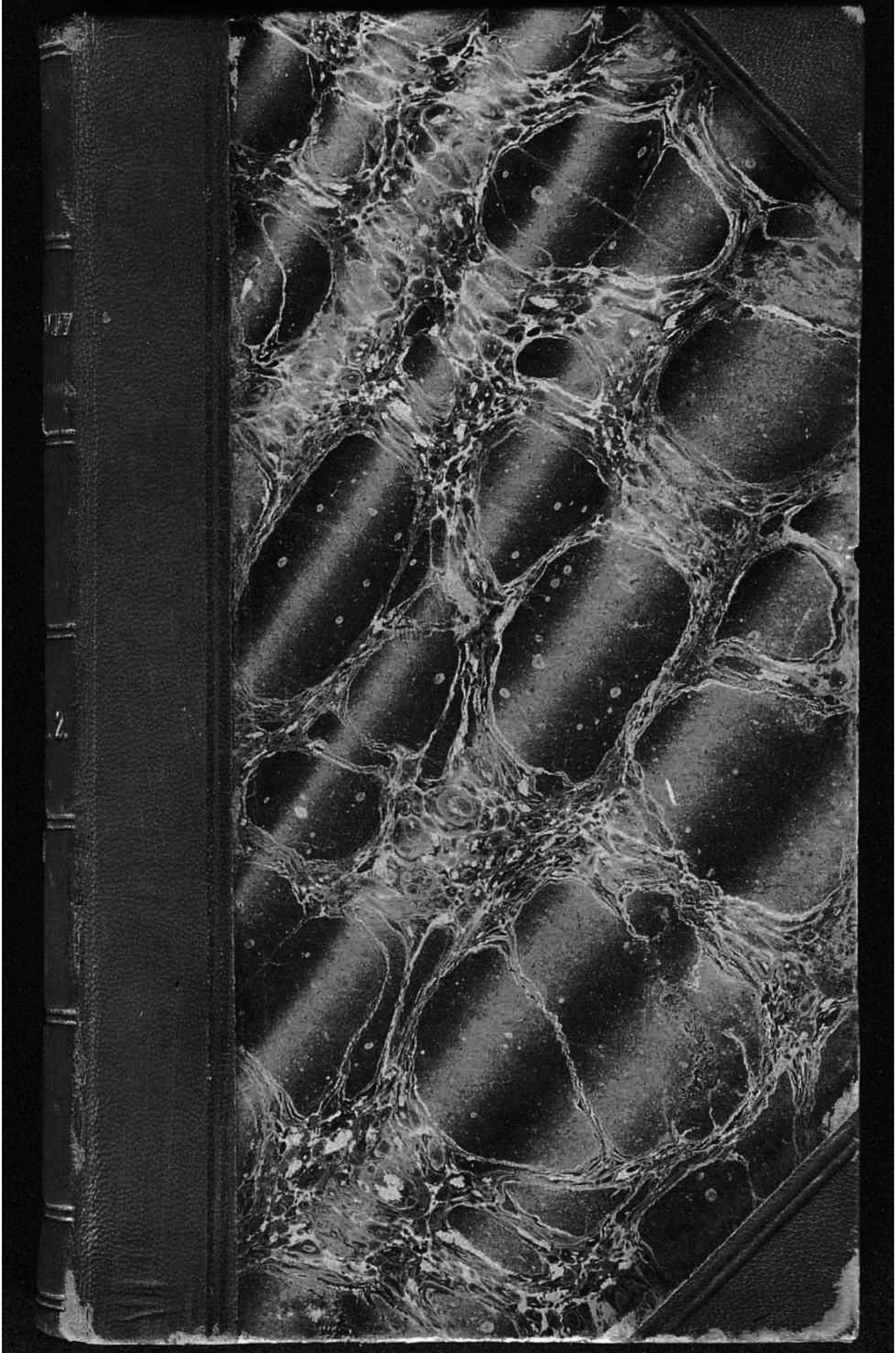


SAMUEL M. WILSON

# KENTUCKY.

A TALE.

BY JAMES HALL.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# KENTUCKY.

## CHAP. I.

AT the close of a fine autumn day, a solitary traveller found himself bewildered among the labyrinths of the forest, near the shores of the Ohio. He had taken his departure early in the morning from the cabin of a hunter, to whose hospitality he had been indebted for his last night's lodging and supper—if that deserves the name of hospitality, which consisted of little more than a permission to spread his blanket, and eat his provisions, by the woodsman's fire: we call it so, because it was granted in a spirit of kindness. When he parted from his host in

the morning, he learned that the settlement to which he was destined was fifty miles distant, and he spurred onward, in the confident hope of reaching his journey's end ere the setting in of night. Before the day was half spent, he began to suspect that he had taken the wrong path; but unwilling to retrace his steps, he still pushed on, in the expectation of meeting with some human habitation, from which he could take a new departure.

It was, as we have before remarked, forty years ago, and this country was still a wilderness. The Indian tribes had been driven to the opposite shore of the Ohio, but continued to revisit their ancient hunting-grounds, sometimes in peace, but oftener impelled to war by their insatiable appetite for plunder and revenge. Small colonies were thinly scattered throughout the whole of this region, maintaining themselves by constant

constant watchfulness and courage, and every here and there a *station*—a rude block-house, surrounded with palisades, afforded shelter to the traveller, and refuge, in time of danger, to all within its reach. Between these settlements, extensive tracts remained uninhabited and pathless, blooming in all the native luxuriance and savage grace which had captivated the heart of their earliest admirer among the whites, the fearless and enterprising Boon.

On the same evening, Mr. Timothy Jenkins, the sole proprietor, occupant, and commander, of "Jenkins' Station," might be seen alternately plying his axe, with a skill and vigour of which a backwoodsman alone is master, and shouldering huge logs of wood, under the burthen of which, any other sinews than such as were accustomed to the labour, would have been rent asunder. It was evident that captain Jenkins was prepa-

ring for a vigorous defence of his garrison, against an enemy of no mean importance, and was determined to guard against the inroads of a frost, by building a log-heap in his fire-place. That the latter was of no ordinary dimensions, might have been readily inferred from the quantity of fuel required to fill it; for Timothy, like a true Kentuckian, never considered his fire made, until the hearth was stowed full of the largest logs which his herculean limbs enabled him to carry. An unpractised observer might have supposed that he was laying in a supply of fuel for the winter, when the hospitable landlord was only performing a daily labour. And here it is necessary to inform those who have not enjoyed the luxury of reposing in a cabin, that the fire-place is generally about eight feet in width, and four or five in depth, so as to contain conveniently about a quarter of a cord of wood, which quantity produces

duces a cheerful warmth, the more necessary, as the doors are left standing open.

Having performed this duty, captain Jenkins threw down his axe, with the air of one greatly relieved by having gotten fairly through a disagreeable job; and relaxing into the ordinary indolence of manner, from which the momentary stimulus of necessary exertion had aroused him, sauntered round his enclosure, with one of his hard bony hands stuffed in either pocket. Perceiving that an aperture had been made in the outworks by the removal of one or two of his pickets, which had rotted off, and fallen to the ground, he proceeded to close the breach.—"They are of no use, no how," said the captain; "the Indians have not paid me a visit these eighteen months, and may never come back. It seems right hard to be at the trouble of barricading them out, when they don't

try to get in; but, howsever," he continued, as he raised the prostrate timbers, and propped them in their places, "I'll put the *wooden sogers* on post again, if it's only for a show; they keep the hogs and wild *varments* out; and if an *inemy* should come, it will *sort o'* puzzle 'em to find out the weak place." Having thus compromised with his indolence, he stopped the breach, in such a manner as have deceived the eye of a hasty observer, and returned to the house, hastened by the sound of loud talking and mirth which proceeded from his guests.

The fortress popularly known as "Jenkins' Station," consisted simply of a circular enclosure, formed by a picketing, composed of long sticks of timber planted firmly in the ground, and was intended to protect the domicile of honest Timothy against a sudden onset of the Indians. At that period, every farmer who ventured to pitch his tent in advance

vance of the settlements, fortified his house in this manner; others, who followed, settled around him, and sought shelter in the *station* upon any sudden emergency. Thus these places, although private property, partook of the nature of public defences, and became widely known; and travellers made their way from one station to another, so that they also became houses of entertainment; and those of the owners of them who would accept pay from wayfaring persons, were, in a manner, forced into the business of tavern-keepers. The proprietor moreover became a *captain* by common consent, because, as the people gathered here in time of danger, and it was natural that he should command in his own house, that office fell to him during a siege, and, of course, pertained to him through life: and such is the love of military titles among a people who are mostly descended from warlike an-

cestors, that however the individual thus honoured may be afterwards distinguished, though he may become a legislator, or even a magistrate, his military designation is seldom merged in any other.

The dwelling of captain Jenkins was composed of two log-houses, covered under the same roof, so as to leave a wide passage between them, after the most approved fashion of a Kentucky log-cabin. Round the fire-place, which occupied nearly the whole gable-end of the house, sat five or six men, recently dismounted from their horses, who were compensating themselves for the fatigue and abstinence of a day's travel, from the contents of a bottle which was circulating rapidly among them.

