles from a girl, now turned of thirteen, with fine natural powers, and an arch eye. As it was, the whole scene inspired her with terror and aversion. She had recently learned, that the father of Hercules had a claim to the land on which her mother lived, supposed to be better, than that which her deceased father had purchased. In many ways she felt, that her mother was in the power of this man, so courted, and dreaded



through the settlement. Her charge from her mother had been to steer in the midst between encouraging, and affronting this young swain. Amidst the uproar and clatter her mother could only partially hear what he said to her, and divine the purport and effect, by discovering the alternate changes from the rose to the lily, in the countenance of her dear orphan.

The dinner terminated, as such affairs in such places usually do, except that at the earnest remonstrances of the host, there was little intoxication, and the jolly planters arose from table, only "well to live," as the phrase was among them. They dispersed, followed by their dogs and negroes, to shoot at a mark, and decide the comparative merits of the horses, that were entered for the next horse-race. The married ladies retired to another room, to commence a quilting. The young gentlemen and ladies paired themselves and marched off into the woods, to witness the cutting of a bee-tree, and to gather grapes and peccans. Hercules would have insisted upon leading off Eliza, but with a shrewdness and a knowledge of things, which might not have been expected from her age, she clung firmly to the arm of his sister, Letitia, so far a blue-stocking, as to be able to read a novel with very little spelling. Seeing himself anticipated in his purpose, the young gentleman had nothing to do, but to saunter, somewhat moodily, by the side of his sister.

It was a gay spectacle, to see so many girls in their gaudy dresses, and with their streamers fluttering in the breeze, as they spread in groups among the pawpaw groves, under natural bowers, covered with the rich clusters of the blue grape. It was the sweet autumnal season of the south country, in which the air is bland, the temperature delicious. The leaves were plashing in the little pools; and those that remained were red, yellow, crimson, or sear, and in every rich and mellow tint, from green to brown. There was chatting, and laughing, and reckless gaiety in abundance; and even

Eliza caught the gaiety of the rest, and the inspiration of the scene, and would have been cheerful, but for her terror of the tall young man, whose eye was so constantly fixed on hers, with an expression, before which hers quailed. For the rest, they were as merry, and as witty, and made love in their way as heartily, and to as much purpose, and all their thoughts, hopes, desires, and affections were as completely filled with the scene, and probably, far more so, than are the gay parties at Ranelagh.

When they arrived at the point proposed, Miss Letitia informed her young friend, as Hercules left them for a moment, that his inventive brain, inspired, as she insinuated, by love, had devised the striking spectacle, that they were now to witness. They had come to a grand, perpendicular, lime-stone bluff, four hundred feet high, down which precipitated a white sheet of water from a spring on the summit, looking like a wide ribband of silver-lustre, suspended in the air, and falling with a pleasant murmur into a basin at the foot of the bluff. Thence it wound away in a still stream, which crept slowly through the bottom. On the banks of this stream was a wide turf, covered with the most splendid mosses, short, silken, and seeming like buff-green velvet. It was shaded with prodigious sycamores and peccans, alive with wild pigeons and parroquets, feeding on the grapes and the nuts. At the basin, refreshments, cakes, pies, and claret wine, were prepared, and two or three blacks, dressed in fantastic finery, played the fiddle and the hurdy-gurdy.

Beside three trees at a proper distance stood three negroes, each with an axe in his hand. The young gentlemen and ladies were all assembled around the fountain. The negroes were scraping their fiddles and hurdy-gurdies in great glee. Suddenly they came to a dead pause, and Miss Letitia whispered Eliza, that she must wave a handkerchief, and that something grand would happen in consequence. She

perceived that all eyes were turned upon her, in mute expectation. Merely to get rid of the awkwardness of this pause, she held up a handkerchief, which she had received, as part of her recent present, and waved it. At the signal the three blacks struck two or three quick blows upon the trees, by which they stood, and three prodigious trees, the very giants of the forest, bent in opposite directions, giving two or three sharp cracks, and then thundered down with a crash, that was terrific, sweeping whole trees and limbs and every thing that opposed, from their course, and striking the earth with a force that made the very earth tremble under their feet and echoed far through the woods. The pigeons and parroquets fluttered in clouds from the scene. The dogs barked. The young men huzzaed, and there was a general and long waving of handkerchiefs from the young ladies to correspond.

One of these prodigious fallen trees was a beech-tree, in which was a large and rich swarm that had been discovered and reserved for the occasion; and this tree, and the other two were prepared for the festival, by being cut so nearly off as only to require a blow or two to fell them. One of the other trees was a pecan, covered with nuts, and the other a sycamore, whose summit was crowned with clusters of the blue grape. It was a new source of amusement to gather nuts and grapes, which, but a few moments before, had been a hundred feet in the air. There was, of course, a new theatre for wit and mutual gymnastic efforts, on the part of the lads and lasses; and many were the feats of springing, reaching, and climbing, on both sides, and well, and gracefully did the lovers show their elected their love and daring, in getting for them, at any effort and any risk, the clusters, or nuts, for which they expressed an inclination.

When the young ladies had eaten grapes and nuts to their satisfaction, and had filled their handkerchiefs, and given them to their attending servants, to carry

home, a trial of the gallantry and devotion of their swains ensued, which, so far from being semblance, and unreal, was one worthy of the hardihood and daring of a Sampson. The bee-tree, in falling, had broken at the point where the swarm had formed their hive. The little exasperated insects were whizzing by thousands about the ruin of their habitation and fortunes, and were denouncing vengeance against those who should dare to add misery to affliction, by plundering them of their honey. One young man after another, covering his head with a handkerchief; walked up to the hollow; amidst the shouts and bravos of the company, and with as much adroitness, and as few stings, as might be; brought off a fragment of the comb, and presented it with a suitable speech to the young lady of his choice.

Hercules Pindall, to show more devoted love, and more chivalrous daring, walked deliberately; and with uncovered face, among the thickest of the bees, and stooped down and took a full survey of the comb in the broken hollow, and reached in his hand, and scooped out the white and virgin circles of comb from the very centre of the hive, and with his face and hands swollen, and agonizing with fifty stings, presented his trophy to Eliza. All this was accompanied with a suitable speech, the witty part of which bore for burden, that this external stinging had no relation, nor comparison to certain smarts and agonies, inflicted by her mischievous eyes in his bosom. There are few female hearts of thirteen, I ween, that would not have softened something from the rigor, imposed by maternal counsels, at such notable proofs of daring constancy. Eliza pleaded, that she was too young to love. Hercules, in reply, was ready to wait her time, so that he might hope at the end of his probation.

But I willingly pass over this scene. Hercules was earnest, rough, and direct to his point, and used threats withal. Eliza was young, and frightened, and trembled at the thought of committing the grounds and

cabin, that sheltered her poor brothers and her mother. It was a scene most trying to the unpractised child, from which she only escaped by telling him, that even if she were of age to love, it would be no way to inspire it, to threaten ruin to her mother's family, and by warning him, that if he did not desist, and let her off, she would call the company. The party broke up, partaking of the general gloom, created by the visible ill humor of the chief entertainer, who was evidently dissatisfied with the progress of his love-making, his prospects, himself, and every thing. It was late in the evening, when the carriage was ordered to carry Mrs. Mason and her daughter home. The narrative of the incidents of the feast was of course reserved for the following day.

The first smile, which had been seen in this family, since the death of its head, was excited in the listening group, the next morning, as Eliza described, in her way, the dinner, the nut-gathering, and the gallantry of Hercules, manifested by the number of stings, and the amount of swelling. From the little which she related of what he had said to her, and the answers, which she had made to him, the state of the case was sufficiently obvious not only to the keen discernment of the mother, but even to the inexperienced judgment of George. They had been for some time aware, that their little homestead was claimed by different titles, and that, probably, that of Mr. Pindall was as valid as theirs. A law suit, at least, was necessary to try their comparative validity, and this would be as ruinous to them as to be deprived of their home. The opulent, who are in suspense about the fate of their ships, after a storm, can have but a faint idea of the bitterness of apprehension, with which this family regarded the idea of being turned out of their humble home. It was their all, and not the less important to them, because it would have been nothing to another. Various were the devices proposed, to soothe the disappointed vanity of the young man,

and ward off the vengeance of his father. Thomas ventured to propose it as his judgment, that Hercules was a fine, stout, young man, and called by all the people, the "best" in the settlement of his years, and certainly the richest. He thought sister might tell him, that she would wait for him; "And you know," he significantly added, "you can make him wait as long as you will. Then you could be sure of this, and the great farm, and ride about in the coach, and we should all be rich and happy." A kind of musing contemplation of the matter, in the same point of view, seemed for a moment to pass over the brow of Mrs. Mason. A paleness, as of death, and a burst of tears from the daughter showed the light in which she considered the most distant prospect of getting rid of their difficulties in that way. It was settled, that they would deliberate no further upon the subject until future difficulties called upon them to act.

## CHAPTER V.

“Despise not the poor because he is poor.”

WHENEVER the question of the future course of the family was in discussion, and whenever the investigation was followed by gloom and despondency, George never failed to ply his father's motto, and to dwell upon his last declaration, that God never forsakes them, who do not forsake themselves. “They were in health,” he said, “and in a country where sustenance was easy to be procured, and if they could only hit upon the right way, some one might surely be devised, in which they might become independent of Hercules Pindall, and every body, and take care of themselves.” The grand burden of their conversations was to search for this way.

The inquirer after the secret of perpetual motion, the chemist inquiring after the transmuting secret, that will turn lead to gold, the student whipping up his powers to put the finish to an invention that will bring him fame and fortune, know but little of the heart-wearing study of this family, to start in some track, by which they might obtain sufficient money to clothe the family, and pay the doctor's bill and the taxes. Destitute as they were, these bills were presented, and payment pressed with persevering importunity. In discoursing every evening upon this theme, Madam Mason, George, and Eliza were of course the chief speakers, though Henry, Thomas, and William, often made their speech, and threw their light upon the subject. These discussions were pursued with the more earnestness and interest, inasmuch as the speakers considered themselves urged to these inquiries by the mournful consideration, that in so doing they were fulfilling the last wish and charge of their deceased head. His spirit was consid-

ered as one of the number, still pressing the grand maxim of his life, "never to despond," and urging them to task their inventive powers to the utmost to find some branch of industry, in pursuing which, they might obtain a decent livelihood. If the reader would not have felt a smile out of place in this family, he could not have restrained a smile at hearing some of the propositions of the junior members of this singular debating society. Henry proposed the mystery of bird-catching, and sending cages of mocking-birds, red-birds, parroquets, and turtle-doves to New-Orleans for sale. Thomas was for applying their exertions to the gathering reed-canes, and sending them to the Northern manufacturers for weavers' sleys. George had high hopes from a chemical composition for ink and blacking, which he expected to complete from the vegetables of the country. Mrs. Mason and Eliza limited their projects to the tried and simple experiment of raising cotton, and spinning night and day to clothe themselves, and manufacture a little surplus for sale. A thousand inconveniences attended every experiment, as preliminary difficulties. The proposer was generally overwhelmed by the objections of the next speaker. One project was abandoned to find difficulties equally insuperable, appended to another. Night after night, and week after week, wore away in the unprofitable speculations of theory. The debating society generally retired from the evening fire to their beds, their brain dry and exhausted by useless reaching for some practicable project, and their hearts sunk with the discouraging impression, that nothing was before them but the same hopeless poverty.

But when their supper of milk, corn-bread, and sweet potatoes was finished, and they were again assembled about the evening fire, the repetition of the ancient maxim, "never despair," like a voice from heaven, renewed their courage and strength for a new discussion. Success, as it ought; ultimately attended



these counsels. The post-master, on the bank of the river, had noticed George, and had inquired into the circumstances and character of the family. He was a man, who had both understanding and a heart. He never, it is true, had proposed to himself to be a Mæcenas, or to establish a manufacturing village. But if we could know all the good thoughts that pass in the minds of humble and undistinguished people, who expect neither notoriety nor advantage from those thoughts, we could not but think better of the species and human nature. While this family was wearying itself in fruitless attempts to invent some kind of pursuit in which to employ their industry, he had more than once been occupied in the benevolent desire to be useful to them. As a foretaste of good will to them, he was in the habit of sending George the newspapers and pamphlets, that came to his office, after he had perused them. These were beneficial to them in a hundred ways. They taught the children to read. In an imperfect degree they supplied the want of books. They learned from them the events, passions, and employments of the great world. The thousand projects and discoveries of manufacturing inventiveness were brought to their view. They could thus trace the range of other minds in the same inquiries, which themselves were pursuing with so much interest. Among other inventions in manufactures, they noted with keen interest, that the town from which they had emigrated, had become famous for the manufacture of a new kind of grass-bonnets, in imitation of Leghorn straw. A premium of fifty dollars had been obtained by a school-mate of Eliza's, for a bonnet of this kind, which had sold for thirty dollars beside. Eighty dollars for a single bonnet, and that made by a girl neither older, nor more ingenious, than herself! In fact the whole family, from constantly seeing the manufacture going on about them, while in New-England, had become familiar with all the mysteries of cutting, splitting, bleaching, and plating straw, and with every

stage of the operation, from cutting the grain to arranging the artificial flowers on the finished bonnet. From a dissertation upon the kind of grass, used in this manufacture, George was confident, that it was none other, than the identical crab-grass, which was such an abundant and troublesome inmate in their corn-field. So impatient were they all, to satisfy themselves upon this point, that immediately after reading the article in question, George and Henry sallied out with a light, at ten in the evening, to gather some of the crab-grass, and to satisfy themselves, as to its capabilities for this manufacture. The article was still unharmed by the frost, though so late in the season, and Madam Mason and Eliza found it to succeed, on experiment, beyond their most sanguine expectations. They retired to rest, full of cheerful and golden dreams, even Eliza dreaming, that the children were all clad in new suits with shoes and stockings, and that she and her mother were once more fine.

This was a project for immediate and earnest trial. Sufficient quantities of the grass were collected from the field. George and the boys concluded to try their skill upon the coarser manufacture of Vevay straw-hats for gentlemen, of which some for domestic use were already made in the settlement. Plenty of the finest oat-straw for that purpose was readily obtained in the settlement. In the papers, too, were minute dissertations upon rearing the silk-worm, and the making of silk. The woods about them abounded in mulberry-trees, and there were acres covered with young and thrifty ones, such as were represented to be in the right stage, to furnish tender leaves for feeding the silk-worm. Eggs for rearing the worms were offered gratuitously, to encourage this species of industry. Behold the promise of pleasant, practicable, and profitable labor, both for winter and summer. The adventurer, whose ticket has obtained the fortunate prize of fifty thousand dollars may feel more intoxicating enjoyment, in the

first raptures of success, but we question if his meditations, on the whole, are as calm, tranquillizing, salutary, and enduring, as were the anticipations of this family, in laying out their plans of future industry and success.

The trials and efforts of Madam Mason and her daughter were commenced with the morning light, and scarcely relinquished until midnight. Their slender fingers were guided by all the skill, derived from practice in New-England, by way of amusement, and by having been reared where such operations and pursuits were familiar, and carried on by every one about them. It is true, they did not succeed to their minds at once. But active and ingenious people, who are in earnest, and determined not to be discouraged, seldom fail in such efforts, and soon improve upon their first attempts. *As faith in religion can remove mountains,* so courage, patience, industry, and perseverance conquer all difficulties in practice. The inexperienced manufacturers made many mistakes, and slow progress at first. But in the course of the winter, the mother and daughter had made two grass bonnets, of which the first might be said to be quite tolerable, and the last even beautiful, in comparison with Leghorn straws. George and his brothers, in the same interval, had completed eight gentlemen's straw hats, which were considered merchantable, besides one, of a less perfect workmanship and the fruit of their first essays and experiments, for each one of their own number. The last half-dozen were wrought with considerable ingenuity and neatness. In the same period, they had made considerable preparation for the manufacture of silk, in which they were favored by their friend, the postmaster, who not only furnished them with all his printed information, in relation to this business, but franked their letters, requesting eggs, and had the pleasure of learning that their requests were granted, and the eggs forwarded according to their desire.

March had come again; but the venerated head of the family would come no more, to enjoy with his dear family the pleasure of seeing the brooks tufted with the beautiful blossoms of the meadow-pink, and the woods rendered gay with the opening flowers of the red-bud. But these harbingers of spring admonished them, in compliance with his last wishes, to begin their preparations for subsistence through the coming year. It was necessary that the field should be ploughed this season. The frank deportment and the persevering industry of George had so far won upon the good feelings of the planters about them, that two of the richest offered to send their slaves and teams to plough his field. It was regarded in the family as a gift from heaven; for they could not expect a second crop, without ploughing; neither had they been able to devise any possible means of hiring it done. It inspired them with new courage, and was regarded as an omen of future good fortune.

This grand difficulty overcome, it was proposed, that before planting, George and Henry should carry the fruits of their winter's industry to the village on the banks for sale, at the time, when they were advertised by the papers, that a steam-boat would arrive there from New-Orleans. It seemed, though they admitted a slender one, the only chance that offered for a market for their bonnets and hats. They had made some efforts, indeed, to sell these articles to some of their more opulent neighbours. They had even offered the best bonnet for the ploughing of their field. But such is the effect of prejudice, that these men found the bonnets and hats mean and coarse, compared with much meaner and coarser hats and bonnets bought from the stores. An impartial eye could have seen at once the superiority of their articles. But these had been made at home and under their eye, and without mystery, and by a destitute family with worn and patched garments and bare feet. Those that they purchased from the stores, were far-fetched and dear-bought. So true is it, that

manufactures, like prophets, are not like to be honored in their own country. It is human nature, to undervalue what grows up under our own eye. Of all this Mrs. Mason was fully aware. Hero and emperor, as George was, in her eye, she was aware, that he was an inexperienced trader; that his market was a most unpromising one, and she allowed herself to indulge but very slender hopes from the proposed excursion to the river. But there was neither shoe nor stocking in the family. Notwithstanding the mending and patching of decency and honest pride, their last dress was rapidly verging to rags. They already hid themselves from their neighbours as they passed. As the mother made her last arrangements for the departure of her boys on this excursion, it was with many prayers and tears. Nevertheless, the grand maxim of her dear departed husband, "never to despair," came to her thoughts, as though it were his spirit hovering near to cheer them. Her last and best exertions were made to render them as neat and decent in their appearance, as circumstances would admit. But though their clothes were so patched and seamed, that the original material and the ground color could be hardly discerned, it was manifest that they were children of a mother who had been used to decency and respectable society. After giving them all the counsels of maternal apprehension and forecast, after long and laborious dictation, what was to be said and done, in various supposed cases, she did up the venture in two bundles in the only two decent handkerchiefs remaining in the family, the larger to be borne by George, and the smaller by Henry; she kissed them both, suppressed her starting tears, and trusting the return purchases, if they made sales, entirely to the judgment of George, and his knowledge of what they needed most, she sent them forth. An India merchant, who fits out a ship carrying specie to China, knows nothing of the anxious solitudes of this mother in the case. The poor widow, who sends her only son on a voyage, and

raises her last dollar to fix him out with an adventure, can understand the case better.

The younger boys and Eliza were in high spirits, and tripped along with them to the steps that led out of the field. She gave them many counsels in relation to the pretty articles, which she wished them to bring back. At the steps she kissed them, shook hands with them, and again and again wished them a good voyage, which was earnestly echoed by the younger ones, and they set forth alone.

I know not how the reader feels, but I feel as much interest in the march of these barefooted boys along the deep forest, as I do in reading about the adventures and ridiculous distresses of fine dressed lords and ladies. Of all stupid things in our world, it is the most stupid, as we have before remarked, that the great mass of readers should have thought, that there was no dignity nor interest in any adventures, but those of men that have fine houses and coaches. There are only a few hundreds of the former in our whole country. There are a million who can claim the alliance of kindred fortune with George and Henry. The movements of human nature are just as strong in them, and if we would study them, would be found possessing as high an interest as those of the former.

It was a beautiful March morning when they started, and the swelling buds of the Spice-Wood filled the air with aromatic fragrance. Wherever they crossed a run with a southern exposure, they saw the delicious meadow-pink and the red-bud in flower. The beauty of the day, that inexplicable spirit of freshness and joy to the whole creation, which spring diffuses over earth and through air, and with which it fills every thing that has life with gaiety and songs; the alcove of branches in the grand forest through which they passed, just beginning to be tinged with countless points of green; every thing on their way was of a freshness to cheer every thing but despair. They, too, were full of the freshness and buoyancy of youthful

existence, and the sweet illusions of hope were diffused over their minds. They walked almost with a bound. They whistled, and sung, as an echo to the songs of the forest, and for the first six miles of their way, no doubts or fears had mingled with their expectations. But we all of us from four to fourscore are creatures of the elements; our joys and our sorrows, the fabric of a passing remembrance, a floating cloud, a change in the temperature; and the sunshine of the mind vanishes with that of the sky. Before they reached the river, the sun rode high, and the day was sultry. They had become weary, and the excess of morning gaiety and hope was gone. For a couple of hours they had lived too fast, and the revulsion of discouragement followed. Whoever had met them at that time, would have noted in their weary and listless step, and their dejected countenances, that their sanguine anticipations were gone. Henry began very frankly to confess his doubts and discouragements. George in heart was as much discouraged, as his brother; but he had practically and thoroughly learned the hard lesson of putting a good face upon a hopeless project. So he put himself, to his utmost ingenuity, to prove to his brother, that nobody could ever hope to succeed in any project with a sad countenance, and a discouraged look. "If we do not look cheerful and full of hope, when we arrive," said he, "that alone would spoil our market. If I were going to the gallows, I would strive to put a good face upon it." He then exerted his utmost ingenuity to prove to his brother, that they actually would do well. Children are easy to convince, especially when they wish to be convinced. While they rested a few moments, he entreated his brother to look cheerful, and by making such efforts with him actually became so himself. More of the secret of success in life lies in this thing, than many readers imagine.

They arose, resuming their morning faces, and marched on, whistling and singing, until they arrived at the

river. The steam-boat had just fired its cannon, and swept to the bank in all the pageantry of display, as they arrived. It may be imagined, what an imposing spectacle it presented to boys, who for so many months had seen nothing but log-cabins and trees. Hundreds of waggish boat-men were raising the wind on the deck, and seventy-five or eighty gaily dressed cabin-passengers sprang ashore, as soon as the plank was put out. A trading-boat was moored a few rods above them. George considered this a good omen. The people on those boats are known to be traders and traffickers, who deal in every thing. Besides, it was to remain there two days, whereas the steam-boat was only to take in wood and a few passengers, and would depart in a couple of hours; of course the first trading essay of the two boys would be made upon the steam-boat. It will be seen that it was but an unpromising business for two ragged boys to carry such articles, as hats and bonnets for sale on board such a steam-boat, returning from New-Orleans, crowded with passengers, some of them dandies, some of them belles, many of them empty; heartless, and unfeeling, most of them in a careless, toothpick frame, and scarcely one of them disposed to offer a fair chance to the intended speculation of the boys. True, they were boys with fine faces, and keen observers might easily have noted, that they were not common boys. But who of the card-playing people, and the vain women on board the steam-boat, yawning with ennui, and greedy only for some kind of heartless distraction, would inspect them close enough to look beyond their first appearance and their rags? Besides, all that could be supposed capable of such a purchase, had been to the great-mart of finery, New-Orleans, and would little think of supplying themselves with any thing they had overlooked there, in such a place as this. All these thoughts were sufficiently obvious even to the inexperience of George. His heart palpitated. His mouth was dry, and as he gave his hand to his brother



Henry, to lead him along the plank on board the boat, his very hand was covered with a cold sweat. Never had the poor lad more urgent occasion for his motto, "Don't give up the ship." He assumed the courage of desperation, and walked up to a tall gentleman with an air of patronage and authority, who seemed to be a kind of chief gallant among the ladies. "Will you please to have any of our hats and bonnets, sir?" said he.

The gentleman answered carelessly, but kindly, "My boys, I have no need of either." But, as if struck with the singularity of the offer of such articles in such a place; "let us look at them though," he continued; "what kind of hats and bonnets do you make here?" To have a chance to display his articles was an unexpected advantage; and no small point gained. So he very modestly undid his handkerchiefs, and spread his hats and bonnets before the gentleman. It is more than probable, that he had made the proposition to the boys merely to bring about a conversation with the ladies. "Come, and look, ladies," said he. "Why, they are fine. Upon my word, if we have not come all the way from New-Orleans to a bonnet-market at the Iron Banks! Who made these articles?" he continued, handling them rather rudely. "My mother, and myself," answered George, firmly. "Please not to rumple them, sir."

By this time a circle was formed round the boys and their articles. Any person, who has witnessed such a scene, knows how little feeling there is in such cases. Some of the ladies showed their wit, by laughing at the bonnets. Another took one of them up and ran to the mirror, screwing it sidewise on ther head, and giving herself a great many pretty airs in this ridiculous position, well pleased to have gained the general laugh of the gentlemen. George felt every ill-natured remark upon his hats and bonnets, as he would have felt an insult upon his mother, and every rude pull upon his bonnets, as though it were upon his heart-strings. His temper,—for he was a high-spirited boy,—was fifty times

ready to burst forth. But he saw, that all depended upon self-possession. So he swallowed his words, and attempted to conceal the palpitations of his heart, as they agitated his tattered jacket, and bade himself be calm. Some tumbled over his hats, remarking, that they showed an astonishing ingenuity, and began to ask questions about a family, that could originate such manufactures in such a place. To all these questions George and even Henry had such modest, prompt, and proper answers, that persons of much thought and feeling would naturally have been aroused to an interest in them. But, unfortunately, there is little of the kind to be expected in such circumstances. In such places they generally prefer to show their own wit and talent at ridicule, rather than exercise consideration and benevolence to little paupers like these. There was, in particular, a forward young lady with a fine complexion, who was pretty, conceited, and vain, the belle and the wit of her village, when at home, and she had been a third-rate blue-stocking even at New-Orleans; she was, moreover, wealthy and dressed as fine as colors, ribbands, and lace could make her. She made such ridiculous efforts to squeeze the handsomest bonnet over her huge combs upon her head, as made Henry cry out in terror, "that she would spoil the bonnet." A lady of more character and consideration saw, and pitied the distress of the boy, and begged her, if she did not wish to purchase it, at least to return it without injury. This polite and proper rebuke piqued her, nor was it the first time she had been piqued with this lady of superior understanding, during this trip. She returned the bonnet to George, comparing it with her own Leghorn, however, as she returned it. Her own was certainly a meaner bonnet, though dizzened with ornaments and artificial flowers. "You see, my boy," said she, holding her own beside his, "that I should hardly want to buy such a thing, as this. Still, as you seem to be poor, I will give you half a dollar." At the same time she offered him one from her

splendid purse. Half dollars had been rare visitants with George, and he thought how much it would purchase for his mother. A glow passed over his cheek. He knew not, whether the feeling were pride, resentment, or proper spirit. He was not casuist enough to decide in a moment, whether he ought or ought not to refuse the money. But he answered promptly, "Thank you, ma'am; I should be glad to sell, but I did not come to beg. As you do'nt find my bonnets worth buying, I will go." An answer so proper from a boy so young and so dressed, produced an instant and unexpected impression. It did the business for George. It aroused attention, and created instant sympathy. The considerate lady, who had spoken before, whispered a person who seemed to be her brother, and a momentary consultation ensued between them, and the gentlemen and ladies in general. The gentleman came forward, and asked George the price of his bonnets and his hats. "Six dollars for the one, four for the other, and seventy-five cents for each of the hats;" was the answer. The gentleman remarked, as one who was a judge, that the best bonnet was a fine one, and ought to sell for more than the price asked. He proposed to buy it, and dispose of it in a lottery, to which there was an assent by general acclamation. He paid George six dollars, and took the bonnet. I dare affirm, that receiving these six dollars made him happier than Napoleon was, when, amidst all the splendors of Paris, and the acclamations of marshals and nobles and conquered kings, he put on the imperial crown. The example was contagious. All at once it was discovered, that the hats were light and fine for the approaching summer. The story of the cleverness of the poor boys ran through the crowd. Strong feeling, excited in their favour, gave them credit for even more than they possessed. In a few minutes George had sold five of his hats.

Delighted beyond measure, he skipped up the ladder among the hundreds, who were crowded on the

deck. There was no hope for the sale of the remaining grass-bonnet among the plain and hardy fellows there. But no one laughed at him for being ragged, and he sold another of his straw hats. The bell rung for all on shore to come on board, and all on board, that did not belong there, to be off. The cannon fired, and George was admonished, that the steam-boat was getting under way. He carefully led his brother Henry ashore, and with feelings very different from those with which he came on board. He had in hand ten dollars and a half, and to him it was the treasure of the Indies. The boys were now in a frame of mind to be delighted with seeing the gay steam-boat, with her colors raised and her pennons flying, moving majestically round, as the wheels began to throw up the foam, and as she began to take her strong march against the current of the mighty stream.

There still remained one bonnet and two hats. The boys had now acquired confidence from success, and they walked up the stream a few paces, to where the trading-boat was moored. The two partners, who managed it, probably took them to be boys bringing eggs on board for sale. One of them held out his hand, to lead them aboard.

“What do you ask for your eggs?” was the question.

“We have none to sell,” answered George, “but an imitation Leghorn bonnet, and a couple of gentlemen’s straw hats.”

The traders were shrewd fellows from Connecticut, whose business on the river, as they phrased it with the true northern accent, was “trading and trafficking,” and to whom no article of barter came amiss. Like the people in the steam-boat, their curiosity was excited by having such articles offered there, in a region, where they had been accustomed to suppose nothing was manufactured. These knowing traders examined the articles with seeming carelessness, but they com-

prehended the character and circumstances of the boys in a moment, learned that they were Yankess, and perceived, that they offered their articles cheap. They ascertained, too, at once, that they had money, which they wished to expend in purchases. Such an opportunity to "trade and traffic" was not to be lost.

The sight of so many goods, arranged for show and effect, and with many a gaudy article on the external part of the shelves, to strike the eye, could not fail to arrest the admiration of the boys from the woods. Henry held up his hands, exclaiming, "Oh! brother, brother, what would I give to carry home some of these fine things to mother and the children. Dear George, you *must* buy some of these things for them."

After a little pretended difficulty about the price, the traders purchased the remaining bonnet and hats. But it was part of the contract, that the boys were to receive their pay in goods, and moreover, to expend their money in purchases there, they engaging to furnish every article as cheap as could be bought at the stores. Sorry I am to say, that George, with all his natural cleverness and quickness, had better thrown his articles into the river, than have dealt with *one* of these traders. But *one* of the traders was endowed with a heart and a conscience, strange as it may seem, in his case. The artless story of the boys had moved his pity and his feelings. He was determined, that no advantage should be taken of their youth and inexperience. He called his partner aside, and told him as much. The younger of the traders remonstrated, but being the inferior partner, was obliged to yield, while the elder dealt with them. The whole amount of the purchase was to be sixteen dollars. The trader made many considerate and kind inquiries with a sincere view to inform himself, what they most needed at home. It was a business of extreme perplexity with George, to decide between conflicting claims in their purchases. He went on shore with Henry to consult with him on

points, that pride forbade him to mention before the traders. After all, it would have occupied all the day, to fix on the specific articles to purchase, had it not been necessary, that he should decide in season to return home that night. The important selections at length, after much doubt and solicitude, and aided by the honest and more decided judgment of the trader, were made. They consisted of patterns for a chintz dress for the mother and daughter, a pair of shoes for each, and patterns for a domestic cotton dress for each of the children beside. Two dollars, that remained, were bestowed in coffee and sugar, luxuries that had not been tasted in the family, since the first month after their arrival in the country. The trader had not only given them the full value of their money and articles, but had generously allowed them more, and in the noble spirit of saving their feelings, and wishing them to receive it, not as a gift, but as a purchase. The whole amount, when done up in a bundle, was no inconsiderable package, and constituted a burden too heavy for their strength and the distance they had to travel that night. Fortunately a neighbour from the settlement was in at the river, carrying out a load of articles in his horse-wagon to the settlement. He offered to take their package, and even themselves back again. But as his wagon was heavily loaded, and inconvenient, and uncomfortable, as a vehicle, they thankfully accepted the offer for the transport of their package, preferring themselves to return on foot, as they came.

This matter arranged, away marched the boys for home, with hearts as light as a feather. It was cheering to hear their young voices echoing in songs through the woods, as they walked briskly onward. The still dusk of a March sunset overtook them, before they reached home. It happened in this case, as it always happens, that too high a flood of joy is succeeded in the mind by an ebb of sadness. The solemn sensations

of decaying light in the forests, weariness and the reaction of feelings, that had been too highly excited, drew from Henry, with a long sigh, as they rested for a moment, this remark :

“ Dear George, it takes away all my gladness in carrying our fine things home, to think that my poor, dear father is gone, never to come back. Oh ! I would give all this world that he were only alive, and well ; what we have got would render him so happy ! Oh ! how glad he would be to see that we are able to make ourselves comfortable and take care of ourselves ! I shall never see him more, and I care nothing about all we have bought.”

As this thought came over him, in all its bitterness, his surcharged heart found vent to its feelings in a burst of weeping. George was not a little proud of his reputation for philosophy, but he had been brooding in his mind over the same gloomy train of remembrance, and this ill-timed remark of his brother, the echo of his own thoughts, so nearly vanquished him, that he was obliged to turn away to conceal the tears, that were forming in his own eyes. While they were thus crying in company, their neighbour's wagon came up with them. His company, and the view of their package introduced a new train of thought. They were still two miles from home, and as the wagon parted from their path there, and took another direction, it became necessary, that they should take their package themselves. It was heavy ; but it was a precious burden, and they wiped their eyes, as George thanked the neighbour, and bent his neck to it. As he became weary under his proud burden, Henry shouldered it, and staggered on a quarter of a mile, when George resumed it. In this way, they arrived in view of the house. Twilight was just fading. The wooden shutters were not closed, and a bright light gleamed from the house. The sweet and subdued voice of the mother and daughter was heard within, singing the evening

hymn. They distinctly heard the burden of the closing stanza,

“Oh, guide the dear ones safely home.”

The family dog received them with his caresses at the door. The two boys threw down their package, as they entered, and rushing to the arms of their mother, made no effort to restrain tears of joy. They both sobbed together, “Father, dear father, if you were only here!” But the happy tears, and kisses, and embraces, that ensued, were only those of tenderness and joy. They all agreed, that if his spirit could be among them, it would only be to chide them for any other feelings, than those of gladness on this occasion.

And now, after a half an hour spent in this way, came on, of course, the happy business of unrolling the goods and displaying the individual character of their purchases. My reader may have seen a lady in her birth-night ball-dress. He may have seen a dandy sport a suit of clothes in an entire new fashion. He may have imagined high degrees of gratified pride and joy on occasions, which he has seen, or of which he may have read. But I question, if he has ever seen, or read of a more real, heart-felt, and honest exultation and joy, than that of this family. Ah! my dear reader, I hope you do not know by experience, as these poor people did, that it is bitter privation, that teaches us the value of things; that it is poverty which instructs us to be content, and glad, with a little. Who can tell the gladness of heart of this mother and daughter, that they should be once more decently clad, and in a garb to be seen! The two boys were exulting proudly in their own wisdom, cleverness, and management, and as a spice of evil mixes with all our good, I much fear, there was in their hearts a dawning feeling, like that of the exulting monarch, who said, “*Is not this great Babylon, which I have built?*” Add to this the gratified pride of the mother, in seeing this proof of the premature industry and capacity of her children;



and in witnessing the fulfilment of her departed husband's prediction, "that God would never forsake them, if they did not forsake themselves." One of the most insupportable burdens of extreme poverty was not only thrown off, but a prospect opened of a constant remedy of the same kind for the future. It is not necessary, that the parties should be kings, or rulers, or rich, or distinguished, to be capable of all the joy and all the sorrow, which our nature is susceptible of experiencing. I dare affirm, that this family, for the first hour of unrolling these articles, and examining their excellence, and exclaiming, as well they might, at their cheapness, and making their arrangements for the share which each one of the family should have of them, and in the anticipated joy of the smartness of their appearance in their new dress, and listening to the story of the sales and purchases, was one of the happiest for the time that existed in our world.

Mrs. Mason, too, had, like her two sons, her painful revulsion, after the first burst of joy. She remembered the eye that used to kindle with such intense affection at seeing the happiness of his family. She remembered him on whose bosom she had divided her joys and sorrows. She remembered his satisfied look, as he saw his children happily seated round the evening fire. She felt, too, how happy this evening would have made him. It was in vain, that she said to herself, that his ashes only remained with them, under the sycamore, and that his spirit was in heaven, and infinitely above such poor and trifling joys. She was after all but a frail being of flesh; and unavailing longing for his loved society, to share the happiness of that evening, brought bitterness in the midst of her joy. "Some natural tears she dropp'd, but wip'd them soon." Coffee was prepared, the first they had tasted for a year, and the exhilarating beverage had a relish which they cannot know, to whom it is a daily repast.

To make the dresses was the work of the mother

and daughter. Privation rendered this labor, which in so many instances is considered a painful toil, a delightful pastime. The boys, the while, were in the field, busily engaged in planting, and delighted, on their return from labor, to watch the progress of the important operations within. They within, too, often came out to observe how the labors of the field succeeded. During this inspection, we see George in the honest pride of head workman and overseer in this important business, directing Henry to straighten the rows, and Thomas to take some kernels from the hill, or add them, as he saw the case require. These subalterns, too, had a pride, in manifesting under the eye of their mother, the promptness of their obedience.

The imagination of the reader may easily supply the details of a considerable interval of time that ensued, marked with no incident but the rejoicings of the succeeding Sabbath, in which the family performed their customary Sabbath solemnities, in an entire new dress from head to foot. This was a silent joy, and a pride inly felt; for each member of the family knew too well the claims of self-respect, to exult externally in the display of their finery. We should have mentioned, that since the death of Mr. Mason, Sabbath had been in this family, as nearly a day of the same kind of worship as while he lived, as the case would admit. It was in vain, that their neighbours strolled by with their dogs and guns, and invited the boys to share with them the pleasure and the profits of the chase. It was in vain that even the women came past the house with their angling rods to fish in the neighbouring creek. The day had always been in that family consecrated to pursuits worthy of the hopes of immortality, and these duties, so far from being remitted after the head was gone, were more exactly performed. The house was that day a Sabbath-school, a place of worship, a house of instruction in singing, and in training to all the high thoughts and holy feelings of religion. Neither was it

a day of gloom. It had long been inculcated on this family, as one of the first duties of the Sabbath to strive in every way to render it a pleasant and a cheerful day to the children. Prayers were recited, select portions of the Scriptures read, questions propounded, and every duty seasoned with an air of cheerfulness and joy. The day never passed away without an affectionate remembrance of him, whose body mouldered, indeed, under the sycamore near them; but whose spirit, the mother told them, was, probably, permitted that day to descend from heaven, and to be invisibly present with them.