"Come on, Tim Jenkins," said one of them to the landlord, as he entered, "step *forrard*, and touch the blue bottle to your lips. Your whiskey is as good as your fire, and that is saying a great

a great deal, for you are the *severest old beaver* to *tote* wood that I've seen for many a long day."

"I like to warm my friends inside as well as out, when they call on me," rejoined Jenkins; "the nights are getting powerful cold, and they say it's not good for a man to lie down to sleep with a chill in his blood."

"I say so too," said the other: "I don't know what cold is good for, except to give a man an appetite for his liquor——"

"Or long nights," continued the host, "but to get sober in; so here's good luck to you, Mr. Patterson, and to you, gentlemen, all."

At this moment the attention of the company was arrested by a loud "hallo!" uttered without, and Mr. Jenkins hastened to receive a new guest. He soon returned, introducing a young gentleman of a very prepossessing appearance,

whose dress and manners announced him as an inhabitant of a more polished country than that in which he found himself. It was our friend, Mr. George Lee, who having been lost in the forest, as we have seen, had continued to grope his way in great perplexity, until he chanced to fall into a path which led him to the "Station." Bowing cheerfully to the rough sons of the forest, as they greeted him with the usual—"How d'ye do, stranger?" he seated himself, and began to throw off his spurs, leggins, gloves, and other travelling accoutrements, while Patterson and his companions, after a passing glance, resumed their bottle and their mirth.

Tired and cold, Mr. Lee drew his chair towards the fire, and remained for a time solely occupied in the enjoyment of its comfortable warmth. Patterson sat by the table, replenishing his

his glass, and pressing his companions to drink, talking all the while in a loud and overbearing tone, and growing more and more boisterous, until the annoyance awakened Mr. Lee from a kind of stupor that was creeping over him. He raised his head, and discovered the eyes of one of the party fixed upon him, with a gaze so eager, and so malignant, as to attract his own instant attention. The man, whose countenance displayed nothing remarkable, except a ferocity unmingled with the least touch of human feeling, no sooner caught the eye of the young traveller, than he drew back, as if to avoid observation.

Mr. George Lee was a young gentleman by no means remarkable for penetration; but he was bold and manly, had mixed with the world more than most persons of his years, and had a tolerable faculty of knowing men by

their looks—a faculty which by no means evinces a high degree of intellect, but more frequently is found in ordinary minds. He looked round upon the company into which he had been accidentally thrown, and for the first time his eye rested upon the savage features of Patterson.

The latter was a large stout man, evidently endued with more than common strength. There was a considerable degree of sagacity in his countenance, and his strong peculiar language seemed to be that of one accustomed to think and speak without constraint. His blood-shot eye and bloated skin betokened habitual intemperance; the fierce and remorseless expression of his face was rendered more terrific, by a large scar on his forehead, and another on his cheek, while the whole appearance of the man was bold, impudent, and abandoned. He possessed, or, what was more

more likely, affected, joviality and humour, continually pressing his companions to drink, and giving to every remark a strangely extravagant and original turn, which always created laughter. Another peculiarity was the loudness of his coarse voice; partly from habit, partly out of an assumed frankness, and an affectation of not caring who heard him, and partly to produce an impression of his superiority upon those around him, he always spoke as loud, even in a small room, as another person would in haranguing a multitude. But when intoxicated, this peculiarity became very striking; then he bellowed and roared, uttering his sentiments with an astonishing energy of language, and a horrible profusion of the most terrific oaths, in a voice naturally loud, and now pitched to its highest and harshest note, and with a wonderful vehemence of gesture. This characteristic

racteristic had gained for him the nick-name of "Roaring Bob," by which he was as well known as by his proper christian and surnames.

Our friend, George Lee, who had never before seen a man whose presence excited so much disgust, turned from him, and looked round upon his associates. They were a villanous and ruffian set, who seemed fit instruments to perpetrate any crime, however base or bloody. There was one person present, however, whose countenance drew his regard the more forcibly, from the contrast it presented with those around. It was that of a young man, whose placid features, and neat, though coarse dress, indicated an acquaintance with the decencies of social life. There was a fine expression of ingenuousness in his face, and his clear blue eye sparkled with vivacity and intelligence. He seemed to be under some constraint, for although

although addressed by the party as an acquaintance, his answers were brief; and while he treated them with civility, he appeared to be not disposed to join their conversation or share their mirth. At an early hour, a plentiful supper was spread, to which the whole of this ill-assorted party sat down; and immediately after, Mr. Lee, pleading fatigue, retired to repose.

A weary traveller needs no poppies strewn upon his pillow, "to medicine him to that sweet sleep" which is the reward of toil; and on this occasion, although the imagination of our friend George, never very active, was considerably excited by the novel scenes he had just witnessed, his reflections were soon drowned in forgetfulness. He had not slept long, when his slumber was suddenly broken by a cold hand, which grasped him by the shoulder. He started up in alarm, and was about to speak,

speak, but was prevented by a voice addressing him in a firm but hurried tone, so low as to be barely audible—"Do not speak—you are in danger—rise and follow me—be quick and silent!" The first impulse of the traveller's mind was distrust towards his mysterious visiter, for whose secret warning he could not readily perceive any rational ground; but as he proceeded mechanically to obey the mandate, his generous nature, not easily awakened to suspicion, repelled the hasty suggestion of doubt, and induced him to follow his guide with confidence. The latter, again cautioning him to silence, led the way to the open air, and proceeding under the shadow of the house, to an aperture in the stockade, passed out of the inclosure, and hastily penetrated into the forest. Mr. Lee pursued the rapid, but noiseless footsteps of his conductor, amazed at the suddenness of the adventure,

ture, and perplexed with his own endeavours to guess its probable cause or issue. It will be readily imagined that his conjectures could lead to no satisfactory conclusion, and that his situation—decoyed into the solitude and darkness of the forest by a stranger, perhaps one of those whose felon glances had attracted his attention—was such as to have created alarm in the stoutest heart. Yet there is something in every young and chivalric bosom, which welcomes danger when it assumes an air of romance; and George Lee, while internally blaming his own imprudence, which seemed to be leading him from a fancied to a real danger, could not resist the curiosity which he felt to develope the mystery, nor resolve to abandon an adventure which promised at least novelty. His uncertainty was of short duration; for his guide, after a few minutes' rapid walking, emerged into an open

open clearing, and halted; and as he stood exposed in the clear moonlight, Mr. Lee had no difficulty in recognising the young forester, whose prepossessing appearance he had remarked as affording so strong a contrast to the suspicious looks and brutal manners of his associates.

Pointing to a ruined cabin near which they stood—"It is fortunate for you, sir," said the guide, "that our landlord's stable within the stockade was filled before you arrived, and that your good nag was sent to his sorry roof for shelter."

"I shall be better able to appreciate my good fortune," said Lee, endeavouring to imitate the composure with which the other had spoken, "when I learn in what manner I am to be benefited by the bad lodging of my horse."

"By the badness of his lodging, nothing," said the other; "by its privacy, much; to be brief, you must fly."

"Fly!

"Fly! when—how?"

"Now; upon your horse, unless you prefer some other mode of travelling."

"Fly!" repeated Mr. Lee, incredulously, "from what?"

"From danger—pressing and immediate danger."

The young traveller stood for a moment irresolute, gazing at the placid features of the backwoodsman, as if endeavouring to dive into his thoughts. His embarrassed air, and suspicious glance, did not escape the forester, who inquired—"Are you satisfied? Will you confide in me?"

"I cannot choose but trust you—and there is that in your countenance which tells me my confidence will not be misplaced; I only hesitated under the suspicion that I was to be made the subject of some idle jest."

"I have been too familiar with danger," said the other, "to consider it a fit subject

subject for pleasantry. Had you looked death in the face as often as I have done, you would have learned to recognise the warning voice of a friend who tells you of its approach."

"Enough," replied Lee; "pardon my hasty suspicion, and let me know what has excited your apprehensions for my safety."

"First let us saddle your horse—we delay here too long." So saying, the young woodsman hastened into the cabin, and with Mr. Lee's assistance equipped the gallant steed, whom they found sounding his nostrils over a full trough, with a vigour which announced as well the keenness of his appetite as the excellence of his food.

"Your nag has a good stomach for his corn," said the backwoodsman, leading him out into the moonlight; "and if he does not belie his looks, he travels as well as he feeds;" and without waiting

ing for a reply, he threw the bridle over the animal's neck, and returning into the cabin, produced the baggage, great-coat, and other equipments of Lee, who, now more than ever astonished at the conduct of his companion, prepared in silence for his journey.

"Are you ready?" said the forester.

"I am ready."

"Then mount, and follow me."

The guide struck into the woods, and proceeding with the same noiseless steps which Lee had before remarked, strode forward, with a rapidity to which neither the darkness of the forest, nor the thick undergrowth of tangled bushes, seemed to present any obstacle.

They proceeded in silence, the horse following instinctively the footsteps of the forester, until the latter, striking into a hard footpath, halted, and advancing to the horseman's side, placed his hand on the pummel of the saddle.—

"With

"With common prudence, you are now safe," said he; and, after a moment's hesitation, he continued, in a low rapid tone—"Those scoundrels in the house have laid a plan to rob and murder you!"

"Is it possible? Can they be such base——"

"It is true—I have not alarmed you on bare suspicion. I overheard their plan; and knowing the men, I was satisfied that you could save your life only by flight."

"But our landlord—surely he is not privy to their design?"

"He is not."

"Why then should I fly? If he and yourself will stand by me, I could defy a regiment of such fellows!"

"You do not know your danger—to return would be madness! Jenkins, though an honest, is a timid man; as for myself, I would cheerfully aid you, but circum-

circumstances forbid that I should embroil myself with those men at present. Besides, you cannot remain at the station always, and your departure can never be effected with such safety as now, before the enemy is on the alert. Farewell—keep that path, and you are safe." So saying, he disappeared, and our traveller, with a heavy heart, resumed his journey.

If Mr. Lee had found his situation perplexing on the preceding day, while wandering in uncertainty through the forest, it was certainly more so now, when surrounded by the gloom of night. Unable to see the way, he was obliged to trust entirely to the instinct of his horse, who kept the path with surprising sagacity. Sometimes he found himself descending into a ravine, sometimes the splashing of water announced that he was crossing a rivulet, and sometimes a bough overhanging the path would

would nearly sweep him from his seat; but he continued to move cautiously along, satisfied that he could encounter no danger more pressing than that from which he had escaped. He was aware that the outlaw is often found on the extreme frontier of our country, perpetrating deeds of violence and fraud, beyond the reach of the civil authority. In those distant settlements, and at the early period of which we write, the inhabitants, thinly scattered, were fully occupied in providing for their own defence and sustenance, and the wholesome restraints of law, if they existed, were but feebly enforced. At such points, gangs of ruffians would sometimes collect, and for a time elude, or openly defy, the arm of justice. Carefully avoiding to give offence to their own immediate neighbours, and striking only at a distance, they for a time escaped detection. The honest settler,

simple

simple and primitive in all his habits, unwilling to meddle with laws which he little understood, endured the evil so long as the peace of his own community remained undisturbed; until roused at last by some daring act of violence, he hunted down the felon, as he would have chased the panther. That Patterson and his associates belonged to that class of marauders, Mr. Lee had little doubt; and he judged correctly, that if they had really marked him out as their prey, he could only be protected by a force superior to their own.

Occupied with such reflections, he continued to grope his way, until he supposed the night must be nearly exhausted. The moon, whose beams had occasionally reached him through the shadows of the forest, had gone down, and the darkness was quite impenetrable. He stopped often, turning his eyes

in every direction, to discover the first beam of the morning. Never did night appear so long—he counted hour after hour in his imagination—until his impatience became insupportable. The silence of the forest, so long continued and so deathlike, became painfully distressing; but when it was suddenly broken by the savage howl of the wolf, or the fearful screaming of the owl, the traveller involuntarily started, and was not ashamed to acknowledge a thrilling sense of danger. Even now, the panther might be silently crawling along his track, watching for a favourable opportunity to spring upon his prey, the hungry wolf might be scenting his approach, or the Indian crouching in his path. Wearied with conjecture, a feverish excitement took possession of his frame, and he thought he could cheerfully encounter any peril, rather than be thus tortured with darkness and suspense.

pense. Bodily fatigue was added to his sufferings, and at length he dismounted to seek a momentary relief by change of posture, and threw himself on the ground at the root of a tree, holding his bridle in his hand; and the vividness of his sensations subsiding with the inaction of his frame, he was unconsciously overcome by sleep.

When Mr. George Lee awoke, the morning was far advanced. The bridle had fallen from his hand, and his horse was grazing quietly near him: stiff, and aching with cold, he remounted, and pursued his journey. The road, if such it could be called, was no other than a narrow path, winding through the forest, of sufficient width to admit the passage only of a single horseman. Pursuing the course of a natural ridge, the traveller passed through a hilly region, clothed with oak and hickory trees, and thichly set with an undergrowth of ha-

zel-bushes and grape-vines; often halting to seek the path which was concealed by the intertwining brush, or covered with fallen leaves, and sometimes delaying to gather the nuts and fruit, which offered their luxuries in abundance; thence descending into the rich alluvion flats, his way led through groves of cotton-trees and sycamore, whose gigantic trunks, ascending to an immense height, were surmounted with long branches, so closely interwoven as almost to exclude the light of heaven. Sometimes the graceful cane skirted his path, and he waded heavily through the tangled brake, embarrassed by the numerous tracks beaten by the wild grazing animals, who resort to such spots, or alarmed by the appearance of beasts of prey, who lurk in these gloomy coverts. Alternately delighted with the beauties of nature, or chilled by the dreary solitude of the wilderness, our traveller passed rapidly

rapidly on, sometimes enjoying those absorbing reveries in which young minds are apt to revel, and sometimes indulging the apprehensions which his situation was calculated to excite. For the bear, the wolf, and the panther, still lurked in these solitudes, and the more dangerous Indian yet claimed them as his heritage.

The sun was sinking towards the western horizon, when he reached the broken country bordering on the Ohio. His heart, which had been saddened by the monotonous gloom of interminable flats, and the intricacy of miry brakes, was cheered as the hills rose upon his view, and his faithful horse moved with renewed vigour, when his hoof struck the firm soil. Still, the apprehension of approaching night was not without its terror. The backwoodsman alone, accustomed to such scenes, inured to the toils of the chase, and versed in the stratagems of

border warfare, can contemplate with indifference the prospect of a solitary encampment in the forest; and our traveller began to look impatiently for the signs of human habitation. He listened with intense interest to every sound, in vain; the deer still galloped across his path, stopping to gaze at the harmless stranger; then throwing back their horns, and leaping leisurely away with graceful bounds. The owl hooted in the dark valleys, sending forth yells so long, so loud, and so dismal, as to mislead the traveller into the momentary belief that it was the mournful wail of human misery; while the long shadows falling across the deep ravines, and seen through myriads of yellow leaves which floated on the breeze, assumed fantastic shapes to the now heated fancy of the tired wayfarer.

## CHAP. II.

Mr. George Lee had been accustomed from his youth to active sports, and severe bodily exercises; he was perfectly at home in the saddle, and loved to wander about the woods, better than to do any thing else, except to drink wine. There were, therefore, some pleasures mixed with the perplexities of his present situation. He bore the fatigues into which he was so unexpectedly thrown, like an experienced hunter, accustomed to long and weary excursions; his native courage rendered him careless of the dangers of the way, and his taste for forest sports was frequently gratified

by the sight of animals which were new to him, and of places charmingly suited to the amusements in which he delighted. The only thing that distressed him was hunger. Although he was in love, and had travelled all the way from Virginia, in pursuit of Miss Pendleton, whose hand he considered indispensable to his happiness, yet he was so unsentimental as to be actually hungry—and well he might be, for the poor young man had now been riding twenty-four hours without food. When suffering a privation of this kind, we are apt to torment ourselves with the recollection of the good things that we have eaten in happier days. And who had been more fortunate in this respect than our friend George, who had not only "sat at good mens' feasts" all his life, but kept expert cooks, and gave famous dinners himself? He looked back, with pleasurable and mournful reminiscence, similar to that

of

of the man who is suddenly reduced from opulence to poverty. He too was reduced in his circumstances, for he was denied the luxury of eating, which is the most important circumstance of life; and the visions of departed saddles of venison, turkeys, hams, roast pigs, oysters, and various other dainty dishes, which the Virginians have in great perfection, and dispense with prodigal hospitality to their friends, rose before his mind's eye in mournful yet delicious profusion. These reveries he dwelt upon until their sameness wearied his mind. He began to grow faint and tired; excessive hunger produced drowsiness, accompanied with such callousness of feeling, that a propensity was creeping over him to throw himself on the ground, and sleep away his senses and his existence. He tried to recollect some text of scripture which might comfort him, but for his life he could think of nothing but "eat,

drink, and be merry," or something that had eating and drinking in it. He attempted to sing, but his songs were all bachanalian, and only served to provoke thirst. He would have repeated some stanzas of poetry to keep him awake, if he had known any; but he had never cultivated the muses, and not a line could he recollect, but

> " Little Jackey Horner, sitting in a corner,
> Eating a Christmas pie ;"

and the dreadful conviction fastened itself at last upon his alarmed fancy, that if he should escape a miserable death by starvation in the wilderness, he would surely meet a wretched end by surfeit, whenever he should come in contact with food. Never did George Lee commune so long with his own thoughts, or reflect so seriously.

All at once his tired horse, who was moving slowly along the hardly-perceptible

tible path, with the bridle hanging on his neck, suddenly stopped, as the path turned almost at right angles, round a dense thicket. A few paces before him, and until this instant concealed by the thick brush, stood a miserable squalid boy, intently engaged in watching some object not far from him. A small, gaunt, wolf-looking, starved dog crouched near him, equally intent on the same game, so that even his quick ear did not catch the tread of the horse's feet, as they rustled among the dry leaves, until the parties were in close contact. The dog then, without moving, uttered a low growl, which the ear of his master no sooner caught, than he looked round, and seeing Mr. Lee, started up, and was about to fly; but George exclaimed—"My little man, I've lost my way," and the lad stopped, eyed the traveller timidly, and then looked earnestly towards the spot to which his glance had been before directed.