The field was planted, and the corn waved in its beauty. The showers descended, and they were again cheered with the prospects of an ample harvest. The materials for the labors of the winter were prepared, as they were matured for gathering. It was a delightful employment to tend their silk-worms. For this season they calculated upon little more, than an experiment. But they contemplated with untiring eagerness and unsated pleasure the manifestations of the astonishing wisdom and contrivance of Providence in the labors of these humble animals. They admired the beauty of the little silken world, in which they enclosed themselves, and saw, in the increase of their stock, and the extension of their labors another year, the promise not only of pleasant employment, but of adding to their means of support. There was certainly with them every conceivable motive to industry. One of their most important arrangements was, after the evening service, to settle the business of the succeeding day, and parcel out the amount of time, that should be appropriated to each duty. This appreciation of time, this wise and settled distribution of it beforehand, redeems half a life. By rising an hour earlier than other people, and by drawing on the evening for an hour later, and by saving two hours every day, by having all the employments of the day, and the length of time to be devoted to each, set-

bled beforehand, four hours every day were gained upon their most industrious neighbours.

Yet, with their utmost industry, the evils of poverty pressed hard upon them. Their sugar and coffee were soon expended, and the privation rendered more bitter by the inclination for it having been rekindled, and the habit renewed by this transient indulgence. A single dress for each of them only rendered the want of a change more striking and painful. The doctor's bill and the tax bill were presented anew with a sneering remark, that "people ought to pay their debts before they made themselves fine." There were a hundred other things to which they, stinted as their means had been, had been formerly used, which were necessary to common comfort, and the want of which was felt to be sufficiently galling. But poor people, that have religion and good sense, learn to bear many evils, and to endure the want of many things, without envy or repining. The mother nightly inculcated upon them, that it was not only making themselves miserable, but wicked, to fret, and murmur, because others had means and comforts which they had not, or to harbour angry and revengeful feelings towards even those who despised them on account of their poverty.

The spring and the summer passed away calmly, and without other incidents than those, every where brought about by the silent march of time. The sun, the moon, and stars kept their hours of rising and rest. Their days sped in noiseless privacy, in these calm and innocent employments. Every day added to the strength of the children and developed the energy, firmness, and forecast of George. Their amount of silk was laid by for future winding. An abundant supply of the article for the manufacture of the coming winter was provided. At this period of hope and cheerful anticipation, a catastrophe befel them of which they had been forewarned, but which yet fell upon them like a thunder-stroke. They had been told, that they must expect

the sickness of *acclimation*, called "seasoning," in the phrase of the country. They had been too busy, too much occupied, and too deep in schemes of the future, to think of sickness, until it came.

The corn had just begun to whiten on the ears, and the intense heats of summer to soften into the milder temperature of autumn, when, at ten in the morning, Mrs. Mason felt a chill, which compelled her to take to her bed. Her lips and her hands had the customary livid appearance. She had hardly lain down, before the three younger children came in from the field, all attacked in the same way. The little discouraged tremblers bestowed themselves on their beds. The spasms of the chill in each were most severe. From Madam Mason to her youngest child, their teeth chattered, and a kind of low, mourning noise accompanied such violent and spasmodic shaking, as made the cabin tremble, and their few earthen plates on the shelf, beside their beds, were heard to clatter with the united shudderings. Each one was under the influence of a delirious excitement, like that of opium, and the cry of "drink! drink!" was, uttered with the eager earnestness of a traveller, expiring with thirst, on the parched sands of a desert. In their wild conversations, it was affecting to hear the younger children call upon their father, in such a variety of tone and supplication, as would have moved a heart of stone. A couple of hours passed in this way, when they dozed for a few moments, and then aroused with cheeks crimson with fever, and another kind of delirium, attended with new tones and accents of distress. Eliza and George were continually carrying the water-gourds, first to one, and then to the other. The patients seized the vessel with a convulsive grasp, and held to it so long, that one would have thought they would have suffocated by the eagerness and duration of their drinking. This paroxysm endured something longer than the former, and when this passed, a few moments of agony succeeded; when the sweat began to start,

slowly at first, and without much sensation of relief. But soon it burst from every pore, and dropped from each particular tress of hair, as though their solid flesh would "resolve into a dew." This immediately brought calmness and relief, and a delightful languor, which they only know, who have felt it, attended by such soothing and tranquillizing sensations, as we may suppose to belong to the spirit of the just, after the last struggles of escape from the prison of the flesh. But though relieved, they were so weak, as to be unable to rise from their beds. A thick fog rose above the tops of the trees, and the sun went down in utter and Egyptian darkness. What a night for this family, of which two only of the children could walk from bed to bed of the sick! Eliza was, as might be expected from her age and sex, subdued and pale as death. George felt that the grand trial of his fortitude was come. He repeated his grand maxim, as he kindled the evening light; told them in the common proverb, "that the darkest time in the night was just before morning;" talked with calmness of this sickness, as the common course of things in the country; and remarked, that though distressing to endure, they ought all to be thankful, that it was by no means a dangerous disorder, and prophesied with deep apparent conviction, that not only would they all be shortly well from this "seasoning," but find it to be the harbinger of good fortune again.

Still he was aware, that in such violent attacks, something must be done, to arrest the fury of the disorder. He consulted none but his sister. He made every considerable arrangement, within the limits of their slender means, to meet the renewal of the paroxysm, which, he was aware, the patients must expect again on the morrow; and he was away before the dawn in the morning on the road to the river for the doctor. There was now no brother Henry to accompany him, whose prattle might serve to beguile him on the

way. The day was sultry, and the subject of his meditations dreary and full of gloom. We need not imagine, what he thought and felt. Courage and affection achieve miracles. He reached the river early in the day. The doctor could not accompany him back, but promised, as is customary in that climate, and at that season, to avoid heat and flies, and to save time, that he would start for the sick family at midnight. George was on his return by half after ten in the morning. He had already measured half his distance home, when he felt himself suddenly seized with a chill. So violent was the attack, that after walking two or three minutes under its endurance, he was obliged to stop and sit down. Fortunately the disease had arrested him on the bank of a rivulet and at the ford. He crawled on his hands and knees through the mud, and reclining over the water, drank as long as he could hold his breath. A momentary relief flashed an impulse of courage through his frame, that he should be able to resume his journey. He waded through the ford, and staggered on a few steps. All would not do. Every thing flashed before his eyes, in long and flaky streams of green and yellow light, succeeded by darkness. His head swam, and thick pantings oppressed his bosom. The poor fellow fell, but fortunately on the moss at the foot of a sycamore. It was some minutes before he returned to himself; and as he felt as he had never felt before, and perceived that he was covered with a cold and clammy sweat, his first thought was, that the hand of death was upon him. Even then, the noble lad thought only of the poor sufferers at home, looking in vain through the evening and the night for his return. It was long before he could gather strength to repeat his adage, and resume his courage. He settled himself as comfortably as he could, on the moss, and in a position as convenient as might be to crawl to the stream. It was a thought sufficiently gloomy, it must be admitted, for such a lad to contemplate his probable chance

of expiring there in the woods, unattended and alone, and, perhaps, be devoured by panthers, or wolves, even before the death of nature had taken place; and leave the sufferers at home entirely forlorn. But he said, "Our Father, who art in heaven!" and he prayed first for those at home, and then for himself, and laid himself down to await the disposal of Providence. His paroxysm was increased by his fatigue, and the want of a bed, and the comforts, which even his home would have afforded. He was afflicted with partial delirium and devouring thirst. Once more he fainted in his efforts to crawl up the bank, after drinking. It seemed to him, indeed, on regaining his couch of moss, that he must expire in the woods. Such was his situation, as the dark night came upon him, and the distant howl of the wolves rung in his ear. In the midst of his thoughts within him, it occurred to him, that at one in the night the doctor would pass that way, and that, by that time, his fever would be so far abated, as that he might be able to ride home behind him. But then it would be necessary, that he should remain awake, or the doctor would pass him ignorant that he was there. The sweat soon began to flow, and he was easy, languid, and his eyes so heavy, that sleep seemed irresistibly to weigh upon his eye-lids. He attempted a hundred expedients to keep himself awake. An invincible drowsiness pressed upon him, and nature levied her tribute. He fell into a profound sleep. The angels of God not only guarded this pale and exhausted lad from the wolves, but inspired pleasant dreams into his innocent bosom. He fancied that he had just arrived home. His mother and the children were recovered, and were about him with kisses and caresses. Water seemed to be handed to him, and in his eagerness to grasp the gourd, and bring it to his lips, he awoke himself from his dream, just as he heard the distant trampling of the doctor approaching on horseback.

It might have startled another, to have been thus call-



ed upon, as he passed, by a feeble human voice, imploring aid at that hour and in that place. But the doctor was a man of temperament, such as not to find miracles in incidents wide from the common, and when he learned the state of the case, it was nothing strange to him, to find a sick lad on the way, who had just passed the paroxysm of the ague. He made some difficulty about taking him up behind him, remarking, that he seemed very comfortably situated there, and that he could notify his mother, to have him sent for in the morning. Poor George had to exert himself to the utmost to be taken up. But he succeeded at length, and was carried home.

Eliza of course had found it necessary to instruct her mother, as the fever returned upon the family in the morning, what was become of George. I need not say how they endured their severe fever that day, or what they thought, when they found, that George did not return at night. When he did return, he found, that Eliza, towards night, had been attacked in her turn, and that the family had suffered inexpressibly for water. But they were still alive, and the sight of him and the doctor revived their spirits. The doctor prescribed as he thought the case required, and I am sorry to add, that it appeared to him, to call for cheap medicines. He was one of those physicians who make most exertions for those who pay best. Physicians, generally, are kind men, and there are few, who would have left a helpless family in the woods, with the nearest neighbour distant two miles, and each member so sick, as to be unable to go to the spring and bring a gourd of water for the rest, without having attempted an arrangement, to procure some one to nurse them. But this doctor had a thick head and an unfeeling heart. He daily saw much misery and sickness of the same sort, and he thought very little upon the scene before him, except, that it afforded him little immediate prospect of a bill. He thought in this case, I rather imag-

ine, if he thought at all upon the subject, that men were made to be sick, take pills, and pay the doctor; and as this family could not do the last, he felt it right to hurry away to the care of some patients who could. Be that as it may, he left the family, in which no one was able to walk to the spring, to shift for themselves. They had all taken medicine, and this had produced an exacerbation of the morning attack. It was distressing to hear their groans during the paroxysm, and their incessant cries for drink. However Mrs. Mason and George might be able to sustain the agony of thirst in silence, it was an effort of self-restraint not to be expected of the rest.

For aught that appears, they might all have expired together, without any relief, had not Providence in its own merciful way, sent them aid. Their nearest neighbour had an old slave, Pompey by name, who was a methodist professor of religion, who was really and in good earnest religious, not from stubbornness, or laziness, as masters are apt to charge their slaves with being, when they pretend to that thing. Pompey had been on an errand to the river, and had returned that way. Hearing the groans within, he was induced to stop, and enter the cabin. What a scene was before him! There was none to bring them water to quench their burning thirst. His kind heart was affected. He repaired to the spring, and returned with a couple of gourds full of water. He gave them drink. He opened the shutters to ventilate the room. He cut green boughs, and put in the windows, to keep out the sun, and admit the coolness of the air. He grated the tender corn of the half ripe ears, and made them gruel. He made their beds, and aided them to change from the one to the other, while he did it. In short, he did every thing, which a diligent and affectionate nurse could do, with the means of the house, and then he fell on his knees beside their bed, and prayed with them. Nor was his prayer less effectual in the divine ear, or less cheering

and consoling to the patients, because it was uttered in the broken accents of an African dialect. He then sat by them, and talked to them in his good-natured and affectionate way, bidding them take courage, and promising them, that he would hurry home, and ask leave of his master to return and watch with them. And as he was old, and as he said, of little account in the field, he had no doubt, that his master would allow him to come back, and stay with them. He added, "Me cure heap people of the ague. Me know six times more about him than the doctor. Me come and cure you all."

A solemn conversation between the mother and these children on their beds ensued. The two younger children were wild with the delirium of fever. Henry, Eliza, and the mother were in utter despondency, and certainly few prospects on the earth can be imagined more gloomy than theirs. The only article in the cabin for sustenance was corn-meal, and the alternative before them seemed only that of perishing of sickness, or hunger. George, though the sickest of the whole, held fast to his grand maxim. He declared an undoubting confidence, that things would yet go well with them. He called them to consider, how mercifully God had dealt with them in many respects already. From their rich experience of the Divine mercy, in time past, he called them to take courage for all the future. None, but people so situated, know what invigorating refreshment arises, to cheer despondency, and banish despair, from one such firm and undoubting prophet of good.

In due time Pompey came. The kind-hearted and considerate slave had looked deeply into their condition, and had fully espied *the nakedness of the land*. From the stores of his fellow-servants he had brought a little sugar and tea. Of his master he had begged powder and shot. He killed squirrels and partridges in an hour's hunt. With these and grated corn he pre-

pared a nutritive and rich soup. He then went along the run, and gathered *Eupatorium Perfoliatum*, or Thorough Wort. He gave each one a cup of the infusion of those leaves, a grand remedy among the the slaves in such cases, and perhaps the best that can be given. The medicine operated at once powerfully, and gently, and when the fever, and the effect of the medicine were passed, a devouring appetite returned to them. Nothing could be more restorative than the soup which Pompey had prepared for them. At nine he made tea. Their fear and dejection were dispelled, as by a charm, and the kind black fellow was in the midst of them, a sort of ministering angel, and enjoying their thankfulness and their hopes, with all the sympathy of his affectionate nature. He prayed with them again in the earnest language of thanksgiving and praise, and he sung his own wild hymns, as a part of the worship. Nor did he take his sleep on his blanket beside them on the floor, until he had ascertained, that each one of his patients was asleep.

Next day, it is true, their fever returned, but with symptoms of abated violence, and an hour later in the day. The same medicine, and the same regimen were repeated and with the same effect. The period of fever was short, and the attack of this day comparatively mild. The third day of his attendance, instead of the infusion of Thorough Wort, he gave an infusion of Dog Wood, Wild Cherry, and Yellow Poplar bark. On the fourth day nothing of their sickness remained, but a kind of pleasing languor, and Pompey pronounced the fever broken, assuring them, that all that was now necessary, was to use great caution to prevent relapse, or in his phrase, "getting it again." They were now all able to help each other. Leaving them materials for soup, and killing them an abundance of small wild game, obtained in those woods, with but a small effort, he left them with the tears and *blessings of them that were ready to perish*, as his reward. As they shook hands

at parting, George gave him his promise, if he was ever able, as he hoped one day to be, to purchase him and give him his freedom. In a few days the family were fully recovered, and resumed their usual routine of cheerful and religious occupation and industry. They had, indeed, incurred an additional debt of twelve dollars to the leaden-hearted physician, who shortly let them know as much, by presenting his bill.

## CHAPTER VI.

Many a sin-worn face  
 Was pale, and woman's sympathetic tears,  
 And children's flow'd; and men's, who thought no shame  
 In tears.

THIS family had abundant reason to regard the merciful interposition of Providence, in not imposing upon them a double burden at the same time, or one greater than they could bear. The affection of Hercules Pindall for Eliza still seemed to preponderate over his resentments. He was soothed, too, by learning, that the family had promptly rejected similar proposals to his made by Mr. Garvin, in behalf of his son Jethro. A coolness existed between those two families, originating with Mr. Pindall, and founded on the presumption, manifested by his neighbour, in thinking of a movement of that sort, in which even he had been unsuccessful. From the circumstance of the continued passion of young Hercules, or from some cause, it happened, that the dreaded writ of ejection had never yet issued against their humble premises, and a kind of doubtful truce seemed yet to be exercised towards the family, which, it was considered probable, would take the form of alliance, or war, according as Eliza and her mother should favor, or reject the suit.

An invitation to the whole family to accompany the Pindall family to a camp-meeting, distant twenty miles among the hills, was urged with so much earnestness, mixed with half threats, in case of refusal, that it was deemed advisable to accept it. There was less plea for rejecting it, for now all the family was comfortably and decently clad from their own means. They were informed, too, that a separate carriage should be provided for the family, and all the necessary arrangements made for its subsistence, while out on this religious expedi-

tion. The idea of a ride in the country was pleasant to Mrs. Mason, and delightful to the children, except Eliza ; so that, on the whole, the day was awaited with impatience.

The time of the camp-meeting had been appointed with reference to the mild and delightful weather in autumn, commonly called Indian Summer, and happened on a morning of one of those beautiful days, when the weather is changing to coolness, and when the leaves are in the stage between verdure and the yellow tints of approaching winter. Hercules and his father rode on horse-back, accompanied by half a dozen negro servants, and a four-horse baggage-wagon, loaded with provisions, and a couple of tents ; and the family carriage, in which were Mrs. Pindall and daughter, and Mrs. Mason, and all her family. The conversation that took place in the carriage turned upon the customary topics. Mrs. Pindall often descanted with a mother's eloquence, pride, and affection upon her darling Hercules, and without coming directly to the point, took care to draw sufficiently alluring pictures of the happiness, that would crown the wife, of whom he should be the husband ; and Mrs. Mason expressed herself delighted with the romantic solitudes on the eastern side of the Mississippi. When they came among the hills, every thing was a charm to the delighted children. Eliza was cheerful, and sometimes made a remark, accompanied by an arch expression of the eye, which told, what she would have said, had the company been pleasant, and her heart light. Miss Letitia found it in keeping to be romantic, and she talked over all that she could remember of all the trumpery novels, that she had read, and found this one to be "the most delightfulest, and that the most genteelest, and the other the most sentimentalist novel," that she had ever read. They took their dinner under a prodigious yellow poplar, on the margin of a clean branch, and had claret and coffee, to carry down the solid parts of the repast. On

their arriving at the ground, Miss Letitia insisted, and Mrs. Mason gave a silent assent to the remark, that this had been a most pleasant day.

Long before they arrived at the place of destination, they were passed by multitudes, on horseback, or in various kinds of carriages. They passed multitudes on foot, some mothers carrying a babe in their arms, and having two or three small children holding to them. The very woods seemed to be alive, and populous, and the groves pouring forth their sequestered sons from every side towards the central point of attraction. The place of worship was in the midst of a grove of those noble and beautiful tulip trees, so natural to that region. The spot was a deep verdant bottom-valley. On the east and south it was surrounded by high precipitous hills, faced with an almost perpendicular lime-stone wall, in its fissures charmingly marked with prodigious tassels of the most verdant fern. A clear spring branch rolled gently through it, sufficiently broad and deep, to reflect the trees, and the pillared clouds of the firmament. There were the ambitious and wealthy, because in this region opinion is all powerful, and they were there, either, to extend their influence, or that their absence might not be marked, to diminish it. Aspirants for office were there, to electioneer, and gain popularity. Vast numbers were there, from simple curiosity, and merely to enjoy a spectacle. The young and beautiful were there with mixed motives, which, perhaps, it were best not severely to scrutinize. Children were there, their young eyes glistening with the intense interest of eager curiosity. The middle-aged fathers and mothers of families were there, with the sober views of people, whose plans in life were fixed, and calmly waiting to hear. Men and women with hoary hairs were there, with such thoughts, it may be hoped, as their years invited. Such was the congregation consisting of thousands.