"I have missed my way," continued Mr. Lee, "and am almost starved."

"Can't you wait a minute, till I kill that *ar* snake?" replied Hark, for it was he.

The traveller looked in the direction indicated by the boy's finger, and saw an immense rattlesnake, coiled, with its head reared in the centre, his mouth unclosed, his fierce eyes gleaming vindictively, and all his motions indicating a watchful and enraged enemy. Hark gazed at the reptile with an eager and malignant satisfaction. His features, usually stupid, were now animated with hatred and triumph. The scene was precisely suited to interest the sportsmanlike propensities of Mr. George Lee, if he had not happened to be too hungry to enjoy any thing which might delay him any longer in the wilderness.

"Kill the snake, boy," said he, impatiently, "and then show me the way to some house."

Hark

Hark motioned with his finger, as if enjoining silence, and replied laconically —" It ain't ready yet."

The rattlesnake now raised his tail and shook his rattles, as if in defiance; and then, as if satisfied with this show of valour, and finding that his enemies made no advance, but stood motionless, slowly uncoiled himself, and began to glide away. Hark left his position, and with noiseless steps alertly made a small circuit, so as to place him in front of the enemy. The snake raised his head, darted out his tongue, and then turned to retreat in another direction; but no sooner had he presented his side to Hark, than the intrepid snake-killer bounded forward, and alighted with both his feet on the neck of the reptile, striking rapidly, first with one foot, and then the other, but skilfully keeping his victim pinned to the ground, so as to prevent the use of its fangs. The snake,

in

in great agony, now twisted the whole of its long body round Hark's leg; and the boy, delighted to witness the writhings of his foe, stood for a while grinning in triumph. Then carefully seizing the reptile by the neck, which he held firmly under his foot, he deliberately untwisted it from his leg, and threw it on the ground at some distance from him, and seemed to be preparing to renew the contest.

"You stupid boy," cried Mr. Lee, "why don't you take a stick and kill the snake?"

"That ain't the right way," replied Hark; and as the venomous creature, disabled and sadly bruised, essayed to stretch its length on the ground, to retreat, the snake-killer again jumped on it, and in a few minutes crushed it to death with his feet. Then taking it up in his hands, he surveyed it with his peculiar grin of joy, counting the rattles

as he separated them from the body, with an air of triumph, as great as that of the hunter when he numbers the antlers of a noble buck.

Mr. Lee gazed at this scene with unfeigned astonishment. Though no mean adept himself in the art of destroying animal life, he had never before witnessed such an exhibition. The diminutive size of the youth, his meagre and famished appearance, his wretched apparel, together with the skill and intrepidity displayed in this nondescript warfare, with a creature scarcely his inferior in any respect, strongly excited his curiosity.

"Well, you've beaten your enemy," said he, in an encouraging tone.

"Yes, I reckon I've *saved* him."

"But why did you not take a club to it?"

"It ain't the right way. I never go snaking with a pole."

"What

"What is your name?"

"Do you live about here, stranger?"

"No, I am a traveller from Virginia, and was going to Hendrickson's settlement, when I lost my way."

"People's mighty apt to get lost, when they don't know the range," replied Hark, familiarly, encouraged by the stranger's affability.

"Where do you live?" inquired Mr. Lee, endeavouring to conciliate the half-savage being, whose friendship was now important to him.

"I don't live nowhere, in peticklar."

"But you seem acquainted with these woods."

"Yes, I *use* about here some."

"How do you employ yourself?"

"I hunt some, and snake a little; and when I *haint nothen* else to do, I go a *lizardin*."

"Lizardin! what in the name of sense is that?"

"Killen

"Killen lizards," replied the boy, rather consequentially; "I use up all the varments I come across."

"Then you must *frog it some*," said Mr. Lee, laughing."

"Oh yes — and there's a powerful chance of the biggest bull-frogs you ever see, down in the slash yander. It would do you good to go there in the night, and hear 'em sing. I reckon there's more frogs and water-snakes there, than they is in all Virginny."

"I have no curiosity to see them. And now, my lad, if you will guide me to the settlement, I will satisfy you generously for your trouble."

Hark made objections—it was too far —he could not tell the distance—but it was farther than he could walk in a day. Mr. Lee then begged to be conducted to the nearest house; but the snake-killer shook his head.

"Surely you lodge somewhere," exclaimed

claimed the Virginian, growing impatient; "take me to your camp, and give me something to eat. I am starving."

Hark seemed irresolute, and continued to eye the traveller with a childish curiosity, mingled with suspicion; then as if a new idea occurred to him, he inquired—"Where's your gun, mister?"

"I have none."

For the first time the melancholy visage of Hark distended into a broad grin, as he exclaimed—"Well, I never see a man before that hadn't a gun. If it aint no offence, stranger, what do you follow for a living?"

"Why, nothing at all, you dunce," said George; "I am a gentleman."

Hark was as much puzzled as ever.—"In North Carolina," said he, "where I was raised, the people's all gentlemen, except the women, and they've all got guns."

"All

"All this is nothing to the purpose —will you not show the way to your camp?"

"Well—I reckon"—replied Hark, withdrawing a few steps, "I sort o' reckon it wouldn't be best."

"What objection can you possibly have?"

"I am afeard."

"You need not fear me; I can do you no harm, if I felt so disposed; and I have no disposition to injure you."

"Won't you beat me?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor take my skins from me?"

"No, no. I would not harm you upon any consideration."

"Well, then, I reckon I'll take you to my camp." So saying, Hark marched off through the woods, followed by Mr. George Lee.

## CHAP. III.

THE snake-killer urged his way through the forest with a rapid but noiseless step, followed by our friend George, whose weary horse was scarce able to keep pace with the hardy boy. After travelling a short distance, they arrived at the top of a hill, whence the river Ohio could be seen at a distance, gliding placidly, and reflecting the sunbeams from the broad mirror of its clear and beautiful surface. Here Mr. Lee was requested to dismount and leave his horse—an arrangement with which he was by no means disposed to comply, for he was too good a horseman not to love the generous

generous animal which had borne him safely through the fatigues of so long a journey. But the cautious policy of Hark was not to be overthrown by any argument; and after some discussion, the saddle and bridle were stripped off and hung upon a tree, and the horse turned out to graze, with his legs secured in such a manner as to prevent him from wandering far from the spot. They then descended the hill, until they reached an extensive plain of flat alluvion land, covered with a thick forest of tall trees, skirting the shores of "*the beautiful stream*," and forming, what is called in this country, the river bottom. Here, concealed in a tangled thicket of brushwood, matted with grape-vines, was a small lodge, constructed of slender poles, covered with bark. Hark paused, and cast furtive glances of apprehension around, before he disclosed the entrance to this primitive and wretched

wretched abode, examining with his eye the neighbouring coverts, and then looking timidly towards his companion, as if still balancing in his mind between prudence and hospitality; while the dog, imitating his master's caution, crept silently round the spot, snuffing the air. At last, Hark, as if satisfied, pushed aside the leafy branches which concealed his place of retreat, and entering hastily with his guest, carefully replaced the bushes behind him.

If Mr. Lee had been astonished before, at all he had seen of the mysterious being into whose company he had been so strangely thrown, his wonder was not decreased on finding himself introduced into "a lodge in some vast wilderness," which seemed a more fit habitation for a wild beast than a human creature. The lodge was square, and not more than eight feet in diameter, while its height was barely sufficient to allow

allow the dwarfish proprietor to stand upright in the centre. It was dry and tight. The floor was formed by logs embedded in the ground, and covered with dried grass. The only visible articles of property consisted of an iron stew-pan, a steel trap, an axe, and a quantity of skins. Motioning to his companion to seat himself on the floor, Hark proceeded with some alacrity to prepare a meal. In the first place, he drew from a magazine of sundries, hidden in one corner of his tent, several pieces of jerked venison, dried so hard as to be nearly of the consistency of wood, but which, by the bye, was by no means unpalatable; and placing them before his guest, signified that he might commence operations, an intimation which Mr. Lee, with the assistance of a pocket-knife, obeyed without hesitation. Hark then retired, and having kindled a small fire, in a ravine near the tent,

produced

produced the carcase of a fat opossum, which he cut up, and placed in the stew-pan. In a few minutes the savoury mess was in a condition to be placed before the traveller; and although totally unseasoned, and destitute of the accompaniment of bread or vegetables, the famished wayfarer did ample justice to the cookery of Hark, who sat by, and refused to partake, until the hunger of his guest was appeased. This was the proudest day of the life of Hark the snake-killer. Unused to kindness, and accustomed from the earliest dawn of reason to consider men as his enemies, this was probably the first time that he had ever enjoyed the luxury of doing good from motives entirely voluntary. He was in company with a gentleman of fine appearance, and, to his apprehension, of superior intelligence, who treated him as an equal. Although an aristocrat by birth, property, and association,

ciation, Mr. Lee was naturally good-humoured, and his habits, as a sportsman and man of pleasure, had thrown him frequently into contact with the lower classes of society, and this we suppose to be generally true of those who engage in sensual pleasures, or in what is more commonly called dissipation; and it is, if we mistake not, a national characteristic, that our gentlemen can, when circumstances render it convenient, adapt themselves with perfect ease to the society of their inferiors in education and manners. Mr. Lee, therefore, without much effort, had the tact to treat our friend Hark as an equal, simply by avoiding any supercilious show of aversion, or airs of superiority; and the consequence was, that he rose every moment in the esteem and affection of this uncouth boy, who soon began to venerate him as a superior being.

It was now dusk, and our traveller

had no choice left out to spend the night under the miserable shelter which he had found so opportunely. Indeed, contrasting his present situation with the gloomy terrors of the forest, and the disquietude which he had experienced within the last twenty-four hours, he found great room for congratulation, and recovered his natural flow of spirits sufficiently to converse freely with Hark, whose reserve began imperceptibly to wear away.

While they were thus engaged, the dog all at once shewed symptoms of agitation, pricking his ears, then crawling out of the tent and snuffing the air, and at last uttering a low sharp whine, and hastily retreating back to his master, with his hair bristling and his limbs trembling. Hark, always alive to fear, looked at his dumb companion, and at his guest, with a ghastly expression of terror on his sallow features.

Mr.

Mr. Lee would have spoken, but the boy cautioned him to be silent; and creeping to the aperture of the lodge, reconnoitred the surrounding shades with the cunning of a wary hunter. George followed, and was about to step from the lodge, when his companion caught his arm, and whispered--"Indians!"

Footsteps could now be heard passing around; they were the wily steps of the cautious savage treading softly, as if aware of the vicinity of a foe; but the rustling of the leaves, and the cracking of the dried twigs, betrayed them to the ears of the attentive listeners. Then a low signal-cry was heard, which was answered by another from a different direction. A party of Indians, painted for war, was seen scattered about, moving silently through the bushes, or standing in the attitude of eager and watchful attention, with their hands upon their weapons,

and their dark eyes gleaming with ferocious avidity. It was evident that they had traced their victims to this spot, and were now anxiously seeking the place of their concealment. Suddenly Hark uttered a piercing scream, and rushing forward a few steps, pushed aside the bushes, so as to disclose the entrance of the lodge to the Indians.

"Traitor!" exclaimed Mr. Lee, as he sprung after him, convinced by this action that the wretched boy had betrayed him into an ambuscade, and intending, under a sudden impulse of passion, to strike him to the ground; but a momentary glance induced him to abandon the suspicion. Before him stood a tall Indian, whose superior air and dress announced him to be a leader, with his rifle pressed to his shoulder, as if in the act of taking aim. His keen eye had discovered the faces of the whites, through some slight opening of the intervening foliage, and he

he was deliberately preparing to fire with a deadly aim, when Hark, perceiving his intention, leaped towards him to implore mercy, throwing himself on his knees, and regarding his savage captor with looks of intense agony. Mr. Lee stood behind him, unarmed and embarrassed; while the Indians, dashing through the bushes, with the most terrific yells, and brandishing their tomahawks, crowded about their victims, prepared to glut their vengeance, by immolating them upon the spot. But the chief restrained them, making a brief but peremptory explanation, in a language unknown to the prisoners, but which probably suggested a respite from instant death, only as a prelude to a more lingering and dreadful fate.

Ferocious as this band of savages appeared to the eye of Mr. Lee, to whom the scene was new, an experienced ob-

server would have remarked in their deportment a more than ordinary degree of moderation. The Indians, like all other unlettered men, act from impulse. A battle always whets their appetite for blood; and they visit upon the lives of their unfortunate captives the ill-humour occasioned by their own fatigues, losses, or sufferings. They are cruel, always when excited, and often without excitement; and sometimes, from mere caprice, treat their prisoners with lenity, and even kindness.

It happened that the captors of Mr. Lee were in a good humour. They had perhaps made a successful inroad upon the whites, or had met with no occurrence recently to awaken resentful feelings. The fine horse of Mr. Lee, the gun, the axe, and the skins of Hark, constituted in their estimation a prize of no small value, and their ready tact enabled them to see at a glance that their

their prisoners were not persons of war-like habits. Some, or all of these reasons, operated to protect the captives from ill usage; and they were marched off to the shore of the Ohio, where the Indians embarked in canoes that were concealed among the willows, and crossed to the opposite bank, where they encamped.

At an early hour, the following morning, the whole party prepared to march; but not until some of the warriors evinced a disposition to amuse themselves at the expence of Hark. The diminutive size and queer looks of the half-civilized youth, attracted their attention, and they induged their drollery by forming themselves into two parallel lines, and making the disconcerted snake-killer march backwards and forwards between them. As he passed along, one would prick him in the side with the point of his knife, and when the frightened boy

turned his head towards his tormentor, another would trip him, by placing an obstacle in his path. One of the tallest of the braves led him to a tree, against which he placed him, while with a tomahawk he marked his diminutive height accurately upon the bark; then measuring and marking his own height upon the same tree, he pointed out the difference to the amused warriors, who laughed vociferously at this specimen of wit.

Mr. George Lee joined heartily in the laugh, occasioned by the ludicrous appearance of his new acquaintance, but it was not long until he became himself a subject of merriment. Among the spoils was a large iron kettle, into which the Indians had packed their provisions, and when the march was about to be commenced, it was determined to make our friend George the bearer of this burden. In vain did he remonstrate, both by emphatic signs and imploring language,

guage, assuring them that he was a gentleman, unused to labour, and totally unable to carry such a burden; the Indians persisted in placing the kettle on his head, and the unfortunate gentleman, willing to try the virtue of obedience, and afraid to refuse, moved forward; but although his head had always been considered hard, in one sense of the word, it did not prove so in the present instance; and after proceeding a few steps he began to falter, and showed a desire to set down his load. A very muscular savage, a surly malicious-looking ruffian, advanced towards him, and brandishing his war-club, ordered him to proceed. George, without understanding the language, readily comprehended the meaning of the Indian, and turning towards him, exclaimed in a tone of vexation—"I say, my good fellow, if you think it's so mighty easy to carry this load, you had better try it yourself."

The Indian raised his club to strike, but George, who was a theoretical boxer, and a man of spirit, threw the kettle from his head, suddenly darted upon him, wrested the club from his grasp, and throwing it from him, struck his assailant with his fist. The Indians shouted applause, formed a circle, and encouraged their companion to continue the battle; and the latter, who could not refuse without disgrace, sprung furiously upon the rebellious prisoner. Though stout and active, he found his full match in Mr. Lee, who was a young man of large frame, in the prime of manhood, and accustomed to athletic exercises: he was much stronger than the savage, while the latter was his superior in cunning. Thus matched, the battle was severely contested for several minutes, when George, by a lucky blow, stretched his adversary upon the ground, to the infinite amusement of the by-

standers

standers, who made the forest ring with their acclamations, while they taunted their beaten comrade with the severest irony. Mr. Lee now rose considerably in the estimation of his captors; the kettle was suspended upon a pole, and carried by two of the party, and our friend accommodated with a lighter load.

They had not proceeded far, when they reached the margin of a broad and rapid stream, which they prepared to cross by fording. To this evolution Hark evinced great repugnance; for although accustomed to dabble in marshy pools, he could not swim, and was marvellously afraid of deep water. The Indians, who became more and more amused with his untoward vagaries, drove him into the water before them, with shouts of merriment. The stream was about waist deep to the men, who waded firmly through without difficulty; not so Hark, whose chin floated like

a cork upon the surface, while his feet, scarcely touching the bottom, were frequently swept by the force of the current from under him, and the terrified urchin completely immersed, until he was relieved, and again placed in a perpendicular attitude.

The Indians, either from a sense of the ludicrous, or from the pleasure of giving pain, found such rare sport in the sufferings of Hark, that they no sooner reached the shore, than they determined to repeat the exhibition, actuated by the same spirit which induces the spectators at a theatre to *encore* some precious piece of buffoonery. Hark was therefore commanded to retrace his steps to the opposite bank, attended by a warrior, whose duty was to keep the performer's head above water, but who mischievously bobbed it under the surface, whenever a suitable opportunity offered. Having thus recrossed, and returned,

returned, the savages, satisfied for the present, prepared to resume their journey. Such are some of the sports of the Indians, by which they enliven the brief intervals of enjoyment, few and far between, that succeed the solitary labours of the chase, and the butcheries of war, the gloomy nights of watching, and the long days spent in brooding over meditated violence, and insatiable revenge.

Hark, though greatly terrified, was not much fatigued by his late exertions, for he was as hardy as a pine knot, and accustomed to exposure to the elements. He was therefore soon rested, and was leaning carelessly against the stem of a young tree, when the singular expression of his countenance attracted the attention of the Indians, who are quick and accurate observers of physiognomy. His eye, usually dull, was now lighted up, and keenly fixed upon some object at a short distance off, in the woods.