A host of preachers of different denominations was



there, some in the earnest vigor of youth, waiting an opportunity for display ;—others, who had proclaimed the gospel, as missionary-pilgrims, from the remotest north of our vast country to the shores of the Mexican gulf, and were ready to utter the words, the feelings, and the experience, which they had treasured up in a travelling ministry of fifty years, and whose tones and accents, trembling with age, still more impressively, than their language, announced, that their travels, their toils, and their missionary warfare was soon to terminate. Such were the preachers.

The two families arrived about sunset, and were received with the marked distinction, due to the wealth and importance of Mr. Pindall, a distinction, which, with all its characteristic marks, has found its way even into these woods. Mrs. Mason had been accustomed to think of a camp-meeting with unpleasant associations of every sort. She was therefore in a frame of mind, peculiarly fitted to receive the magic impression of the scene before her. Distant acquaintances and friends, who had not met for years before, here met again. Persons, who knew each other only by dim and, perhaps, disfigured description, here met, and were introduced, and contemplated one another face to face. Long previous canvassing of the merits of the respective preachers was here resumed again. The religious were awaiting to hear that their expiring sentiments might be rekindled ; the witty, that they might find subjects for their supposed wit and criticism. In fact, scarcely an element of excitement for the human heart can be imagined, that was not here. Of course, the interchange of apostolic greetings and salutations among the stricken in years, the embraces of women and young girls, the hearty recognition of young men ; the eager questionings, how the time had passed, and the color of the incidents, that had marked it, since they had last met ; the seeming vanishment of the chill indifference of interest and ordinary life, and in its stead the assumption

of an earnestness, warmth, and life, apparently belonging to a more disinterested and warm-hearted and sublimed race of beings than men ;—marked these meetings, and seemed to indicate, that in coming here, they had come to a holier region, and a new country, where the air was love, and where every one cared, *not only for the things of himself, but also*, for those of his neighbour.

Mean while a hundred negroes, dressed in their holiday finery, pitched the tents in lines under the rustling of the tulip trees, and just beside the margin of the stream. In the suburbs of this religious city, the growth of a few hours, there were some tents, where the careless, or the irreligious lingered, where cakes, wine, and refreshments were sold, and dispensed ; and where the extremes of frivolity, merriment, and pleasure were brought in direct contrast with those of religious excitement. Lamps were hung in lines among the surrounding branches, and fires, kindled with pitchy fragments of pine, blazed in front of the tents, and diffused a glare through the forests, and on the sides and summits of the hoary bluffs. Coffee and tea were prepared ; and as they sat down to a religious supper, thus furnished, and transported, as they seemed to be, to paradise, even the subdued heart of Mrs. Mason swelled with tender remembrances and undefinable emotions, in which, however, pleasure and joy predominated. The hearts of her children danced in rapture.

By the time that their supper was finished, the moon, broadened and purpled with the mists of Indian summer, began to show her calm orb above the summits of the bluffs, and to pour her pensive and religious light upon the hills, the trees, and the immense gathering of the people. A few stars were seen glimmering through the branches, and dancing in the moving waters of the gentle stream. The whole scene was as a temple, fitted up with a magnificence and grandeur worthy of a God.

“Oh !” said Eliza, as she pressed her mother’s hand, “that my dear, dear father were here ! How differently

would he think of a camp-meeting! what a glorious place must be that heaven where he will dwell for ever."

Thirty preachers of all ages surrounded the "stand." But the first preacher of the evening was an old man, apparently four score, in a dress of the quaintest simplicity. As he mounted the stand, the glare of the lights upon the polished baldness of his crown, and the thin gray locks that time had spared, and the furrowed wrinkles of his brow, gave him an aspect of fragility and unearthly elevation above flesh and blood, that prepared the hearers to be impressed, with what he was about to say. In a voice, which was so modulated by age, earnestness, or natural tone, as if it were from a being of another sphere, he gave out that sweet hymn,

"Thou shepherd of Israel and mine,  
Thou joy and desire of my heart," &c.

Instantly the voices of the whole assembled multitude burst forth in an air, familiar to all the people of this region, and as it swelled, and died away among the hills, and forests, and was returned softened in the echoes, I should deem poorly of the heart, that would not have been affected, and prepared to receive the full impressions of religion. The hoary orator prayed as one who felt, that he was soon to be "caught up;" and in his exhortations he spake deeply on a deep theme, such as the peace of those, who love God, and have a confidence that He has forgiven their sins; the misery and the ruin of those suicide reprobates, who turn their backs on God, and despise their own mercies, the hopes, joys, and terrors of eternity; his own experiences, his travels, toils, and wanderings, his persecutions and welcomes, the many, that he had seen in hope, in peace and triumph, entering the "dark valley;" his determined purpose to be diligent through his short remainder of time, his deep regrets, that the increasing burdens and infirmities of years were taking from him the power to proclaim the mercies of his Saviour; the hope that he should meet at least some of those present, as his

trophies, and *his crown in the day of the Lord Jesus*—such were the themes of this aged servant of Jesus Christ. He had no need of the studied trick of oratory, to produce the deepest movements of the heart. He was compelled, occasionally, to pause, to dash the gathering tears from his own eyes. His audience, almost as one person, melted into tears. Even those, who poised themselves on intellectual superiority, and the pride of a nobler insensibility than the crowd, caught the infectious tenderness, and melted into tears, like the rest, and many scoffers, “who came to scoff, remained to pray.”

Unhappily these scenes of high excitement are apt to foster and energize all kinds of sentiments, as well those of the animal, as the intellectual nature; and while the worshippers, generally, had been rekindling the decaying fires of devotion at the altar, others had been only increasing the intensity of unhallowed ardors. Beauty is never so lovely, as when lighted up with the inward radiance of devotion. Many a person present had remarked Mrs. Mason as the young and lovely widow; for in truth, the excitement of the scene, and the glow of faith and of hope, which it had kindled, had colored her pale cheek, and had imparted a juvenile brilliance to her eye. What was the effect, then, on Eliza, by the influence of a new climate, prematurely developing into the form, feature, and beauty of maturity? Poor Hercules, and Jethro Garvin, and many others, had felt to their cost how much more lovely she had seemed here, than they had seen her before. But the sanctity of her manner, and the inspirations of the place, had awed them to silence, and had saved her mother and herself much pain, which they had armed themselves to endure, in hearing these swains talk of their love and constancy. The meeting of three days broke up, and the audience dispersed, without an unpleasant incident, save that Hercules and Jethro, on their way home, brought it to a battle, to decide whose claims of

the two should be resigned to the other, in case Eliza admitted either. In this case, Hercules, like his famed prototype, fairly vanquished the monster, who assumed to come between him and his love, and remained master of the field, and his pretensions.

The father and mother of Hercules were sufficiently weary of this hopeless pursuit of a portionless child, who had nothing but beauty, and were heartily desirous, that their son should relinquish the chase. But the young master inherited from his father a sufficient portion of that spirit, which is either a great virtue, or fault, according, as it is perseverance, or obstinacy. He ceased not to tease them, until they had partly wearied, and partly intimidated Mrs. Mason, to give her consent, to carry her family to see the next horse-race. As it is a spectacle, which every body in the southern and south-western country attends, as it is one of their capital amusements, and a scene of the next degree of interest to a camp-meeting, I am not unwilling, that the reader should accompany the widow and her orphans to a scene, which some will think improper for her to have witnessed. Others will view it, as do most of even the religious people of the south, and will consider, that this tender mother had constantly before her eyes the study, not to break with her powerful neighbours; the fear, that their aroused vengeance might eject her and her orphans from their humble home, and throw them upon the naked elements. What do I know? Perhaps in the different views which mothers take of this thing, from their daughters', she mused in the recesses of her thoughts, that the constancy and importunity of the young man might wear out the aversion of her daughter, and secure an asylum for her and the family, at least from the evils of poverty. Whatever were the motive, she consented to accompany the Pindalls to the horse-race.

On the appointed day, away galloped Hercules and his young companions; and behind them rolled the

family carriage, with the family of Mrs. Mason along with his mother and sister; and still behind them, the father and his neighbours brought up the rear. It was a day of huzza and jubilee, and all parties seemed to feel, that the subdued and silent spirit of the camp-meeting was out of place. The negroes, that remained behind, and those, who were allowed to attend the race, parted by singing in alternate divisions, and in their loudest and merriest, "Old Virginia never tire!" Those that remained, huzzaed for Green Mantle, and those that went for the Cedar Snag. Even the hounds felt the difference between this occasion and the other, and lifted up their long and lantern jaws, and howled to a merry key.

The place of meeting was a beautiful island-prairie, in the midst of an immeasurable extent of woods, as level, and as smooth, as a shaven and rolled walk. In fact, the "heat," a narrow turnpike of two miles, returning by an elliptical curve to the goal, had been shaven, and harrowed down. Under the shade of oaks and holly trees, covered with grape vines on the edge of this prairie, were raised galleries, or stands, about six feet above the surface, of an extent, to accommodate all the spectators, that did not choose to remain on the turf. A horse-race assembles all the beauty and youth and gaiety of the southern country, and here it is seen arrayed in all its splendor and charms. Beside a great number of small races, that would be considered to be episodes, to take down the excitement of the chief one, there were to be merry races of asses and "chunks," by persons, who volunteered, as the fools, or Merry-Andrews of the meeting. The capital race was between the famous racers, Green Mantle and Cedar Snag. The partisans of these horses, and those, who had staked high bets, wore badges, the one of green and the other of red, corresponding to that of the latter horse. The jockeys and riders were habited in close silk dresses, of these re-

spective colors, with jockey caps to match. Such was the strength of feeling and of party in the case, that probably, with the exception of Mrs. Mason's family, there were scarcely any persons, male or female, young or old, black or white, but what had a bet depending on the race. *By-bets*, as they were called, and increased bets, were continually forming, and persons of honor and grave presence for such occasions were invoked, to attest the terms, and prescribe the forms. The judges were enclosed in awful sanctity from the crowd by a railing. Long before the race was started, there had been a number of fist-fights, in which the eyes of the parties about to bet, were bunged up, that their judgments might be less diverted by visible objects from a sagacious calculation in regard to the issue of the race. Here might be seen, a in concentrated form, the readiness of the American people, to form parties, and to be stirred up by the fury of party spirit. A bully comes forward, and cries out, "The Green Mantle beats the field," adding an oath, that I choose to omit. "Here 's my fist for five dollars, and a fight for Green Mantle." "Done," says another; "ten to your five, and here 's at you." Upon the word, they fall to it, and fight, until one, or the other, is *hors du combat*. Meanwhile, at the cake and grog stands, the matter is debated by the bumpkins and boys and negroes and yellow women, with as much ardor, as by the planters themselves. At the same time, there are mock-races along the sides of the prairies, between chunks and mules, and blind horses, to the great amusement and delight of the mob around them. The while, there were negroes, and awkward boys, and men, who were aware that they had this sole chance for distinction, riding back and forward, across the field, spurring, and whipping their horses to their utmost speed, with their clothes streaming away behind them, resembling militia aids, on a muster day, or a mob retreating from an army. Here, too, is a place of display for generous and con-

siderate gallantry. The young gentlemen place gloves, hats, and dresses, as stakes for the lady of their love, to suspend upon the horse of their choice. Hercules Pindall, before the assembled crowd, brought a bonnet, pair of gloves, and a beautiful peach-blow Nankin crape dress pattern, showing the articles to Eliza Mason, and informing her that she was elected by him, as the lady of his choice, to bet either upon the Green Mantle, or the Cedar Snag, and requesting her to choose between them. At the same time, he expressed a wish, that she would fix upon Green Mantle, as, in his judgment, the winning horse. The poor girl, no doubt, wished the tall Creole in the Red Sea, and pretty decidedly told him, that she chose to be excused from betting upon either. But there was a look of such imploring humility in the countenance of this haughty and powerful young heir, accustomed to such uncontrolled authority, (some say there was even a tear in his eye,) that it may be fairly presumed, other motives, than an unwillingness to disgrace him before so many people, and displease her mother, whose eye bade her make a choice and gain the beautiful articles, decided her. She told him that if custom required her to choose, as every one about her told her it did, she should of course choose the Green Mantle, for it seemed to her, that it would, in fact, be the winning horse. What a powerful tamer of wild animals is love! This young-hero, as unmanageable by all beside, as a mule, and as *farouche*, as the French say, as a dromedary, all at once bowed his tall form, like a lily, cut by a scythe, and went away as subdued, and as sentimental, as an unfledged turtle, took his place on the turf, drew off his hat, and waved it three times over his head, crying out, "Green Mantle for ever!" in good set tones, that might have been heard on a still morning three miles.

Beside the purse, and the great bets, there were many by-bets, many beaver hats, many pairs of boots, and many fancy articles for the fair, pretty equally sus-



pended upon the two horses. After an hour's prelude, in which these matters were settled, and a dozen chunk-races run, and a goodly number of the spectators rendered as blind as Justice, by fist-fights, after the judges, too, sitting in their inviolable conclave, had settled the grave preliminaries of the weights, and every thing that appertained to the riders, and what should constitute a "balk," what "flying the truck," and what amount of advance should be adjudged decisive of victory; the jockeys brought their horses, in their appropriate trappings, to the goal. The judges issued the cry, "Clear the field!" Away scamper chunks, donkeys, mules, and negroes, and the audience is as still, as death. The horses are brought with their breasts against a line. It is astonishing, and to me it is absolutely painful, to see to what an extent these noble animals catch the enthusiasm and the excitement of the spectators. You may see it in their eye. You may see it in their bodies, painfully stretched, and prepared for the leap. You may see their trembling impatience in the spasmodic movement of all their muscles. You may see it in the swelling of their veins, and the expansion of their nostrils. The two senior judges, one on each side of the truck, withdrew the string, dropped a hat, and cried, "Go!" Away sprang the horses, and no one, who has not seen a race, can imagine the enthusiasm of the moment. Mingled cries, shouts, and I wish I was not obliged to add, oaths, in treble, tenor, and bass, in repeated bursts of acclamation, rose to the sky. "God bless the pretty soul of Green Mantle," shouted some ladies. "God bless the noble heart of Cedar Snag," shouted others, and in less time than it takes to trace these lines, the horses had reached the extremity of the ellipse and were on the return. The cunning rider of Green Mantle, immediately measuring the comparative speed of his horse, gently reined him in, and amidst deafening cries of "Cedar Snag and Carolina against all the world!" that horse had gained of the other half

a length. "Double the bet for Cedar Snag!" was the cry, and poor Eliza, whether for Hercules or the peach-blow crape, or other cause, I say not; but, clearly, she was sorry, to see Green Mantle dropping astern. But, exactly at the right time, the jockey rider of this horse gives him the rein, a cheer, and a gentle switch, and the noble horse stretches himself almost to the earth. In an instant he gains on Cedar Snag. The spectators now comprehend the movement. The dumb-founded partisans of Green Mantle throw up their hats, rend the air, and shout, "Huzza for Green Mantle and Old Virginia!" By this time the cheek of Eliza and her mother is colored with eagerness. With the cries, "Green Mantle! Cedar Snag! Virginia! Carolina!" and the names of the betting ladies, and oaths, shouts, and exclamations, until the parties are hoarse, Green Mantle advances a full length before the other to the goal.

After the shouting and enthusiasm of the partisans of Green Mantle had been allowed time to subside, came on the important business of settling the bets. The decision of the judges was clear, and irrevocable, and the bets were paid, in general, without a murmur, for it is deemed mean and unworthy, to question the decision, or to show any backwardness, either in paying, or admitting the victory to be a fair one. Here, too, we see the genuine obstinacy of American perseverance in party feeling. The trials of speed had been as fair, as could be imagined. Neither horse balked, or flew the truck, and without some palpable mistake of the horse, or the rider, this trial might be considered a fair and unvarying criterion, of what would take place in a hundred subsequent similar trials. Not so thought or said the partisans of Cedar Snag. Both parties baffled learnedly about heels, wind, and bottom, and the losers found out some mistake, either in the training, or riding of their favorite horse, which, they were confident, another trial would rectify, and thus produce a differ-

ent result. "Here," say they, "is my fist for double the bet on another trial." Well said Hudibras,

"Convince a man against his will," &c.

When Hercules came forward with the beautiful dress, to offer it to Eliza, it was done with so much visible satisfaction in her success and pleasure in offering it to her, tempered with so much humility and a manner so different from his usual proud and saucy bearing, that I am not sure, had he been a little more polished, and she a few years older, but some touch of pity and tenderness would have mingled with her acceptance. As it was, there was something so near like relenting, in the eye and manner of Eliza, that the young man went off as happy, as a prince, treasuring the kind look in his memory, and growing as proud upon it, as if he had vanquished her young heart as completely, as he had the authority of his parents. Poor young man! Before the carriage set off with Mrs. Mason for her cabin, he took occasion to renew his suit, in such earnest and assured terms, that both the mother and daughter were obliged once more to cut off his hopes, and leave him as much in despondency and dudgeon as before.

I have said nothing of the extacy of the children in the enjoyment of the race. It is of all others the show, that seizes most strongly upon the affections of their years. George, in truth, had been too deeply occupied with the examination of Hercules, and his bearing towards his sister, on the occasion to enjoy it. But for the rest, they chattered about the race all the way home, and more than once sprang up from their mattresses by night, shouting, "Green Mantle, for ever!" in their sleep.

But I find myself entering too minutely into the fortunes of this family, and I must hasten to follow the thread of events by a more general outline. For a considerable time, too, there does not appear any striking incident in their course. I may only say, that the

web of their life, the while, was of mingled yarn, as falls to the common lot of mortals. Their scheme of silk-making had not been pursued to an extent, to yield much beyond amusement; though it was completely successful, as far as it went. They labored incessantly at their occupation of making hats and bonnets. But it was not always, that George was so successful in his sales, as he had been at first. Eliza had plied her spinning-wheel, with cotton of their own raising. But the evils of poverty continued to press upon them. The love of Hercules seemed fast verging towards revenge. When he had first thought of wooing a girl, who had nothing but beauty, the parents had considered it, and he had considered it, graciousness and condescension. When it was perceived, that after the pursuit of a year, in which she had become turned of fourteen, and as beautiful as May, after the mother and daughter had received such magnificent presents, still no real progress was made towards success, and that the mother and daughter still shrunk from the alliance, the parents began to talk again of the law-suit, and the writ of ejectment. Hercules had ventured once to solicit the interference of George on the subject. But the tall and powerful young man absolutely quailed under the flashing of the eye of this poor orphan lad, and he never cared to resume the subject again. The people, generally, in the settlement, considered this as another proof of the foolish and insolent pride of the family, and passed many a bitter remark upon this fancied union of poverty and ambition. These circumstances operated, as a new and complete cause of severance between them and their neighbours, and days often passed without their speaking with a single human being, except those of their own number.

Mrs. Mason and her daughter, though they could be fine, wanted the plain and common articles of comfortable clothing. The boys were only dressed to the point of the plainest decency, while a small payment of the taxes and the doctor's bill was made, and a trifle reserv-

ed to aid in carrying on the law-suit with Mr. Pindall, whenever he should commence it. No part of these privations weighed so heavily on the spirits of George and his mother, as the necessity of such unremitting labor, imposed upon them all, as left them neither time, nor opportunity for the instruction and education of the younger children. The progress of George and Eliza had been respectable, during the life of their father, who had devoted his whole heart to this task, and who had found in them uncommon docility. But it went to the heart of Mrs. Mason, to see her younger children growing up in the woods, as ignorant, and undisciplined, "*as the wild ass's colt.*" Some more enlarged and efficient plan had occurred to the scheming mind of George a thousand times, to remedy this and various other evils of their condition. His rising thoughts and purposes spurned the idea of his vegetating his whole life in the forest. Nor could he endure the idea, that the beauty and sweetness of Eliza should never be contemplated by any other, than such, as the Pindalls and Garvins. But to go abroad, for his plans always terminated in the necessity of this, and to leave his mother and the desolate and dear ones, to whom his dying father had confided the charge, like lambs in the wilderness;—this, too, was an idea, from which he recoiled. Yet he always said to himself, that it was better to inflict on them and himself a lesser evil for the sake of a greater good; and that he ought to give them and himself the pain of leaving them, for a time, in order to fix them and himself in a position, where they could remain permanently together. His friend, the post-master of the village, had often conversed with him on the subject. He was extensively acquainted with the captains of the steam-boats, that traded on the Ohio and the Upper Mississippi. He recommended to George the place of clerk on one of these, as one, for which he thought him, as he said, peculiarly qualified, by his being uncommonly ready at

figures, and his writing a hand of remarkable beauty. Whenever George named his scruples, he resolutely, and successfully combatted them, proving to him, that he was ruining his own prospects, as well as those of his family, by remaining there in ignorance in the woods, and in pursuits, which, however industriously followed, would never procure an adequate maintenance for the family.

The idea of leaving his mother, sister, and the young children alone, and unprotected, was a gloomy one to his affectionate heart. But in turning over the subject, and taking a view of every side of it, it occurred to him, that it was a part of the duty of mental firmness, to take such measures, as were most for his advantage and theirs, even did they involve the necessity and the pain of a separation. This deep attachment to home, identified with a sense of duty, and associated with the feeling of homesickness, was the most formidable deterrent from his project. Once or twice in their evening conversations, he had ventured to hint the thought of the post-master in the family. It must be allowed, that his mother had already revolved in her own mind the possibility of such an event. She had even allowed herself to contemplate the subject with so much steadiness of vision, as to see, that it would be for his interest, and of course her duty, to consent to it. But whenever she viewed the prospect near at hand, she instinctively shrunk from it, and closed her eyes upon it, as children do upon the terrific notion of a phantom in the dark. At first, when she discovered, that he was actually thinking of leaving home, she burst into tears, and affected to see in this purpose the extinction of filial affection, and a hardness of heart, which cared not for her and the other children, and a selfishness, which regarded only his own ease and comfort, and his own vagabond projects of wandering abroad. George prudently waited until the storm of wounded affection had passed away, and meekly ex-

pressing a hope, that she would review the case, and think more favorably of it another time, he withdrew.

The next time the conversation turned upon the same subject, she viewed it more calmly, and rather in sorrow than in anger. For in truth, she had reviewed the subject, when alone, and her conscience had reproached her, for this indulgence of anger and invective, in regard to her son. She had deeply and religiously meditated her duties, had considered, that, however her own selfish affections might wish to detain him, she must be convinced, that he could do much more for the family in such pursuits as were proposed to him, than he could at home, that it would enable him to see the world, and form his character, and that she ought to struggle to triumph over the selfish considerations, that operate with so many mothers to the ruin of their children. In the second conversation which they held upon the subject, she consented to his project, and only requested time to prepare her mind for the separation.

Not many days after, George received a letter from the post-master, informing him, that a most favorable opportunity offered, for his obtaining a clerkship on board of one of the capital steam-boats. The terms were thirty dollars a month. This excellent man offered him, in consideration of the wants of the family, and the diminution of its means, in his leaving it, to advance twenty dollars, on the prospect of his wages, to expend in articles for its comfort. When he read the letter to his mother, it was, after all her good resolutions, as if an ice-bolt had gone to her heart. But she remembered her duty. She begged him and the children to retire. It was breaking open the unhealed wound, occasioned by her husband's death, and she wept, as a tribute to feeble human nature. She then prayed, and wrestled hard with God for resignation. This is the way to settle high and good purposes. When George and the children returned, she was calm, and the matter was at rest in her mind. She told him, that she not

only consented to his going, but considered it the best thing he could do.

The heart of George was relieved. It seemed to him impossible, that he could ever have forsaken the cabin, unless she had so expressed herself. He hurried to the river, saw, and thanked his friend, and was by him conducted on board the steam-boat, which was about to ascend the Ohio, and would return in a few days. The captain was pleased with him, and he was reciprocally pleased with the captain and his prospects; and the bargain was settled, and he was to be on the bank, when the boat returned, to take his place on board of her. We are swayed to our best actions in many instances by some little obliquity of motive. It must be allowed, that when George saw the noble steam-boat sweep away up the stream, she carried a portion of his heart off with her. It must be admitted, that a spice of roving disposition, inherited from his father, had its share in overcoming his reluctance to leave his mother and his home.

It is not material to relate all the conversations, which ensued, between this engagement and the time of his departure, between him and the different members of the family. He was the only one of their number, that had yet developed strength of character, and the mother and the children leaned upon him not only for support, but to resolve their doubts, and settle their purposes, and decide their plans, and sustain their mental indecision. Meanwhile, Mrs. Mason had faithfully investigated, by all the means in her power, the dangers of the river, and had heard of every accident, in all its exaggerations, that had ever happened to a steam-boat on the Mississippi, or Ohio. She learned all, that she could gather about storms, and snags, and more than all, the dreadful death of scalding by the bursting of the boiler.

Neither was George idle on his part. He had expended the advanced twenty dollars for the comfort of



the family, during his absence. Henry had come sufficiently of age, to take his place in the charge of the field, and the stewardship of their little concern of silk, and bonnet manufacture, and their other humble affairs. Many and solemn charges did he give him. The main points were reduced to writing, that they might not be forgotten, when he was gone. It was an affecting charge on both hands, and when Henry received this solemn responsibility, he gave a promise, as solemn, that he would strive faithfully to discharge its duties.

It is painful to me to remember the distress of the family, when the day of separation actually came. But, like every event borne on the wings of time, it did come. They recited their prayers for the last time together. They mingled their voices for the last time in the song of evening praise. The last evening of tender and solemn conversations passed away. The last promises of affection, remembrance, and prayer for each other were made. They parted over-night, and according to arrangement, long before the sun rose, he was gone. In the morning his place at table was empty; and the mother, and the forlorn young ones walked about, dreaming, and silent, and in stupefaction, not unlike that, which followed the death of Mr. Mason.

George was turned of eighteen, when he was thus thrown upon the world. He was dressed in the most plain and quaker-like style. A small handkerchief-bundle contained his clothes and a bible. Beneath his humble dress beat a heart, at once stout, and affectionate; and these constituted all his baggage. As I have remarked, he stole away before the family had risen in the morning, to avoid the agony of those partings, which make such a distressing part of such a separation. The deepest emotions, that are excited on such occasions, are not those, that show themselves in words or tears. When he had taken the last look of mother, sister, and brothers, and the humble cabin, which together made that dear and sacred word *home*, a word which

means more to a good mind and heart, than almost any other; in our language, he turned round, before he crossed the stile that led out of the field, and gave the dear spot the benediction, that rose to the Almighty from a pious child, an affectionate brother, and an unpolluted nature. "God keep you," said he, "and watch over your innocent slumbers. For me, though now a wanderer in the wild world, I will think of you, and the thought shall be as a talisman, to shield me against temptation. I will think of the pale face of my mother. I will think of the last look of my father. I will think of my sweet sister, and the dear young ones." I consider such reflections, as the best possible security against temptation to degradation and vice, that a young man can possess. Such thoughts must be expunged from the mind, before he can be led widely astray.

## CHAPTER VII.

Mark now, emerging from yon verdant point,  
The steam-boat gay, tracing her path in foam,  
Emitting high above the trees her smoke.

He arrived at the landing, met the steam-boat, closed the contract with the captain, and found the tender thoughts of home and parting partially erased by occupations, as different from his former pursuits, as can be imagined. Instead of the silence and seclusion of a small clearing in the forest, instead of the loved and infantine voices of his brothers, and the silver tones of his mother and sister, he is in the midst of a confusion of sounds, which could scarcely be paralleled in Babel. Above, below, around is the incessant babble of human voices. Oaths, catches of songs, reckless laughter, the prattle of a score of ladies, incessant beating upon a piano, the roaring of the furnace, the sharp and horrid hissing of the steam, the eternal pounding of the machinery, the unceasing dashing of the wheels in the water, the bustle of the fire-men, the boat-men, and the deck passengers—all this, rendered more impressive by immediate contrast with the silence of the woods, is now continually in his ears and before his eyes. Long habit has rendered these sounds familiar to me, and his ear too became, after a while, accustomed to them. But he never paused to think of such an immense machine, borne so majestically down the Mississippi forests, but what this impressive manifestation of the triumph of art over nature, struck him with a feeling of sublimity and profound respect for the powers of the human mind.

But he was the same person in the silence of his woods, and in the midst of this new and most singular form of society. In this place the repulsiveness of vice kept him as firmly in the habits of virtue, as the absence

of temptation, reflection, and right views of things had at home. He was never out of temper, but always calm and collected. With all the wayward spirits, with which he had to deal, he still possessed the incalculable advantage of retaining entire possession of himself. The consequence was such, as self-control, good judgment, right principles, and correct deportment seldom fail to produce. He grew rapidly in the esteem of the captain and crew, and almost invariably secured the good will of the passengers. Among the most dissipated people, and in the midst of lax and even corrupt societies, sobriety, good morals, good feelings, and good principles are invariably respected. Young men are apt to make ruinous mistakes upon this subject and to think that the abandoned best love those, who are most like themselves. Virtue levies every where her proper dues of homage from vice.

The accounts of the boat were kept in the most perfect order. The most contentious, dishonest, and even intemperate found his book so clear, his representations so unanswerable, his feelings so under command, and his firmness and moderation so unalterable, that no such difficulties, as disputes, occurred. By a kind of intuition he comprehended the sharpers, vagabonds, and gamblers, that, under the appearance of gentlemen, are occasionally seen in such places. He always had these people manageable, and at arms length. They were scarcely allowed a chance to go in debt beyond their means of paying, or impose upon the unsuspecting passengers, without a warning from him, sufficient to enlighten them without in any way committing himself. This calmness of manner, this discriminating judgment, exercised with suavity and good feeling, soon obtained for him the same influence among the rough people on deck, as he possessed in the cabin. Of course, when the passengers were discharged at New-Orleans, the number of his friends might almost be said to equal that of the passengers.

Many of the circumstances of these new and strange modes of life were positively painful, and that in no small degree. There were others, that so long as they retained the charm of novelty, were delightful. He never wearied in contemplating the noble river. When he sat on deck in his night-watch, and every thing on board the boat, that had life was still, but the fire-men—it was a spectacle, that filled his whole mind, to see the great and powerful vehicle, by the light of the moon, borne down with such rapidity and force, between the dim and misty outlines of the forest, on either hand. By day the verdant banks, the ever varying scenery, the ambrosial fragrance of the willow-skirted shores, the cries of the water-fowls, wheeling their courses over-head, were circumstances of delightful contemplation to a musing mind, like his. The variety of characters on board, the different opinions, tempers, and passions, developed by the incidents and conversations on the trip, were a constant study to him. Books, too, were accessible. The boat itself carried a considerable library. Most of the passengers had a select assortment of books, and I hardly need add of such a character, that every moment of his time, that was not necessarily devoted to the duties of his employment, and the occasions of food and sleep, was occupied either with reading, or the intense study of the ever open book of human life before him.

The crowded and bustling city of New-Orleans presented a new page of the great volume of human nature. He saw himself amidst a moving mass of life, of people of all nations, languages, and manners. When borne along with the tide, and seeing among the hundreds, that surrounded him, not an individual who knew him, or cared for him, or was connected with him in any other way, than as being a common heir of mortality, then it was, that a sense of loneliness and home-sickness pressed upon him. Then it was, that the comparison of this world of strangers, that seemed in his eye al-

most like foes, forced upon him a contrast of it with that dear little world, which was engraven, like the lines of a map, upon his heart—the little square enclosure cut out of the forest—the lonely ones dragging themselves with painful remembrances to their task, and thinking affectionately of him. Then it was, that his heart cried out in the earnest petition of the Scriptures, “*Oh! that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away,*” and be with them.

In the steam-boat, amidst the passengers playing their cards, and resorting to all the customary expedients to kill time, or in the city, when the crowd was rushing to the theatre on the Sabbath evening, he remained still the same. He uniformly spent his Sabbaths as nearly according to his former habits, as his present pursuits would admit. He had his bible. Still more; he had his assigned hour and the privacy of his birth, where, on his knees before God, all the restrained feelings of his affectionate and filial heart were poured forth to the Almighty. Then before him he called up to remembrance his mother’s necessities, and the determination, that no guilty fear of the charge of meanness should tempt him to squander any part of his wages. Here he determined, that profusion and extravagance should seduce him in vain from his purpose to carry home to her all that he could save from expenditures that were indispensable.

He had another object in view from the first. His cherished purpose was to become a captain of a steam-boat. His intention was to qualify himself thoroughly for that post. With this view he spent much of his time on deck, gleaning information concerning the river from experienced boatmen. He studied the currents, the *boils*, and eddies, the marks of shallow and deep water, the indications for steering in the night, and all the hundred complicated physical aspects of this sweeping and dangerous stream. The captain and pilot were pleased to impart to him all necessary instruction, touching the

art and mystery of steersmanship and the management of the boat. He made the powers and capabilities of the engine a thorough study. His eye saw all, and he ceased not until he comprehended all, that could be learned on board of the boat. So well had he profited by these lessons, that on his return trip, he found himself invited to take his watch at steering along with the pilot. He managed his watch in such a way, as to show how rapidly he had profited by his lessons. Time with him, as it ought to be with every intelligent and virtuous young man, was seen in its true value. He perceived, that it was all the estate to which he was born, and he determined, that not a fragment of this precious patrimony should be lost. When not occupied with one kind of duties, he immediately sped to another. He was reading, writing, gathering information about the country, or in some way engaged in steady reference to his future views in life. He was absent on this trip two months. Good sons, in whose bosoms the heart throbs naturally under the left breast, can tell how he felt, as the boat was at last rounding to the Iron Banks. The passengers, observing the changes from crimson to paleness in his cheek, jested with him about some sweet-heart there. But George's was a still profounder and holier feeling, too deep even to endure a jest. The boat would lie by for repairs one day. The only requisite, which he sought in the horse that was to carry him out to the settlement, was fleetness. For once he was a hard rider, and drove his horse to the top of his speed.

I can see the tears of tenderness rush to his eye; I can see the heaving of his bosom, as he came in view of the clearing. He sprang over the stile, and in the next moment he was in the arms of his mother. My dear young reader, such a meeting is worth more, than all the pleasures of dissipation and vice for an eternity. Besides God, religion, and the hope of indulging friendship and these delightful feelings in eternity, there is nothing worth living for on the earth, but the love springing

from such relations. All on this earth is a dream but virtuous affection and the charities of home. Riches, power, distinction, are all cold externals. This thing is home-felt. It reaches the heart. How proud and how happy felt Mrs. Mason to fold this dear son to her maternal bosom! How innocent were the caresses of the charming Eliza! How boisterous the joy of the young children! How proud was Henry to give an account of his stewardship. It was a full hour, before the books, toys, and dresses, the fruit and rarities, brought from the far city were even contemplated. The pure in heart only know the pleasures of real and deep enjoyment; and such high satisfactions as these, are only to be bought by absence and privation. It was long before the mother and sister remarked how much he had improved in appearance, now, that he was plainly, but respectably dressed. Besides smaller articles, he had brought some books, a box of paints, and drawing paper, a present for his sister from a friend, whom he had acquired on his passage, and to his mother forty dollars.

To follow his fortunes through the three succeeding years would be little more, than a repetition of similar incidents with those I have just related. All the while he continued in the same employment, running between L. and New Orleans eight months in the year; and between that place and P. on the Ohio, during the sultry months. A character, genuinely good, needs no artificial blazoning. George was already a great man in the estimation of the settlement. All accounts of him tended to one point. All agreed, that he was an excellent young man. The planters agreed, that he had the "gab," like a lawyer, and Hercules Pindall quailed in view of his manly form and flashing eye. The threat of ejection was hushed, and his pursuit of Eliza was distant and respectful. The family exercised the most rigid and careful economy; but by the aid of their ground, and the assistance derived from the wages of George, and the proceeds of the industry of



the children, of which he had every chance to dispose in New Orleans, they were not only comfortable, but were laying by a little fund. Eliza was appointed school-mistress, and applied herself with assiduous industry to the instruction of the children, and many of the silent hours of the night she spent in reading, and in close application to her studies to inform herself. The people of the settlement in general looked to them as people, the aspect of whose fortune was brightening. Almost every return trip of the boat allowed George some little time to spend with them. For fear he would not be allowed sufficient time to go out to the cabin, they always made it a point to be on the bank, at the time when his boat was expected. There are many mothers, who can imagine the impatience, with which they used to gaze on the point below, round which his boat first hove in sight. There are many who can imagine the meeting which took place between the parties when he did actually arrive. There are many who can imagine the pangs of separation, when these short meetings terminated. I need only add, that, to soften them as much as possible, he kept a detailed journal of all that he saw, enjoyed, suffered, and felt—a history of events, thoughts, and actions. The mother, between every passage, had conned this journal a dozen times. Each of the children was familiar with all the words and phrases in it; and in their own essays at letter writing all the thoughts of brother George became matters of classical quoting and illustration. Even Hercules Pindall and Jethro Garvin, now, that they had become somewhat tamed and modest in their deportment, were occasionally admitted. Even they had heard George's journal. The crafty young men pretended to admire the style and the manner of it prodigiously. In this way, through the honest pride and affection of the mother, they more than once brought about their real object, which was to read a few moments in the eye of Eliza, instead of hearing the journal of her brother.

With respect to my hero, I need only remark, that his progress in gaining the confidence of his captain, and the general regard of all, with whom he became associated, was steady and unvarying. After the first trip, his wages, in consequence of his uniting the duties of clerk and pilot, were increased to forty-five dollars a month. While at New Orleans in 1822, he received by mail the offer of the command of a beautiful new steam-boat, which had just arrived at L. with an ample salary and perquisites. It was the point to which he had been constantly reaching, and was of course not to be refused. He would have found it difficult, to obtain a release from his present captain, had it not been, that his boat was condemned, as no longer seaworthy. When he had settled with George, he gave him demonstrations of affectionate friendship at parting, equally honorable to both.