His

His lips were compressed, and the muscles of his vacant countenance in perceptible motion. He seemed to be drawing himself up like some crouching animal, preparing to spring on its prey. Suddenly he darted forward towards a large black-snake, which was slily dragging its shining folds over the dry leaves, and seizing the reptile by the neck with one hand, whirled the long body in the air over his head, as a child would flourish a whip-lash. Then he suffered it to coil itself round his arm and neck; and disengaging it, threw it into the air, catching it as it fell. This he repeated frequently, always taking care to seize the animal dexterously so near the head, as to prevent the possibility of its biting. At length he dropped on his hands and knees, and fixing his teeth in the back of the creature's neck, shook it violently, as a terrier dog worries a rat; and finally taking the head in his hand, he rose and

lashed

lashed the trees with the long flexible body of his victim, until he dashed it to pieces, exhibiting in the latter part of this singular exercise, a degree of spite and fury altogether foreign from his ordinary indolence of manner. The Indians, in the meanwhile, gazed at this novel achievement with delighted admiration, clapping their hands, and shouting applause; and when Hark rested from his labours, some of the oldest warriors patted him on the head, and exclaimed, in broken English—"Good!" —"velly good!" They forthwith conferred upon him a sonorous Indian name, which being interpreted, signified, "He that kills snakes," and treated him afterwards with lenity, and even favour.

It was very evident that the Indians were neither in haste, nor fearful of pursuit; for they loitered by the way, stopping at particular places, and examining for signs, as if expecting to fall in with some

some other war party of their own tribe. At length, towards evening, they reached the brow of a hill, where a small mark was discovered, which had been made by chipping a portion of the bark from a sapling, with a tomahawk; and at a distance, in the low ground, a thin column of smoke was seen wreathing above the trees. Here they halted, cut a large pole, which, after stripping off the bark, they painted with several colours, and then planted in the ground. They now cut a lock of hair from the head of each of the prisoners, and after braiding them, placed them in a medicine bag, which they hung upon the pole, and endeavoured to explain, by signs and broken English, that these locks represented the prisoners, whom they intended to adopt into their tribe. All things being ready, the chief shouted with a loud voice, uttering certain peculiar yells, by which they intended

to convey to their tribe the intelligence of their successful return, and the number of their prisoners. Then they formed a circle round the pole, and joining hands with each other and with the prisoners, who were now taken into companionship, danced round it, singing and leaping with great vivacity.

After this exercise had continued about half an hour, they were joined by some of their companions whose smoke they had seen; and the whole party marched off, in great ceremony, to the camp, where Mr. Lee witnessed a spectacle which filled him with astonishment and horror. What this was, will be explained in a future chapter.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

THE course of our narrative now brings us back to Jenkins's Station. William Colburn, the brave youth who effected the escape of Mr. Lee, was the same hunter to whom the reader was introduced at the carrier's encampment, in the Allegheny mountains. He knew the ruffians by whom he was surrounded, and having saved a stranger from their clutches, retired silently to his lodging, little apprehensive of any danger to himself. But his situation was not without peril, which, however he might be disposed to despise it, occupied his thoughts; while the interest

that

that he felt in the stranger, who seemed to have been thrown upon him for protection, concurred to drive sleep from his pillow. The apartment which he occupied was a mere loft, the same which Mr. Lee had just left, immediately above the room in which the noisy ruffians were assembled. Their loud conversation had now ceased, and they seemed to have thrown themselves on the floor to slumber. After some time, he heard a slight noise in the apartment below, succeeded by a faint murmur of voices; then a step could be distinguished, as of one slowly ascending to his chamber. He snatched his hunting-knife from the chair beside his bed, and concealing it under the bed-clothes, feigned sleep. A person entered, and approached the bed which had been occupied by Mr. Lee. A short silence ensued, then a blasphemous expression of disappointment escaped the intruder, who

who now partially threw aside a cloak which had concealed a dark lantern, and a dim light gleamed over the apartment. Having satisfied himself that the bed before him was empty, the ruffian turned hastily to that of Colburn, whose placid features indicated the calmness of profound slumber. The ruffian laid his hand upon his knife, gazed for an instant with resentful malignity, and then hastily retired, but not until the youth had recognised the savage countenance of Patterson. Colburn heard him enter the room below, and arising lightly from his bed, placed his ear to a crevice in the floor, and heard one of the party exclaim —"Gone!"

"Ay," replied Patterson, "gone, hook and line."

A confused whispering ensued, from which Colburn could gather nothing; but directing his eye to the crevice, he saw Patterson point his finger upwards, and

and concluded that the conversation related to himself.

A moment afterwards, one of the party remarked—"*He* knows something about it."

Patterson, with a tremendous oath, replied—"He knows more than he shall ever tell."

A long consultation ensued, which ended with Patterson's saying—"Not to-night—it will not do—but to-morrow he must be taken care of."

During this time, Patterson had applied himself several times to the whiskey-bottle, and becoming much intoxicated, began to curse his companions as villains and cowards.—"It was you," said he, "that put me on this—I never attempted the like before—I have stood by you, and protected you in all your villany—but you know I have always said I would never be concerned in taking life—I never have done it before—

this

this is the first time—and when the act came to be done, you all backed out, and left me to do it—but this is the last time—I shall never lift my hand against a man in the dark again——"

"Yes, you will," said a coarse voice; and the speaker, followed by another person, entered the room.

"Harpe!" exclaimed several voices.

"Ay—that's my name; I am not ashamed to own it."

"You ought to be," rejoined Patterson; "for if ever there was a bloody-minded villain——"

"That's enough," said Harpe, fiercely; "you and I know each other, and the less we say of one another the better."

"I never killed a man," said Patterson.

"Because you haven't the courage," cried Harpe; "but you pass counterfeit money, and steal horses—and besides that, don't I know something about a man

man that's just gone from here, and another that's asleep," pointing significantly upwards.

Patterson saw that Harpe had been eavesdropping, and felt the necessity of compromising matters.

"I was only joking, Mr. Harpe," said he: "what you do is nothing to nobody but yourself—go your ways, and I'll go mine.

"I am willing to do you a good turn," replied Harpe, "and you must do me one; that lad up there must be——you understand—or else you must quit the country—and there's another that I missed in the woods, that must be hunted up in the morning—help me, and I'll help you."

Colburn had been satisfied, until now, that he was safe for the night. Being the son of a respectable farmer in a neighbouring settlement, whose courage and enterprise were well known, and being

being popular himself, he was aware that Patterson and his gang would not dare to molest him under the roof of Jenkins, where a deed of violence could not be perpetrated without the risk of discovery. Had he been a stranger, his situation would have been hopeless; the chances of detection would, in that case, have been few, and the danger of retribution small, compared with the consequences that would result from an injury to himself. That an attempt would be made in the morning to waylay him in the woods, where no witness would be present, he saw was probable, and to escape that danger required all his ingenuity. but the arrival of the Harpes, and the disclosures he had heard, convinced him that he was placed in imminent peril.

At the time of the escape of the Harpes from justice, in the manner formerly related, their names were unknown in Kentucky: they were strangers in the country,

country, and the aggression for which they were then in custody, was the first that they were known to have committed: since then, a series of shocking massacres had given them a dreadful notoriety. They had passed through the whole length of the scattered settlements of this wild region, leaving a bloody track to mark their ruthless footsteps: they spared neither age nor sex, but murdered every unprotected being who fell in their way. What was most extraordinary, they appeared to destroy without motive or temptation: plunder was a secondary object: the harmless negro, and the child, were their victims, as often as the traveller or the farmer. A native thirst for blood, or a desire of vengeance for some real or imaginary injury, seemed to urge them on in their horrible warfare against their species. They had escaped apprehension thus far, in consequence of the peculiar cir-

cumstances of the country, and by a singular exertion of boldness and cunning. Mounted on fleet and powerful horses, they fled, after the perpetration of an outrage, and were heard of no more, until they appeared suddenly at some distant and unexpected point to commit new enormities. Their impunity thus far was the more astonishing, as the people of the frontier have always been remarkable for the public spirit, alertness, and success, with which they pursue offenders, who seldom escape these keen and indefatigable hunters.

Colburn was aware that from such enemies he had no chance of escape but in immediate flight, and hastily putting on his clothes, he had the good fortune to slip out of the house unperceived. A few minutes afterwards, a loud hallooing from beyond the stockade, announced the arrival of other travellers; and captain Jenkins soon appeared, introducing a lady

a lady and gentleman into the common room, which served as a receptacle for all the guests, gentle, simple, or compound, whom chance or inclination brought to this primitive hotel. The lady was Miss Virginia Pendleton, and the gentleman colonel Hendrickson, her uncle, an elderly man, of plain but peculiarly imposing exterior: he was spare and muscular, and, though past the age of fifty, seemed to be in the vigour of strength and activity: his person was erect, his step martial, and somewhat stately: his features, sunburnt, and nearly as dark as those of the Indian, were austere, and announced uncompromising firmness. There was in his deportment towards Miss Pendleton, a mixture of parental kindness, with the punctilious courtesy observed by the gentlemen of Kentucky towards all females, as well those of their own families as others: there was even a more than ordinary de-

gree of polite observance in his attentions, which might have arisen, in part, from a spontaneous admiration of the womanly graces of his lovely ward, and have flowed in part from sympathy for her misfortunes. These feelings produced a kind of fatherly gallantry, a mixture of delicacy and respect, with fondness and admiration, which blended harmoniously with the plain but dignified and gentlemanly air of the veteran pioneer. They were followed by two negroes, a man and maid-servant, who, having removed the outer garments of their master and mistress, retired to the kitchen.