The ill-fated steam-boat Tennessee was just starting at this juncture for the Ohio, and with the multitude of passengers in that boat, he took his passage. I was at New-Orleans, and on the *levée*, when she swept round for display in the river, fired her gun, and with her deck and cabin crowded with passengers, moved off amidst the shouts, acclamations, and boisterous gaiety of those on board, answered by waving of hats, handkerchiefs, and all the usual demonstrations on the shore. Never was a more beautiful winter morning seen in that climate, so fruitful in beautiful winter mornings. Little could any one have foreseen, or conjectured the terrible catastrophe, that was but a few days behind such demonstrations and such a jubilee of joy. Every one in that region has heard, that in a dark, stormy, and sleety night, in one of the most furious cypress bends above Natchez, she struck a snag, and burst in her bow. Among the numerous passengers were many women and children. What a scene of horror to these unfortunate beings! The midnight cry reached them, while asleep in their births. The water poured in upon them

and all was wailing, confusion, and despair. Some exhibited, in this terrible emergency, that presence of mind, and that noble forgetfulness of self, that belong to superior natures. Others manifested the extremes of cowardice and selfishness united. On such occasions it is, that we see the dignity and the degradation of human nature brought together, and grouped in the strongest contrast. Every one has heard, that there was one person paddling about the sinking boat in a skiff; in which he might easily have saved a dozen persons—keeping at a distance, however, to allow no one to get on board. He was calling, the while, most earnestly upon some of the drowning passengers, to throw into his skiff his saddlebags, in which was a paltry sum of dollars!

Amidst the screaming, agony, and distraction of the scene, George remained calm and self-possessed. To some he imparted counsel respecting the best mode of getting on shore without a boat, on a timber or a plank. In many cases he saved the parties by repressing resolutions resulting from the counsels of distraction. When his presence was no longer useful on board the sinking boat, he swam on shore behind a periogue, which was so overloaded as to upset. It had already arrived near the shore, and he saved a mother and her child from those that were on board. When the boat first came to the shore, he assisted to pass her cable round a tree. Had his directions been followed, the boat had been saved. But other counsels prevailed, and it was determined to loose the cable from the first tree, to get a fast round one that was deemed more favorable for bringing the boat to shore. The cable once loosed from the first tree, the boat whirled off into the stream with such power, that they were unable to make fast to another. Her fate was soon consummated. The engineer conducted like a patriot, or a martyr. Universally beloved on board, there were friends, who, in escaping themselves, thought of him, and besought him

to save himself in the periogue, which saved so many of the passengers. His answer was noble. "There is no chance for her if I quit the engine," and he kept the wheels in motion, until they were choked with water, and was drowned in the engine-room, struggling to the last moment to perform his duty. The dwellers on the Mississippi ought to raise a statue to his memory.

When all, that remained on board, in the darkness and in the storm, and in the whirling wrath of that mighty and sweeping river, were plunged into its waves, it needs little effort of imagination, to conceive what a scene it must have been. The mother was whirled under the current, among the sawyers, with her babe clinging to her neck; and between thirty and forty perished. How many our hero saved, we cannot tell. There were other generous spirits, beside him, exerting themselves to the utmost to save all in their power. He was sometimes swimming behind a canoe full of people, and paddling it to the shore. Relinquishing the canoe to some person who could not swim, he was next seen dragging some rescued victim ashore by his hair. One poor wretch, who had floated a considerable distance down stream, had caught upon a sawyer, and amidst the general uproar, had been crying for help a long time in vain. George heard him, and carried a canoe to his relief, and brought him safely ashore, after he was so far exhausted by his exertions and sufferings, as to be unable to speak, when brought to the land. It cannot be doubted, but he suffered much himself from cold, exposure, fatigue, and exertion in swimming against the current. But he enjoyed the most exquisite satisfaction, that a good mind can experience on the earth, meriting the gratitude, and receiving the blessings of many, saved by his exertions, when they were *ready to perish*.

Having done every thing, that benevolence and humanity could dictate for the people that had been saved from the foundered boat, and having bestowed his tribute of unavailing sorrow upon the many that perished, not-

withstanding all exertions, he set off on his way back to Natchez. Thence he took passage on the first boat to L. The pilot engaged for that boat was found, on trial, to be inadequate to the duties, which he had assumed. George was engaged in his place, which once more put him on pay. This was a circumstance, which remembrance of his mother's condition forbade him ever to forget. This boat could not stop at the Iron Banks. From a certain point, indeed, where they took in wood, he had a chance to send a billet to his mother, informing her of his fortunes, and that he should be back in a fortnight from that day, requesting her at that time to be at the Iron Banks with the children.

I hope there are many of my youthful readers who can enter into the feelings of this good young man, as the boat thundered by the Iron Banks, without stopping, and how he strained his eyes to discern the path over the hill, that led out to the settlement, and with what gloomy and disappointed feelings he saw that, and the bluff, and the forests, and all the landmarks, so dear to memory, disappear in the distance.

He had a short and pleasant trip to L. and a safe return in his own large, new, and handsome boat. Madam Mason and the family were on the banks of the river, some hours before the time advertised for his return. The mother and the four children were seated under a spreading oak a little below the summit, on the eastern declivity of the Iron Banks, eagerly looking up the bend, affording a reach of vision of about five miles, to a point where the further view of the river was obstructed by the woods of the opposite shore. Every one has perceived, that in a state of extreme impatience a minute lengthens to an hour. The children complained of delay. Even the equanimity of the mother was vanquished, and she fidgeted, and wondered what detained the boat. Half a dozen times the children had imagined the column of smoke above the trees, and had cried, clapping their hands, "There she

comes!" By and by, there is no mistake, and a column of smoke is really seen; and the children begin to caper for joy. In a few moments afterwards the white bow is just seen shooting from behind the trees. In a minute afterwards a noble steam-boat 'stands confessed,' with her colors and pennons flying, and an immense cylindrical column of pitchy smoke streaming away behind, and bearing down upon them, under a movement of twelve miles an hour. The mother's heart still flutters in suspense, for it may not be her son's boat. In another instant, that doubt is dispelled. A burst of white smoke shoots from the bow, and the children admire at the length of time, before her cannon is heard. Then they are sure it is the boat, they expect. By this time, there are a hundred people on the bank, watching the approach of the new steam-boat. I could almost envy the allowable pride and enthusiasm of the mother and the son, as the noble boat rounded to the shore, and as the latter descried her and the children under the tree, and as they distinguished him standing on the bow-deck. In another moment the son was ashore, and folded in his mother's arms. Every one of the family was plainly, but respectably dressed. The hundred spectators, who, in such cases, are uniformly seen lounging on the shore, to witness the landing of a steam-boat, shrunk back from the affecting spectacle and the tender greetings of this interesting group. Hercules Pindall and Jethro Garvin, and two or three other young creoles, eyed the scene at a distance, and askance, with mingled feelings of love, hate, and envy, exhibiting faces, not unlike those usually assigned by painters to Judas Iscariot.

The interest of this spectacle was strong evidence, that the amount of deference, respect, and homage in common minds is chiefly regulated by external appearance. The family was now considered a rising one, and made as much show, as the wealthiest among them. Three years before, in the same place, the same family

would have appeared either objects of indifference or derision. To the dwellers on the shores of the Mississippi and the Ohio, there are but few personages, entitled to higher and more heart-felt homage than the captains of steam-boats. The coming of a steam-boat breaks the silence of the forest. It brings the population and the fashions and the news and the show of a city among them. It purchases their wood, milk, meats, eggs, and vegetables, and it sells them groceries, finery, and whiskey. For a half hour they exult in the bustle and traffic and news of a city. It is intensely enjoyed for the time, for they are aware, that the pleasure is transitory. The cannon is fired. The boat is under way, and in ten minutes nothing interrupts the silence of the forest again, but the screaming of the jays.

In the short interview, which George had with his mother, entirely new arrangements were made for the future. He had taken a handsome house, in a large and thriving village near L. which had the advantage of schools, of a higher class, and respectable society, and here he proposed to place his mother, and to take the family up to their residence on his return from New-Orleans. She was to sell the establishment there for whatever it would bring, and to be on the bank, ready to embark, when the boat should return. It need not be doubted, that all this arrangement was entirely satisfactory to her, on its own merits, even had it not been made by one, who, in her eye, was little apt to make wrong decisions.

Mr. Pindall purchased the claim to the cabin and clearing, giving something more than half its fair value. Hercules had his last interview with Eliza. The avowal of his continued and ill requited devotion was rather noted for its strength, than its delicacy. Having perused it in black and white, I find, however, that it was substantially the same sort of harangue, that has been said and sung in all languages, in all ages, and by all people. His movements wanted something of grace,

and his genuflections were not managed upon system, it is true. But what the affair wanted in polish, it gained in energy. His tears soiled no handkerchief, and he told her, that she might go farther, and fare worse. In conclusion he assured her, he hoped, she would not forget him altogether; and for himself, he promised to forget her, as soon, as he could. "For," said he, "I would have had you if I could. But, by gosh, I will now marry Debby Sweetser, off hand."

The voyage to New-Orleans was marked by no accident, and the boat hove in sight of the Iron Banks within two hours, after the assigned time for her return. The family had made every preparation for removal, and were on the bank, awaiting the return of the boat. A great many respectable passengers came up in her. The family meeting took place a little removed from the public gaze, and when the first transports were over, George led his mother and sister, followed by three fine, brown, healthy-looking creole boys, into the cabin. Mrs. Mason was richly dressed in black, and though pale and care-worn had a face and figure, in which dignity and interest were united in an uncommon degree. The younger children were clad in new suits of blue, and looked a little shy and awkward at first, especially when they caught the first glimpse of the splendid cabin. It was seventy feet in length, supported by pilasters, and ornamented with mirrors. At one end was a considerable library in an open alcove, and at the other a circular arcade, beyond which was the bar, making a great display of liquors, refreshments of all kinds, and fruits, among which were oranges, pine apples, and bananas. The finishings were fine to gaudiness, and the floor was carpeted with Venetian carpeting. The curtains in front of the births were of yellow silk, drawn up with tassels and festoons. Folding doors led to the ladies' cabin, in which some one was playing the piano. The furnishings and the doors were of mahogany. Such were the splendor and luxu-



ry, that had already made their way into the Mississippi forests.

Eliza Mason, now fully formed and turned of eighteen, was exquisitely beautiful. Her complexion had received a slight tinge of olive from the climate. Seclusion, solitude, and the deeply remembered loss of her father had imparted to her countenance a look of pensive meditation, which threw an inexpressible charm over it. She had hitherto been as rustic in her dress, as a shepherdess. On the present occasion her mother had taken great pains to have her plainly, but fashionably dressed. Hercules sighed and Jethro sighed most pastorally, and the young planters gazed upon her, as she went on board the boat, as on a passing vision.

It may be imagined, that the young children had all their eyes in operation, when just coming from their humble cabin to a scene of so much gaudiness of display. The flame-colored curtaining, the splendid furniture, all the gay accompaniments, the handsomely dressed ladies and gentlemen, opened upon them at once. As they approached a large mirror, they were ready to retreat in dismay from the sight of three handsome, stiff boys in blue, apparently just like themselves, and who advanced upon them, as they advanced. Their sister perceived them just ready to cry out in amazement, and held up her finger, which was a preconcerted signal, when they were to be silent. Their hearts palpitated a little, at first, in view of the black machinery, pounding its cranks and whirling its wheels, with such prodigious force. The scoty faces of the savage-looking and bearded firemen, the glowing of the furnace fires, the hissing of the steam, the croaking of the escape steam, the trembling and recoil of the boat under so much power, and the dashing of the water from the buckets, are all, naturally, circumstances of astonishment and terror to children, until they are used to them. But they had come on board with a feeling,

that all this tremendous power was under the beneficent control of brother George, and this association soon rendered this otherwise formidable spectacle, this clatter and power, an object of pride rather than terror.

The captain led his mother, and the children into the ladies' cabin. Eliza walked through the long cabin full of gentlemen, as timid as a fawn, and as beautiful as the red-bird of her own woods. She had as yet seen nothing to love, but her mother and brothers, and imagined, that there was not another fine young man in the world, but brother George. As she passed, she could not but be sensible of that almost inaudible, yet clear and sensibly felt expression of admiration, which accompanied her to the cabin door, and it brought the crimson of confusion into her cheek. We may remark, in passing, that one of the passengers, his name was Leonard, was an uncommonly fine young man, whose expressive countenance was rendered more interesting by a flush of hectic floridness in his cheek, and a touch of debility in his eye, who was returning from a winter's excursion to Havanna, where he had been for his health, to his home in the state of Maine. It is said, that love, and poetry, and madness, and various other endowments, and inflictions, walk in darkness, like pestilence, and come, no one can tell how nor whence. Certain it is, that Mr. Leonard was returning to the North comparatively cured of the hectic weakness at his breast, only to suffer from a passing glance of this rural damsel, as she went by to her cabin, an infliction upon the heart, as deep, if not as difficult to cure, as that in the breast, from which he had just escaped.

Mrs. Mason had never been in a steam-boat before. She felt the common feminine terrors in the case. But she soon began to feel assured, by perceiving how manageable, as well as swift, was this mighty movement against the current of the Mississippi. A certain confidence and pride, dear to the maternal heart, began to be felt in the reflection, that her good son, hardly yet ar-

rived at majority, had the command of this powerful machinery, that pushed on this floating city. Deference and attention are naturally grateful to all, who have been once accustomed to them. They are peculiarly so to the female heart, and more than all, after a long deprivation of them. None but those who have seen, have imagined the sumptuousness of a dinner on board a first-rate Mississippi steam-boat. At dinner, Mrs. Mason was led by her son to the head of the table, and saw ranged below her eighty well-dressed and genteel-looking people. She was once more seated at a table, where every thing was in order, and where she was respectfully and assiduously helped, and where all the observances of society were understood and practised. Her heart expanded, at what she saw, and the pleasant recollections of other days. The simplicity and poverty of a backwoods life had not been the offensive features of that condition to her. But she was perfectly willing to resign to the disciples of Rousseau their admiration of savage and demi-savage life. It is true, she watched her beautiful daughter with an anxious and painful solicitude, lest her inexperience in the forms of society should show itself in awkwardness and rusticity. It is true, too, that her daughter had seen but little for a long period of that important time, when her mind was unfolding from childhood to maturity, except woods, Indians, and the coarse young men in the settlement. But it is also true, that she had read some of the smuggled novels of her mother, that she had thought a great deal, and that she had had abundant leisure to study the innocent novel of her own heart. It is equally true, that there are some young ladies, who seem to be instinctively endowed with native grace and tact, to comprehend the proprieties of deportment, and Miss Eliza knew a great many things, with perfect clearness, which no one could have expected from her condition and advantages. For instance, amidst all the clatter, bustle, and novelty of this dinner, and a posi-

tion, which it may be supposed, was not a little embarrassing to her, she had not failed to discover, and had she chosen she could have told a confidant as much, that a young man sat opposite her with the prettiest velvet softness and smoothness of manner and voice imaginable, and that he had evidently wished to anticipate her wants, &c. She could have admitted, that there was another fine-looking young man in the world, beside her brother. She would not, probably, have allowed to that confidant, or even to her own conscience, what was nevertheless a fact, that her eye had caught a glance of his, and read, and interpreted the expression and import of that glance.

Young ladies of a certain age and character, it must be confessed, are much more adroit at comprehending and practising the decencies and proprieties of deportment, than young men. Nature, if she has fair play, knows better, what she is about, than art with all her vile instructions in grimace and affectation. Be it as it may, the natural grace, sensibility, and elegance of this untaught wood-nymph did the business for poor Mr. Leonard,—for it was he who sat opposite her,—more effectually than if she had been trained to murder at a fashionable boarding-school. To prove in fact, *a priori*, as they say, that Eliza Mason knew a thing or two, in the way of management, it is only necessary to relate one fact, that anticipating, that her three young brothers brought with devouring appetites from the simple diet of their cabin to such a sumptuous dinner, might create unpleasant notice, by their voraciousness, she had given them their fill of sweet cake and raisins three times in the forenoon. Her mother had aimed at the same result by giving them an emphatic lecture, in the privacy of the cabin, touching the manner, in which they must behave themselves at table. I will not say, which management had the most efficacy upon the deportment of the boys. After all, Eliza cast an anxious eye upon them, as they sat below her at table, and saw with in-

finite satisfaction, that their total want of appetite gave their sylvan rusticity an air of well-bred indifference and fastidiousness.

I can imagine few conditions more favorable to enjoyment, than this trip of Mrs. Mason to her new residence on the Ohio. A steam-boat under such circumstances, as the present, is always delightful at first. In most instances it completely fills the imagination, and wears as well as most pleasant earthly things. It is true, time and repetition dispel at least the charm of novelty. But the first two days of a steam-boat trip in the spring, under favorable circumstances, are even yet after such long use to them, delightful to me. Every thing conspired to render this a charming voyage to Mrs. Mason. The season was the pleasantest in the year, that is to say, Spring, and that season is nowhere more delightful, than on the shores of the Ohio. An uncommon proportion of the passengers were of the most respectable class. The boat was in fine order, The river was full to the brim. The vernal gales were breathing their sweetest influences from the south. The verdure of the forests, as far as they could see from the boat, had that depth and grandeur which are peculiar to the lower course of the Ohio and the Mississippi. With the exception of two or three solitary bluffs on the Mississippi, the children had but once seen hills, since they had lived in the country. The first bluffs that are seen on ascending the Ohio, are singularly magnificent and grand. There is deep water, as every one, accustomed to the scenery, knows, directly on the verge of the shore, at the foot of these bluffs. They have a nobleness of rounding, and a whimsical variety of summits, which I want words to describe. The boat sweeps along at their base, and early in the afternoon is completely in the shade. Oftentimes, these bluffs have an aspect, as if they would roll down upon the boat, and dam up the beautiful river. I have never seen spring more charming, and I have no more pleasant associa-

tions with the mere physical enjoyment of existence than in sitting on the guard in mild weather in the spring, after the sun has sunk behind these noble hills. At this season, on pleasant evenings, there is an ineffable softness and mildness in the temperature, and a bland and balmy fragrance in the atmosphere. To my eye there is not a more beautiful shrub in nature than that of the red-bud in full blossom. It is a perfect tuft of beautiful peach-blossom flowers, and they show on the precipitous declivities of these bluffs, strung one above another, and diffused on every side through the forest, so that, taken into the eye along with the splendid white flowers of the dog-wood, the wilderness at this season may literally be said to blossom. A hundred romantic stories, told by the boatmen, about the "house of nature," "the cave in rock," and the residences of robbers, and their exploits of blood, and attacks of the Indians in former days, concur to give impression and interest to this scenery.

Madam Mason was this evening sitting on the guards of the boat, as it was gliding swiftly along, in the shade of the lofty and flowering bluffs, on the north bank of the Ohio. She sat in a cushioned settee with her two younger children on her right hand, and Eliza and Henry on her left. The scene was full of sublimity and repose, and the shrubs, the flowers, the cliffs, the trees, the sky, and the columns of smoke spouted up from the tubes of the furnace, were beautifully painted in the water, as the boat seemed to fly over the painting, and yet to transport it, as it went. The children expressed their untrained admiration, by interjections; the mother by the calm and pleasing silence of contemplation, and communion with the Author of this beautiful nature. Half way up the cliffs, the birds were singing their "vesper hymns," undisturbed by the uproar of the passing boat.

After the sun no longer gilded the springing verdure on the summit of the bluffs, and as the repose and beau-

ty of the scene, along with the increasing dusk of twilight, gave confidence to the timidity of incipient love, young Mr. Leonard so contrived it, that he was introduced by the captain to Mrs. Mason. Of course, he took a seat between the settee and the guards. He soon found where Mrs. Mason was born. It was next discovered, that they were both Yankees; thirdly, that their parents were acquainted; fourthly, that they were related within the degree of twentieth cousins; fifthly, that he had taken a strong liking to the captain all the way from New Orleans. From these circumstances of affinity, and as he was, moreover, a remarkably good-looking young man, gentle, mild, quiet, and sweet spoken, handsomely dressed, and of elegant manners, and as he so warmly liked George, it was natural, that Mrs. Mason should take a motherly interest in him. When he painted the mental anguish it had cost him, to tear himself away from a widowed mother at home, of whom he was the only child, for an absence so long, as a six months' excursion to a distant and strange island, and the agony of his mother's farewell, at a parting under such just grounds of apprehension, that she should never see him again in the flesh, it is natural, that Mrs. Mason, should remember certain passages in her own life, and that her eyes should fill at the recollection. Nor could Eliza, as she reached her mother her handkerchief, forbear to notice the kindling suffusion in the still delicate cheek of Mr. Leonard. This interesting young man was a subject of contemplation ten times more dangerous to such a girl as Eliza, while relating the incidents of such a parting, with a countenance and form indicative of convalescence only partially established, than he would have been in the perfect glow of the most robust health.

Two or three such "sentimental" evenings followed in succession, and astronomy, and the starry heavens, and the spirits that dwell in those twinkling orbs, and com-

munion of spirit by moon-light, and domestic happiness, and green hills, and sheltered valleys, and many other pretty and tender talks, that fall in with the feelings of a certain age, drawing from the speakers a kind of half sigh after them, never forgetting, towards the close, the delectableness of "Platonic friendship," made the general burden of these conversations. However the other young men on board envied young Leonard, it soon came to be a matter of common understanding, that he was the person, whose participation in these evening sittings was the most acceptable. Nor had Eliza failed to receive many witty compliments in the ladies' cabin, from the young ladies, upon her conquest. Nor had she failed to be informed of the immense wealth of young Leonard, his fine education, winning manners, &c. Nor did she fail to receive representations, darkened by the tints of envy, of the faithlessness of such rich young men, and the multitudes of bonnets that were set for them, thrown in by way of damper to her rising hopes, if any she had. This charming girl knew a good many things, that she did not tell every body, and had an eye, that flashed both wit and good nature. She heard all, understood all, and smiled, and parried these representations, affirming, not exactly according to sincerity, that she had no interest in the question of any one's constancy. The truth is, even they believed much more in his being in earnest, than they wished to believe.

"Sentimental evenings" are wonderful squanderers of time, and before they thought of such a thing, the captain announced, that they would arrive at L. the next day, and of course, that his mother would leave the boat for their new residence, early in the morning. No time was to be lost for certain purposes of Mr. Leonard, and he found an opportunity to say things to Eliza in private, that called both for courage and recollection, on her part, to answer properly. For my part,



I am at a loss to account for her self-possession in this case. But true it is, that she answered certain questions as much to the point, as if she had been trained for years to indite the answers, and on the whole, I have been led to believe, that she had, in some measure, prepared herself to hear such conversations, and to answer such questions, as were now proposed to her. The whole of this conversation has not been reported to me. But it is said, that she reminded him, that he was educated, and that she was not; that he was reputed rich, and that she was poor; and that she could never think, were there no other impediments in the way of what he proposed, of being in any way instrumental in inducing such a mother, as he described his to be, to reproach him with marrying unequally and unworthily. In saying all this, it is true, she was much flurried, and seemed for a moment to labor under difficulty of breathing. But as the children soon made light of the first terrors of the machinery of the boat, so this timid girl began to recover breath and self-possession. In fact, he interrupted her, and proved to her, that she was finely educated, that she was rich in charms, and rich in endowments, and rich in native tact, and rich in every thing, which he cared any thing about; and that the very thing, that made his mother good and dear to him, was, that she always thought just as he did, and that he was sure to a demonstration, that she would view this matter, as he did, and love her as well—and a great many more last words, which took up a full hour in the saying. It is generally believed, that she threw no more discouragement and denial into her remarks and answers, than just enough to operate, according to her understanding of the doctrine of mind and heart, as the most effectual means to fix him in his present purposes, and that, though she never confessed as much to any one, notwithstanding all that she had heard about the infidelity of such persons, and the little

reliance to be placed upon their promises, she did most implicitly believe, that she should both hear from, and see him again.

On arriving at her place, Mrs. Mason found herself comfortably situated in a good house, and in a large and populous village. The children were forthwith put to school. Eliza, amply supplied with books, and with a powerful mind to apply to them, studied, as one who had not been informed to no purpose, that Mr. Leonard was an accomplished scholar. Late, as it was, in the day, to begin, she took lessons in music, and to purpose too. I do not say, that I understand all the motives, that led her to apply herself so closely, as to make the roses in her cheek give place to the lilies. I am clear, that an intelligent and good young girl, who aspires to become a companion to such a husband as Mr. Leonard, ought to study, that the husband may not find, on intimate acquaintance after marriage, a total disparity in the mind of his wife. This incessant occupation occasioned her to hear many witty remarks from the gentlemen of the village about "concealment" and a "worm in the bud," &c. and the young ladies, when they passed her chamber, and saw her at her book, looked significantly at each other, and pronounced her a "would-be blue stocking." Some of them at length divined the secret, and though she seemed to understand nothing of their insinuations, whenever Mr. Leonard's name and town were mischievously mentioned, certain fugitive tell-tale roses in her cheek said more than met the ear. But her mother's family ranked, on the whole, with the best in the village, and was, in many respects, as eligibly situated as it could expect to be in a place of that size. In the course of the summer, George made two trips to New Orleans, on both of which he was uncommonly fortunate, and in that time he became half owner of his steam-boat, and was well understood to be a young man, who was making money, and the

knowing ones pointed him out, as one who knew what he was about, and would be sure to be rich. Among the ladies he bore the name of the "handsome captain." But he sustained the severe temptation of their unequivocal favor, as he had sustained his other temptations, with the same simple habits of modesty and sobriety.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Consenting love

Sheds his own rosy garlands on their heads.

To those who wish to know, without a trial, what is the character of a residence in a village, Zimmerman "on Solitude," will be a profitable book. If there are peculiar advantages appended to such a residence, there are also peculiar disadvantages. The stinted range of society, the eager and garrulous inquisitiveness, the concentrated bitterness of all the bad passions, that are put in operation in such a place, are great evils. There are those, who think it easy to live in a village, without mingling with its society, or suffering from its inconveniences. Such will find themselves mistaken, when they make the experiment. They will find, that while we are among men, we must, and ought to mix with them, to respect them, consult their tastes and opinions, and treat with deference even their prejudices. Such views and feelings will soften the evils and asperities of such a sojourn. Mrs. Mason's family had talked this matter over, and had agreed to make an effort to be pleased with every thing, and to treat every one respectfully, but to engage in none of their feuds, and meddle in none of their petty broils and divisions. With these principles the family could not always avoid mixing with the society of the place, though not much in the habit of intimate intercourse with it. There were many pleasant and intelligent people in it; and in the summer time especially, when its reputed healthfulness, and a mineral spring in it, made it a place of resort from abroad, and from the lower country. Among the parties which Mrs. Mason, George, and Eliza, attended, this summer, I will give a very general sketch of the character and the circumstances of one, with the double

purpose of explaining, how they passed their time in this village, and of showing, that even in a village of the third class, in the back-woods of the West, there are all the elements of excitement, of ambition, and interest, that there are in a *levée*, or a fashionable *soirée*.

The reader is probably aware, that the more remote and secluded a village is, and the more reasons there are, that it should possess the ease, freedom, and simplicity of rural and village manners, the more scrupulously rigid are its fashionable people in the observance of all the rules, that their information has gleaned, as belonging to the punctilio of fashion. For instance, what is called the first circle in this village is more severe in its punctilio, than in the city of C. ; and fashion there is more strict, than at Washington ; and at Washington, than in Paris. Thus, if the hour is 2 in Paris, it will be 3 in Washington, half past 3 in the next place, 4 in the village, and so down.

In the large tea-party, that was assembled this evening, the silence at first was ominously awful ; and when that was broken, there was much more said about fashion, and much clearer indications, by the different speakers, that it was a thing understood in the extent of all its mysteries here, than we usually witness among people of the *haut ton* at Saratoga Springs. There were certainly a great many good-looking young men and ladies, among whom were the half a dozen belles of the vicinity, whose several claims to superiority of beauty had not yet been adjusted. There were magnificently broad Leghorn hats, on which waved a whole flower-garden ; there were a goodly number of dandy coats ; and, on the whole, a party, who, if they had been simple, easy, unaffected, and unambitious, might have passed, not only a pleasant, but an improving evening together. But odious affectation and vanity, and the *would-be* estimation of being acquainted with the great world, and distinguished in it, spoiled all.

Two or three of the persons here, who gave the tone

to the fashions of this village, had been distinguished abroad, and as far off as Washington. During the past winter, they had been at New Orleans. They had been present at what are there very significantly termed, "behaving parties." In these, as the name imports, the persons present are supposed to be on their good behaviour. At first a word only is spoken, under the breath, and the chief part of the amusement consists in looking intently round the apartments, and occasionally giving one foot, as it lies across the other, a gentle shake, and then drawing a deep sigh, which echoes through the circle. Meantime by looking at the foot, you may count, by its gentle and regular movement, the pulsations of the party, and the state of his health and his freedom from fever may be ascertained.

But in this case, after tea, and before the candles were brought in, there was a kind of interregnum, or democratic rising against etiquette. One person, who seemed to have been collecting courage for the emergency, pronounced, by a strong effort, a broken and kind of oracular sentence, and instantly looked round, somewhat alarmed, to see what he had done. Hardened by his example, forthwith another ventured a part of a sentence, and then a third, at intervals, like the minute guns at a funeral. In a few minutes, it became a general discharge of small arms. The restrained propensity of the "gab" burst forth, and there was a confusion of voices, male and female, which has generally been compared to that at Babel; but which, in my ear, much more resembles the chattering of a full flock of blackbirds, that have just rested upon a tree.

George, the handsome captain, was a general favorite, and his attention was sought by each of the rival beauties, who strove to gain it by praising the appearance of his sister, which they had just settled by themselves, in private, to be nothing extraordinary, or in any way worthy of the fuss made about it. Eliza, too, was surrounded by beaux, who were teasing her about her

fine looks, and Mr. Leonard, and her allowing concealment to feed on her damask cheek, &c. A very conspicuous character in this kind of witty conversation was a small man, much dressed, who had been originally bred to some kind of mechanical employment in New-England, but had been, for some years past, employed, very much to his own individual emolument, however it may have been to his patients, in administering pills in the lower country. His language was a most curious and amusing compound of yankee dialect, west country phrase, and murdered, pedantic, medical terms. He was administering, in his way, copious doses of flattery to Eliza. Another distinguished personage was a limb of the law, and candidate for Congress; and he made love to her by technicals from the law, as barbarous and ludicrous as ancient law-latin.

But the central planet of attraction was a young married lady, from New Orleans, who had preceded her husband on a tour to the north, and by an accident, which had happened to the steam-boat, had been dropped from the upper spheres of fashion into this village, to await the passing of the next steam-boat. Her husband was rich, and she was reputed at once an oracle, a blue-stocking, a beauty, and a wit. It is certain, that she was called "a sweet woman, a most delightful woman, a heavenly woman, a most accomplished woman," &c. in common language, in New Orleans. Finding herself cast among, what she considered the canaille of this village, her pride suggested to her to remain profoundly silent. But vanity and garrulity carried it against pride. She soon talked incessantly, used snatches of bad French, and repeated, for the tenth time, exactly all that she had said, or heard said, on good authority, during the past winter, about the theatres, French and English, the actors and the plays, the balls and the dancers, Scott and Cooper, and various other unfortunate wights of authors. Up went one to the clouds, with one puff, and away went another to the shades, with a counter-

puff; and all this very much to the annoyance of an old maid in the village, who read all the novels in the circulating library, and had been accustomed to do up the literary decisions of this village for the people. She felt, this evening, like a sceptreless monarch, to no purpose. The great lady from New Orleans clearly carried the authority and the conversation, and the other had nothing but the cold comfort of listening.

A very considerable circle was gathered round a young French planter from Louisiana, who sojourned in this village from the same cause with the preceding personage. He was handsome, flippant, volatile, vain, and extremely desirous of playing the amiable; and was delighted with the circle of ruddy cheeks, that were gathered round him by the reputation of his wealth and amiability. His name was "Polycarp Boisvert," and the ladies were immensely civil to him, under the name of "Pulliker Bosware." He seemed to think it the proper English of his name, and said, in great glee, "By gar! his Hinglees name was more sweet, as his French one." To the few, who really saw through the fact, the most amusing personage of the whole party was a stout young attorney from Louisiana, who personated a German duke, who was actually travelling in that vicinity. He had taken up a clear conception of his part, and sustained it extremely well, answering with great gravity, in broken English, all the questions that were proposed to him, touching Germany; and supporting with due humility all the homage which was paid to him as duke.

There was much laughter, and much wit, real or attempted, criticism, scanning of character, discussion of politics and great men, and the chances of candidates, and books, and religion. To be short. Call the thing a *soirée*, and suppose the scene at Washington or London, and I am confident, it was precisely the same kind of *Olla podrida*, the same kind of mental entertainment, a little differently garnished. This village had its little



and great world, its looking up and looking down, its envious and envied, its rival belles, and ambitious doctors and lawyers; not forgetting the editor of the village newspaper, nor a bitter feud between Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian ministers, which should gather the chief harvest of the people into his society. As I have said before, there is no good reason why one place should call itself the city, *par eminence*, and think that politeness will die with it. In this little village, and in this evening party, there was as much scope for love, hate, envy, revenge, ambition, hope, and fear, as there was about the throne of Napoleon, in his most flourishing days. This party, with some little allowance for variety, in consequence of variety of guests, may serve, as a sample of all that preceded, and all that followed.

From August until October, the steam-boat was laid up, and George spent all this happy interval with his mother. As they were continually receiving advances from the people to form acquaintances, it could hardly fail to raise painful impressions, in regard to human nature, by bringing up the remembrance, how people had shrunk away from them in the day of their adversity. But let the youthful reader remember, that while our acceptableness and standing with society depend much upon appearance and circumstances of that kind, our real respectability, and, we may add, capacity for enjoyment, are in our own keeping, and depend upon ourselves. A family, like this, in which the good will of the world is met by corresponding good will, but which does not at all depend upon that for enjoyment, is fitted for any condition, solitude or society, poverty or riches.

Before I take leave of George, I wish to satisfy the curiosity of the reader, touching another important point of his fortune. I count nothing on keeping him in suspense. Our hero is now married, and is considered a young man of the most rising fortunes of any in the vicinity of his residence. He has already been solicited to stand a poll, as candidate for congress, and has been

seriously advised to open a lawyer's office, and get a touch of the law, for by the unhappy consent of the country, all great officers must enter the temple of Fame through that vestibule. Even in the circumstances, that determined him in the choice of his wife, he evinced his kind feelings, his nobleness of mind, and his peculiar character. He was returning, in the following spring, from New-Orleans, and was passing by a small town in Indiana, not far above the mouth of the Wabash, with his cabin crowded with passengers; among whom were many fastidious ladies, who affected great delicacy. Every birth had been already taken. The ladies' cabin had been extended, so as to take in a number of the gentlemen's births, by drawing a curtain across the apartment. While the boat stopped, just above this village, to take in wood, a couple of young ladies came down the bank, and requested a passage, stating, that they were on their way to Wheeling, in Virginia. They were tall, slender, flaxen-haired girls, dressed plainly in crape, and in deep mourning, and, as those who saw, declared, with countenances of uncommon interest and beauty. Such was the report of them that was made by the gentlemen among the ladies. As it happened, when they made this application, the captain was busy on deck, and knew nothing of it. In his absence, the clerk acted for him. He came into the cabin, stated the circumstances of the application, and asked the ladies, if any arrangements could be made for their admission, adding, that they seemed to be exceedingly eager to obtain a passage at any rate, and that they appeared to be in trouble, for that he had observed them in tears, when he expressed to them his doubts, about their being able to get a place in the ladies' cabin. A gentleman from the shore, at the same time, informed, that they were orphan mourners, and young ladies of uncommon interest, and that, although he knew little about them, he was anxious that they should be accommodated with a place. The gen-

tlemen, generally, seemed to feel as he did, and proposed to the ladies, to allow them to come in, if it were only to have a place to spread a mattrass on the floor.

Sorry I am to state, that the circumstance of their being lovely, orphans, mourners, and in tears, did not appear at all to make in their favor with the ladies. They almost unanimously affirmed, that they were crowded beyond bearing already; and the fair conclave began to exercise their inventive talents, in discussing them, and their case, with very little ceremony, and not with an excess of mercy either. Particularly, a young lady with a pug nose, a scornful toss of the head, and an uncommonly fine dress, declared, that for her part, she wanted no weeping, die-away young ladies, with their weeds on, she dared to say, only because they thought they rendered them lovely and interesting; and that she was sufficiently dull, and melancholy already. Another young lady said, "pretty they might be, but they were the most awkward and unfashionable things in the world, that their dowdy clothes were made like nothing she had ever seen, and that she wondered, where the gentlemen could find any thing interesting in such people." Others said, "if they were poor, as seemed to be generally supposed, let them go on deck with the other poor people." In short, the ladies decided, by a great majority, against admitting them into the cabin.

The clerk went out, and reported this decision to the young applicants on the bank. They were observed to weep, and converse together a moment, and then they came to the clerk and told him, that circumstances were imperious with them, and that they wished to come on board, even if they went on deck. He informed them, that they could take a passage there, if they chose, and begged them to make their election, for that the boat was just ready to start. The elder gave her hand to the younger, and led her on board, and the plank was taken in, and the boat got under way. The clerk showed them on deck, where there

were two hundred passengers, among whom were many families with females of reputable character, but evidently altogether ill assorted with theirs. As soon as they reached the top of the ladder, and took a survey of the company above, they turned as pale as death, and recoiled from mounting any higher, than the first roof, On a vacant space, just above the companion ladder, the fair and shrinking girls sat down on chairs, which the clerk handed them. They drew down their veils, and sat with their faces towards each other under the full sun, and as motionless as statues.

Before night many of the gentlemen had felt a desire to walk upon deck, and, in so doing, had scrutinized the countenances of the inourners through their veils. If any of the cabin-ladies dreaded, as is possible, the interest they might create on board, they could not have taken a more effectual method, to create it in the highest degree, than by causing them to be excluded from the cabin. A strong feeling of sympathy was excited in their favor. Their beauty, loveliness, and apparent grief started every generous and romantic feeling, and instantly put in operation the creative powers of imagination, to eke out a romance for them. Every gentleman on board had been to examine their names on the clerk's book. It was a warm and pleasant Sabbath morning in spring, when the woods were in blossom, the air inspired languor, and the day forbade cards and the usual modes of killing time; and the men were tormented with ennui; and this was just the kind of subject to relieve them, by curiosity, from the oppressive burden of their time. I know not how it happened, that so strong and immediate an interest was created in the strangers' favor. But so it was. It seemed to be generally made out, that they were of good family, but poor, and had seen better days, and had now but just so much money, as would carry them on their way, and not enough, to allow them to remain and board, until another boat should come along. A benevolent gentleman,

on this presumption, started a subscription in their favor, and it was immediately filled up, to the extent to pay their passage in the cabin. The clerk, whose wife was on board, and who occupied one of the state cabins, was persuaded to relinquish it in their favor, making arrangements with the pilot to occupy his cabin.