The arrival of colonel Hendrickson struck the ruffian party who were assembled round the fire, with awe; for he had long been a terror to evil-doers. They shrunk back to make room for the travellers, while Micajah Harpe drew Patterson out of the apartment, and disclosed

closed to him a tremendous scheme of diabolical revenge. Representing the advantage which would accrue to themselves by ridding the country of colonel Hendrickson, an active magistrate, and a man of military skill and intrepidity, he proposed not only to murder him and his fair ward, but to destroy all evidence of the foul act, by including Jenkins, and all the inmates of the house. Patterson started back in horror at this proposal. The felons who sometimes infest our frontiers, have generally an aversion against deeds of violence, and seldom practise on the lives of those they plunder: Patterson, though dissipated, unprincipled, and a hardened depredator, had never dipped his hands in blood; but human nature is always progressive in depravity or in virtue; the heart of man is continually becoming strengthened in principle, or callous to the dictates of conscience; and he who

embarks in criminal pursuits can affix no limits to his own atrocity. Some recent occurrences had rendered Patterson more than ordinarily reckless, and stirred up his vindictive passions; he was disappoined, excited, and intoxicated, and the foul compact was made.

Supper was prepared for the travellers, and placed upon the table. Colonel Hendrickson led his niece to the ample board, and as soon as they were seated, bowed his head, which was slightly silvered with age, and in a manly, solemn voice, implored the blessing of Divine Providence. At that moment, while the uncle and niece sat with eyes bent downwards, the two Harpes appeared in the door, and deliberately aimed their rifles at the unconscious travellers. Their fingers were already on the triggers—their eyes, gleaming hellish vengeance, were directed along the deadly tubes with unerring skill,

skill, and another second would have rendered all human aid unavailing, when each of the ruffians was felled by a powerful blow from behind. The rifles went off, sending the bullets whistling over the heads of those who had been doomed to death. Patterson and some of his gang rushed to the rescue of their confederates, while the assailants, snatching the guns from the grasp of the prostrate ruffians, passed rapidly over their bodies, and Fennimore and Colborn stood by the side of colonel Hendrickson, who in an instant comprehended the scene, and acted warily on the defensive. They were all brave and athletic; and although opposed to thrice their numbers, the gentlemen thus accidentally thrown together, stood erect, fearless, alert, and silent.

There is a dignity in courage which awes even opposing courage, and subdues by a look the mere hardihood

which is unsupported by principle. The ruffians had crowded tumultuously into the room; but when colonel Hendrickson and his two friends, who were all armed, advanced to meet them, they faltered. Harpe, who was again on his feet, with a voice of desperation, and the fury of a demon, urged them to the attack; but they stood irresolute, each unwilling to commit himself by striking the first blow, and fearful of being the foremost in assailing men who stood prepared to sell their lives at the dearest price; and when colonel Hendrickson, in a tone of the most perfect composure, and in the most contemptuous language, commanded them to retire, with bitter reproaches on their baseness, they slunk away, one by one, until the two Harpes, finding themselves deserted, retreated, muttering horrible imprecations.

The doors were now secured, and the arrangement being made, that one of the

the party should act as a sentinel while the others slept, alternately, the travellers separated, but not until colonel Hendrickson returned to Colburn, who was his neighbour, and to Mr. Fennimore, whom he now saw for the first time, his hearty thanks and commendations for their gallant interference. Miss Pendleton, in acknowledging her acquaintance with the young officer, extended her hand with a cordiality which evinced her gratitude, and having introduced him to her uncle, retired.

## CHAP. V.

On the following morning, Miss Pendleton met the young officer, who had a second time been instrumental in saving her life, with some embarrassment. She had seen him first in the spring-day of her happiness and the pride of her beauty, and had mentally awarded to him that preference over most other men of her acquaintance, which the heart so readily accords to a pleasing and amiable exterior. He was associated in her mind with the last of her days of joy, and with the dawn of her misfortunes. She had twice witnessed his courage, voluntarily and generously exerted

exerted in her behalf; and if she acknowledged to herself the existence of no more tender feeling, she felt that she at least owed him a debt of gratitude. His abrupt departure from Virginia, at a time when his own conduct had seemed mysterious, and when some explanation appeared to be due to herself, or to the representatives of the deceased major Heyward, surprised and perplexed her. She had ascertained that he was related, in what degree she knew not, to the guardian of her youth, and his interests had been placed in painful opposition to her own. These recollections passed hastily through her mind, and she met him with a flushed cheek, and a constrained manner, very foreign from the usual easy frankness of her deportment. But she saw in him the same traits of character which at first won her confidence—the same calm self-possession, cheerful conversation,

and open countenance; and the thin clouds of suspicion which had cast a momentary shadow over her mind, floated rapidly away.

After an early breakfast, the whole party mounted and commenced the journey of the day, for in new countries, ladies as well as gentlemen travel only on horseback. They were not without their apprehensions that the Harpes, who were desperate and unrelenting villains, might endeavour to take revenge for the disappointment of the preceding night, by firing upon them from some covert in the woods; but colonel Hendrickson, confident that his name and standing would deter their late confederates from joining in any such attack, considered his party sufficiently strong to repel any attempt that might be made upon it. But every precaution was used to insure safety; the gentlemen, who were all provided with

with rifles, loaded them carefully, and the little company was arranged with all the precision that would have attended the march of a squadron of cavalry. Fennimore managed, as young men are apt to do in such cases, to place himself by the side of Miss Pendleton, the other two gentlemen took the van, while the servants brought up the rear. Their way led through the same lonesome expanse of forest which had been traversed by Mr. Lee, when suddenly ejected from the hospitable roof of captain Jenkins, in the manner related—a vast wilderness, rich in the spontaneous productions of nature, but in which the travellers could not expect to see a human being, or a dwelling, until their arrival at their place of destination.

In travelling, many of the restraints of social intercourse are necessarily laid aside; and those whose lots are thus for the time being cast together, find it expedient

pedient as well as agreeable to render themselves acceptable to each other. There is a race of islanders, who, in travelling, become even more unsocial, morose, and supercilious, than they are at home; but the ordinary effect of this occupation upon human nature is such as we have suggested; and well-bred persons, in particular, always bring their politeness into active exercise, when the necessity of the case renders this accomplishment a virtue: and at the risk of being accused of national vanity, we will assert, that our own countrymen are the best travellers in the world, the most affable, patient, and cheerful, and the least incommoded by accidental hardships. An occasion like the one before us, is peculiarly calculated to produce the effects to which we have alluded, when the long and lonesome way exhibits a wild but gloomy monotony of scenery, and a sense of danger

unites

unites the parties in the bond of a common interest. Thus felt the young and graceful pair of riders, who had, besides, so many reasons for entertaining a strong interest in each other. Mr. Fennimore exerted all his powers in the endeavour to render himself agreeable; and people who try to please, most generally succeed, for the art of pleasing depends almost entirely upon the will; and the young lady, with that admirable tact, in the possession of which her sex is infinitely superior to ours, displayed her conversational powers with more than ordinary vivacity and eloquence. We shall not set down what passed, because we were not there; and if we had been, it would ill become us to give publicity to those sprightly and unpremeditated sallies, which were never intended for other ears than those to which they were addressed, but flowed spontaneously from young hearts in the glow of unrestrained

restrained feeling. Tradition has only preserved the fact, that although they rode forth from the woodland fortress, on a bright sunny morning, as stately as a hero and heroine of chivalry, it was not long before they were laughing and chatting like people of flesh and blood, and wit and feeling.

They had travelled for some hours when the experienced eye of colonel Hendrickson discovered the fresh track of a horse in the path before them. On dismounting and examining more closely, it appeared that several horses had entered the path at this place, and passed on in the same direction pursued by our travellers; and one of the tracks was pronounced by Colburn to be that of the horse of Patterson. That the gang whose villany they had so much cause to dread, should have taken the same direction with themselves, and at the same time should have avoided the beaten

beaten path, for so great a distance, were circumstances so suspicious, as to leave little doubt of a design to attack them at some point, which was now probably near at hand. In the irritation of the moment, nothing would have pleased these gentlemen more than to have marched directly upon the ruffians; but a proper care for the lady under their charge rendered more prudent measures advisable; and, after a short consultation, it was determined to abandon the road, and to endeavour to avoid the danger, by taking a circuitous route through the forest. They now proceeded rapidly through the woods, observing all the precautions of a warlike party; avoiding the thickets and low grounds, and keeping along the ridges, and in the most open woods. This mode of travelling was extremely arduous, for they were now obliged to pass over many inequalities of ground,

and

and to surmount a variety of obstacles. At one moment they leaped their horses over the trunk of a fallen tree; at another they climbed a steep hill; sometimes deep ravines were to be crossed, and sometimes low branches, or the great grape-vines swinging from tree to tree, obliged them to bow their heads as they passed along.