All these circumstances were told to the captain, whose imagination and feelings were awakened in a moment by the story. He was requested to carry the mourners the amount of the subscription, and inform them of the arrangements in their favor, and invite them to descend to the cabin. The captain's bosom was thus made bare for the infliction of a wound. His heart misgave him, as he saw these interesting figures, arm in arm, in a dress of deep mourning, which indicated all the ingenious devices of proud and inventive poverty, to make it decent. The thought of his mother and sister, immediately after the death of his father, rushed upon him. Under such circumstances he executed his commission. The elder of the mourners drew up her veil, as the captain addressed her, and showed a face so lovely, pale, and subdued by sorrow, as could not fail to awaken pity, and with that a deeper feeling in a heart constituted like his. She appeared to be touched and affected with such an unexpected expression of sympathy by people, who could not be supposed to know any thing about them. She said in reply, that she wished only to explain so much of their circumstances, as to prove to their benefactors, that their kindness had not been bestowed either upon the unworthy, or the ungrateful. She wished them to be informed, that they thankfully accepted, what was thus generously offered, and that they were orphans, who had lost both father and mother during the past winter; that they had resided on the Wabash, that they were returning to the residence of their grandfather in Pennsylvania, and that their friends might easily divine, without the humiliation of any acknowledgment on their

part, why they were so anxious to get on, as to be willing to take a passage on deck, rather than not be forwarded at that time; but that they might explain one circumstance of the urgency of their case, that they expected a relative at C. who would be prepared to attend them on their journey, and defray the expenses of it, if they were there within a given period; and that, she hoped, these circumstances would be a sufficient apology for the seeming impropriety of their being found on deck.

It was but a few moments, that they conversed with George, and in those few moments, they had, indeed, shown themselves intelligent, beyond what could have been expected, in their case; but otherwise had said nothing, but what any well informed girls would have said in the same case. But the clearness and simplicity of expression, the music of her tones of voice, the mingled dignity, humility, and pensiveness of the countenance and manner of the elder of the girls, (her name was Jane,) left an indelible impression upon his heart. He returned, and related the result of his commission to the almoners, and naturally conveyed something of the coloring of his own imagination and feelings into the story. In fact, in conveying their thanks and their apology, he had unconsciously given a most vivid encomium of the orphans, and the ladies rallied him on the spot, as heart-smitten by these all-conquering "deckers," as they were called.

There was on board one of those ancient maidens, who, by the help of a little ivory in front, false curls, a little touch of the mineral pigments, and sweet-scented washes, hold time at bay. But the depth of their experience proves, against all appearances, and all efforts to the contrary, that they have heard, seen, and reflected much, *that days have spoken to them, and years taught them wisdom.* This lady knew every body, and especially every body's genealogy. The marriages of any consequence, that had been contracted, or were

now ripening within three hundred miles, were all well known to her, with all the *whys* and *wherefores*, and how the thing began, proceeded, and terminated. She knew all the beauties in the Mississippi Valley, especially those of any fame, and the exact amount of the expectation of every heir and heiress. In short, she was a living newspaper tablet, an immense slate, on which all the passing news was written out, to be effaced, when a new and more important edition of news was to be circulated. With less data, than will enable an algebraist to make out an equation, she was able to tell every thing about every body. Withal, she possessed one of the essential requisites of poetry, invention, and such a happy talent at guessing, that she seldom failed to make out a story, that corresponded pretty accurately with the fact.

When the little romance of the orphans began to circulate in the boat, with the help of the facts that the captain had communicated, she instantly divined them from alpha to omega. "Why, la!" said she, "sure enough; it is wonderful, I should not have known them at sight; they are the Misses Belden. Their father, I knew him well, was Michael Belden, only child of the famous old miser Belden of Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. The old hunk owns half the county. Michael, the father of these girls, fell in love with a pretty Yankee tailoress, that was hired to make clothes in the family, and besides was fool enough to marry her. You know, I came from Lancaster, and I have met both the parties often. The only apology for Michael, in the case, was, that this poor girl was as beautiful, as wise, and as good, as an angel. As soon as the father was apprized of it, he made the house too warm for them at once. He drove them out, bag and baggage. Neither of the parties had a sou. The father was compelled to give his son a few hundred dollars, by way of compensation for having lived with him, after he was twenty-one. But, after all, they were so destitute,

that some of their Dutch relatives made them up a purse, by way of charity and for the credit of the name. So the two lovers gathered their all together, and moved off to this Western country, and settled on the edge of a beech-forest, by a beautiful prairie, on the Wabash. I have been told, that it was a perfect love-and-a-cottage life, that they led. They had many children. But the country was sickly, and all the children died, but these pretty girls. Last winter both the parents died of typhus fever, and left these orphans nothing but a log-house and prairie field, that they tried in vain to sell. A friend wrote about their case to the relatives of the old miserly grandfather. The story spread, and they were represented as more destitute than they were. A very considerable breeze was raised in the case, and such was the indignation against the old man, that they talked of putting a guardian over him. Terror at the idea of the possibility of taking his estate out of his hands, caused him so far to open his purse, as to send for them, to come on, and live with him. I dare warrant, that he sent money on a calculation, that they should take passage on deck. For the old fellow himself, it is well understood, that he intends all his immense property shall go to a rich relative in the old country."

It was found, by comparing her story with what others knew, that the ancient chronicler had spelled out the narrative nearly according to the fact. In any point of view, the more George saw them, the deeper were his impressions. Their manners, their astonishing acquisitions, considering where they had been reared, their loveliness, their being disinherited orphans, even their humiliation in being driven on deck, concurred to raise a spell round his imagination, in their favor. I cannot say, whether they slept well the following night, but it is said, that the captain was more nervous and wakeful than usual, often returning wrong answers to those who asked him questions. The first



half of the night, he voluntarily consented to take the helm on deck, though out of his turn. As it was a clear and lovely night, and as the boat skimmed prosperously up the beautiful wave of the Ohio, he chose to spend the other half of the night on the bow, watching the stars, and, no doubt, occupied with a multitude of pleasant thoughts, associated with the study of astronomy.

To be brief. He had only two days, in which he could expect to have the lovely orphans as passengers. He had a special inclination to say something private and particular to them. But every body on board seemed to have the same object, and they appeared solicitous to shrink, as much as possible, from notice and observation. Fifty times he thought his courage up to the point of telling Miss Jane, how she had made him feel. Fifty times he found his duties, as captain, leading him to the part of the boat, where they sat. But still, when he came up to them, his speech clung to the roof of his mouth. At length, he walked resolutely up to a chair, near where they sat, breathed hard three or four times, and inly repeated his adage. Upon that, he soon began to be so particular in his conversation, as to give Miss Jane the hue of high health, however pale she had been a moment before. But, let not the reader imagine, that he was abrupt, or awkward, in ordering his speech. It was well studied, and he was much in earnest. He was, as I have attempted to show the reader, a fine young man, in the best and highest sense of the word. But, independently of that, he was a fine fellow, in the sense in which the ladies understand the term; that is to say, he was remarkably handsome, a fine, upright, square figure, with a bright eye, and the nobility of nature marked upon his manners, without a touch of any thing awkward or vulgar about him. Besides, those who have powers and keen sensibilities themselves, instinctively ken these attributes in others; and it is a fact, that Miss Jane had seen all this in George, and

had imagined more than she had seen. In truth, she had heard from the ancient maiden, aforesaid, all about him. That good soul was an icicle, as touched any hopes for herself, and desponded of ever managing such a concern, for her own particular benefit. But still she divined, how others felt, and had a kind of reflected enjoyment in managing such an affair for them. This kind of agency had something of the pleasure, and none of the penalties and dangers of love-making. So she told Miss Jane, what she had inflicted upon the captain, and from that ran on in the most wonderful eulogium of him, painting him, in every relation, thrice more a miracle, pattern, and mirror of chivalry, generosity, and saintship, than he or any other person ever was; and she added, "My dear, you have him fast in your chains. Only manage your power right."

So Miss Jane was somewhat prepared for the declaration in question; and she heard George to the end, for he fairly made love to her, and offered himself in form. After all the usual preliminaries of blushing, and sighing, &c. she told him, in the customary style, "how much obliged she was for his good opinion, &c.; but she thought him altogether too sudden in coming to such a decisive resolution, and the acquaintance too short to warrant it, and that she was in no condition to make any definite reply to such a proposition." But, when she saw his countenance fall very much, on receiving such a damping reply, she told him, that "although she could not warrant it, she could not doubt, but her grandfather would be happy to see him at his house." Upon this hint other conversation ensued, until it was understood, that George was to make an excursion over the mountains, to the county of Lancaster, when his boat should be laid up, this summer. George made this promise of a journey something in the form of a threat, and Miss Jane answered in a tone of good natured defiance, that she was sure sister Sarah would be peased to see him, to which sister Sarah very graciously assented.

When they arrived at C., George gave himself particular interest in all that related to sending them on their journey from that place in the stage. An ancient Dutch relative of their grandfather's was there, and waiting to accompany them. George assured them, that he had much rather it had been himself, who should perform that office; and as the Dutchman aforesaid was a little, old, time-dried, and hard-hearted fellow, as little promising in the inner, as the outer man, I have no doubt, that Miss Jane, in her heart, would have wished the same thing. The next day after their arrival, George saw them safely deposited in the stage with the little Dutchman; and the stage drove off, with very little parting remark between them. But it is supposed, that this speech had been made in private, and that Miss Jane had said some words of comfort, which, interpreted by a lover's glossary, had a considerable degree of explicitness.

Be that as it may, it was understood that George was to marry Miss Jane Belden. His mother approved his disinterested spirit; for it was generally remarked by the young ladies, that George had been caught by a pretty face, and nothing else. His disinterestedness, as some called it, and his folly, as others had it, was the more famous, for it was matter of common parlance, that he could have married an heiress, in the vicinity, if he would. On the first day of the following August, George was on his way over the mountains. Sometimes it seemed to him a wild-goose chase in reflection upon his object. But he comforted and assured himself in these misgivings, by taking the flattering unction of disinterestedness and sympathy to his soul. He was set down from the stage at a tavern, on the declivity of a noble hill, from which a broad sweep of a valley was to be seen. In the view there were mountains, rivers, noble country-houses, villages, and two large towns, and a dozen spires, and much beautiful still scenery near at hand. In the distance, the grand, turreted man-

sion of Mr. Belden displayed itself, above the summits of orchards and forest trees. George inquired, in a faltering voice, of the landlord, about the young ladies; whether they had arrived safely; how they were; and whether they were kindly received. The landlord was a Dutchman himself, though he spoke good English. George began to tremble; for he saw by the tones and manner of the host, that the young persons, about whom he asked, were persons of very different estimation in his mind, in regard to their wealth and importance, from what they had been in his own. He immediately put himself in an attitude of respectful oratory, and began to relate, how they arrived, and were received.

“Two months ago,” said he, “they got out of the stage at my house; and sweet girls they were, and admired by every body. They asked me about their grandfather, and you would have thought Miss Jane would have fainted, as she inquired about him. I could see how their dear hearts trembled, for fear he would not receive them kindly. I gave them all the comfort I could. But heaven help them! There was but little comfort in the case. It was thought he had invited them from the back country, only out of fear, and that he hated them for making him afraid. At any rate, he set about making a will, to leave every thing he had to his uncle, Vandergraff, in Germany.

“He received the dear girls, but not as grand children. He dressed them only as servant girls, and wanted them to run about after the cows and sheep, and would fain have put them to loading hay and wheat. It may be, they did not manage to suit him; for he was said to be particularly hard with them, and people began to stir more briskly for them than before, now they had seen them. Every body was indignant, that such lovely orphans should be disinherited, and that all his riches should go to a person beyond the seas, that nobody cared any thing about. The old talk of a guardianship was renewed, and stronger than ever. The people

were as one man about it. Every body signed a petition to the orphan's court, setting forth that the old man was in his dotage, and requesting that a guardian might be put over him. The affair got wind, and reached him at the same time with an order of notice, to attend the said court, and show cause, if any he had, why the prayer of the petition should not be granted. He took the best step in the world to prove his sanity, by making a will immediately, in the most authentic form, giving every thing to his grand daughters, as soon as he died—which happened in a few days ; for he was so prodigiously frightened, at the idea of having the disposal of his property taken out of his hands, that he took immediately to his bed, and died in a week."

Alas ! poor George. Away went his sympathy and disinterestedness to the winds. The tables were sadly turned against him. He had been jolted over the mountains, night and day ; and he had soothed his aching bones, and his misgiving mind, with the idea of kindly rescuing two pensive, and ill-treated, and disinherited girls from a brute of a grandfather. He had imagined their grateful tears. He had fancied the impression, that his manifest freedom from all mercenary motives would make upon such a heart as that of Miss Jane. Indeed, he well remembered, that she had dwelt upon that aspect of his offer, when he made it. What a complete reverse of the case offered itself ! It had now an appearance, as if he had come with views diametrically opposite. The paternal mansion was full in view, and of an aspect of opulence and grandeur to petrify him. The family, too, was precisely the cap of the climax of the ancient German grandees in the country. The landlord affected to speak of the defunct with familiarity, and to call him by hard names ; but his tones and his looks manifested, that the wealth and grandeur of the family, in his eye, were not unlike the sanctity and importance of the Grand Lama to a devout disciple. He evidently felt, that though the man had

died, his houses and farms, his name and influence, had revived in the young ladies, representatives of the first Dutch family in the country. He took advantage of the astounded silence of George, to run over the catalogue of the estates and mansions, left to the young heiresses; and to state, that they were already looked upon as game for fortune-hunters, all the way to Philadelphia. To mend the matter, he added, that they would have good advisers, and would not be likely to be caught easily; but that he hoped, Miss Jane would lend a favorable ear to the suit of the young gentleman who represented them in Congress, and that he rather believed, she had given him encouragement, that it would be received graciously. Miss Sarah, too, it was generally believed, was spoken for. At any rate, they were matches for the first and best in the land.

George pretended to hearken to a great deal more, and to some indirect inquiries, what his business was with them. But before the conclusion of the speech of his host, his thoughts were a thousand leagues off. His first reflection was, that as affairs stood, his chance was not worth a farthing; and that he should only show himself a fool, to expect Jane to be the same, now that their relative standing was so completely reversed. He had seen enough of the hardening influence of the world, not to expect that she would catch it like the rest. He could hardly forbear a bitter smile at the thought of his fancied condescension and disinterestedness. His pride, his courage, and his hopes, were all sinking together. But, said he, recurring to his old maxim, "Don't let us give up the ship." Faint heart never won fair lady. Such were my feelings, and so free from all mercenary mixture. True, she may never know that. What care I? I am a free man, and the son of a free man. My noble father was worth a dozen Dutchmen, however rich. I am his son, and I have that here," (laying his hand on his bosom,) "that is as proud as the best of them. Suicide is against my prin-

ciples. My heart may swell awhile with pride and love. But I will try to survive it all. I took the pretty mourning witch into my cabin, when I was the patron, and her fortunes kicked the beam. It was her humility and her weepers, that stole my heart away. Now let her marry the Congress man, and dismiss the steam-boat captain, if she will. For my part, I think I had best whistle back, and not go near her to get the flat. Her head is turned, no doubt, with her change of fortune. Why such a mercenary and proud woman would have made a bad wife."

So thought George with himself. In short, the young man had goaded himself up to a passion of jealousy, by the creations of his own brain, and he was trying to lay in a stock of courage and submission, to stand him back, by crying, "Sour grapes!" But he mentally added, "Suppose I were just to go, and show myself as proud as they, and let them see, with what a careless face I can say, Good bye." This view of the matter determined him to go and try his fortune. Thus ruminating with himself, in a most uncomfortable brown study, he walked down the hill. Just to prove to himself that he was indifferent how matters were like to go, he hummed a tune, and began to affect that apparent indifference, that might have imposed upon another. But when he opened the gate, and walked up the grand avenue, his pulse were one hundred and twenty to the minute. When he seized the bell-knob—for it was one of your grand houses—his heart was in his shoes. A servant in livery came to the door. George observed, that "he wished to call on the young ladies, if they were at home, and at leisure."

"Please to send up your name," said the servant; "the ladies only receive particular company at present."

"The Congress man, I suppose," thought George. By mere accident he happened to have a card in his pocket. So he wrote on it, that, passing that way, he

wished to send his respects, &c. The servant took up his name, and during his absence, George was convinced, that the metaphysicians had reason, who said, that, "the only true measure of time is the succession of ideas." In a minute, as clocks measure time, and in a day by the other measure, the sweet and low voice of Miss Jane was heard, asking, "Is it possible, that Mr. Mason could think of passing without visiting us?" He had whipped himself up to such an idea of being a lover rejected from mercenary motives, and to such an effort of right and allowable pride and resentment in the case, that he could not instantly let himself down to her affectionate and heart-felt tones. Her countenance and manner banished all such thoughts in a moment. But they could not in a moment banish all traces of the storm from his brow. He went in, and took the seat that was placed for him, between the two sisters. Before the visible cloud had passed away from his face, Jane had drawn from him a partial avowal of his recent thoughts, touching the premises. The cloud was immediately transferred from his brow to hers. He had never seen any expression in her countenance, but what was as mild as the sweet South. But there was now considerable flashing in her eye, and a somewhat stern remark, that, "she should always distrust the man, who could think so meanly of her, as to suppose, that her views of any one would be changed by her fortunes," adding, that "a jealous lover would be sure to make a bad husband." Her feelings were evidently aroused, and there had like to have been a counter scene of heroics. But Sarah, who saw how the wind was setting, and the paleness on the cheek of the agitated parties, took the hand of George, and said with great self-composure, "Never mind, Mr. Mason, you and I have had no quarrel in this matter. I will see what can be done for you, if my sister continues in a passion." This well timed interlude enabled the parties to recover their good temper, and it was manifest, that they were too



much in earnest, to dare torment one another, and George had soon an entire confidence, that she had the same heart, as an heiress, that she had, as an orphan.

A few words more will bring the history of the family down to the present time. Jane returned over the mountains, as Mrs. Mason, and brought her sister with her. Mr. Leonard, too, contrary to all the sinister predictions of the young ladies in the village, came back a fortnight sooner, than Eliza Mason expected him, and they were married. The whole happy party made an autumnal trip to the Iron Banks. Pompey, the converted slave, according to George's promise, was purchased from his master, and set free. But his grateful heart bound him to Mrs. Mason and her family by the new and delightful tenure of gratitude. I do not say, that these people are all perfectly happy. But they love one another, and are the helpers of each other's joy. Though they have the other evils of mortality to struggle with, they have no fear of poverty, and as they have benevolent and generous hearts, affluence has descended upon them, as a refreshing shower, spreading happiness and abundance all around them.

My dear youthful reader, whenever you are in any way tempted to discouragement, remember the old maxim, that "the darkest time in the night is just before day." Exert yourself in hope. Be industrious, and while innocent and diligent, respect yourself, and hold yourself inferior to no one. Trust in God. Never despond, and assume the genuine American motto, "Don't give up the ship."

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