After riding several miles in this manner, guided only by that knowledge of natural appearances which enables the experienced hunter to ascertain the points of the compass, under almost any circumstances, they arrived at the bank of a deep creek, which was not fordable, except at the spot where it was crossed by the road they had forsaken, and where the robbers would be most likely to await their approach. As there are several modes of passing over streams, practised by backswoodsmen, they rode along the bank, consulting as to the most

most practicable expedient, when they reached a place where a large tree had fallen across the creek, affording the very facility which they desired. Few ladies, however, would have possessed sufficient courage and dexterity to have walked over this natural bridge. The banks of the creek were extremely high, and the trunk of the fallen tree was still further elevated by the large roots at the one end, and the immense branches at the other, so that its distance from the water was so great, as to render it unpleasant to look downwards. But Virginia had a mind which could not be daunted by ordinary dangers, and stepping nimbly upon the log, she walked with a firm step along its round and narrow surface, and reached the opposite shore in safety. The saddles and baggage were carried over by the same way. The greatest difficulty was to cross the horses, for the banks were so steep and miry, as to ren-

der

der it almost impossible to get them into the water. By dint of coaxing, pushing, and whipping, however, all the animals were forced in, except that belonging to Colburn; and after swimming part of the way, and floundering through mire the remainder, they struggled up the opposite bank, where colonel Hendrickson and Fennimore stood to receive them. Colburn had remained alone, and was about to send over the last horse, which was still fastened to a tree, when the rapid tramp of horses' feet was heard upon the dry leaves, and he had barely time to unloose his steed and spring upon its back, when Patterson and his confederates came sweeping towards him at full speed. To cross the creek with his horse was now impossible; to abandon the animal and seek safety for himself on the other side, would have been but the work of an instant, but Colburn loved his horse, and had too much spirit

to

to give him up to an enemy. Besides, the heroic idea occurred to him at the moment, of making a diversion in favour of his friends, by drawing the pursuit upon himself. Catching up his rifle, which leaned against a tree, he shouted to his companions to take care of themselves, and turning towards the pursuers, flourished his weapon round his head in bravado, and dashed off through the forest. The outlaws saw that the party which had crossed the creek was beyond their grasp, as it was but a few miles to colonel Hendrickson's settlement, which could be reached by the fugitives, before they themselves could accomplish the tedious process of crossing with their horses; nor were they willing to attempt the passage in the face of two resolute men, armed with rifles. Their whole fury, therefore, was turned towards Colburn, and, uttering a volley of execrations, they put spurs to their horses, and went

went off at full speed in pursuit of the young forester.

Colburn, well mounted, and admirably skilled in all the arts of the hunter, had little doubt of being able to evade his enemies by speed or artifice; and guided only by the sun, and by his knowledge of the country, pressed onward through the trackless forest. Relying on the great strength of his steed, and his own superior horsemanship, he often chose the most difficult ground, leaping over ravines, plunging down steep declivities, or dashing through dense thickets, where thorns and tangled vines seemed to render it impossible for any animal to pass; and he had the satisfaction of seeing more than one of his pursuers thrown from their horses, while others were left in the rear. Still they kept upon his track, with the unerring sagacity of woodsmen.

Patterson, who, although the largest man,

man, was best mounted, soon left his comrades, straining forward to overtake the young hunter; while Colburn, confident of success, and anxious only to separate his pursuers and keep them in his rear, so as to prevent their surrounding or intercepting him, held up his horse, to husband his powers for a long race. But he had judged too meanly of the animal ridden by Patterson, who soon came in sight, uttering a loud yell when he beheld the young forester, and madly urging his steed over every obstacle. Still the advantage was in favour of Colburn, who, being the lightest rider, and mounted on a fine blooded animal, led the outlaw through the most intricate ways, passing dexterously through thickets apparently impenetrable, plunging into deep morasses, and leaping ravines which seemed impassable. The latter pursued with spirit, sometimes gaining a view of his adversary, and sometimes falling in the rear.

At one time an accident had nearly decided the contest, for Colburn's horse became entangled in a close thicket of hazel and grape-vines, and the outlaw came near enough to discharge his rifle deliberately, and with so true an aim, that the ball passed along the side of the hunter, inflicting a severe though not a dangerous wound. The young man extricated himself from the tangled brushwood, reined up his horse, and turning towards his enemy, waved his hat in the air, shouted in derision, and then rode on with unsubdued alacrity. At last, in leaping over the trunk of a fallen tree, his horse sprained an ancle, and Colburn found that it was impossible to retreat any longer. A gentle swell of the ground concealed him at that moment from Patterson, who had stopped to reload his rifle, and hastily pushing his horse into a clump of bushes, he crouched behind a tree, to await the coming

coming of his foe. In a few minutes Patterson came in sight, pressing eagerly forward, with his heels closed into his horse's flanks, his eye gleaming with fury, and his countenance animated by the excitement of an anticipated triumph. When he arrived within a few paces of the spot where Colburn stood concealed, the latter stepped boldly out, directly in front of the advancing horseman, and presented his rifle. Patterson, with a powerful arm, reined up his well-trained horse, dropped the bridle, and threw his gun to his shoulder; but before he could fire, the young forester's ball passed through his body, and the wretch fell forward, with a deep groan, upon his horse's neck. Instantly recovering his strength, he raised himself in his stirrups, and charged upon Colburn with his rifle presented; but the latter, no longer avoiding the combat, darted nimbly upon his foe, and throwing his arms

around him, dragged him from the saddle. For a moment they struggled fiercely upon the ground; the ruffian, abandoning his gun, drew his knife; but Colburn parried the stroke, and at the same time disengaging himself, seized the loaded rifle of his adversary, and stood on the defensive. Patterson attempted to rise, but his career of crime was ended.

The young forester now caught the outlaw's horse, which stood trembling beside his own disabled animal, and having reloaded his rifle, continued his retreat. He was pursued no further. The ruffian gang were struck with panic when they reached the spot where their comrade lay in his gore, a mangled corpse. They had, perhaps, carried their scheme further than had been at first intended, and they now feared the consequences of their audacious attempt. The remains of Patterson were hastily buried, at

at the lone spot where he had fallen; and the unprincipled companions of his guilty life, dispersing in different directions, sought safety in concealment or flight.

Colonel Hendrickson and his young friends had been greatly shocked on beholding the peril in which Colburn was placed, when surprised, as we have narrated; but it was impossible to render him any assistance, and when the sounds of the pursuit died away, they recommenced their journey with heavy hearts. They soon regained the road which they had left in the morning, and descending from the high grounds, struck into a rich flat, through which a deep creek was sluggishly meandering: on their right hand the Ohio, smooth and transparent as a mirror, suddenly burst upon their view. They stopped and gazed for a moment with delight, for there is something so cheerful in the appearance of a beautiful sheet of water, that the

same scenery which had seemed gloomy without it, became, with this addition, gay, brilliant, and romantic. The western bank of the river was low, and fringed to the water's edge with trees, whose long limbs dipped into the current, while their shadows stretched far over the stream, and pictured the exact contour of the shore upon the green surface. Nearer to them the beams of the setting sun fell upon the water, tinging it with a golden hue. There was a softness and repose in this landscape that were irresistibly charming; no living object was to be seen, not a leaf moved—not a sound was heard; all was serene and silent.

Their path now pursued the course of the river for a short distance, then turning from it at right angles, crossed the creek by a deep ford. They had nearly reached the fording-place, when their horses pricked their ears, snorted aloud,

aloud, and stopped trembling in the path. At the same instant the travellers discovered that they were beset on all sides by a party of Indians, hideously painted, who had risen from an ambuscade, and stood around, with their rifles pointed, and their black eyes gleaming with a hellish triumph. They uttered a terrific yell when they beheld their victims; our travellers saw their ghastly smiles, their murderous looks, their flashing knives, and felt, in anticipation, the tortures of a lingering death. A single glance satisfied them that it was impossible to reach the ford, as the largest body of the savages stood in that direction, while on either hand they were so stationed as to cut off all hope of retreat. One of superior stature stood in the path, a few paces before them, laughing with demoniac exultation, as he took a deliberate aim, and discharged his rifle. This was the

signal of attack; several others fired at the same time, and a number of tomahawks whistled around the heads of the assailed party.

Colonel Hendrickson and Mr. Fennimore closed up on each side of Miss Pendleton, endeavouring to shield her with their own persons, and beating back the assailants with the most desperate courage. But they were overpowered by numbers. Colonel Hendrickson was dragged to the ground; Fennimore received a wound which caused him to reel in his saddle—a faint and sickly numbness was creeping over him. At this instant his horse wheeled suddenly, and plunged into the thicket. He rushed through the savage band, who in vain attempted to arrest his flight, and in a moment stood on the margin of the creek. The bank was perpendicular, arising to a considerable height above the water; but the noble animal,

animal, without hesitating, leaped forward, and alighted in the turbid stream, about midway from either shore. A few powerful struggles brought him to the opposite side, which was steep, but less precipitous than the other. Clambering up the bank, he soon reached the level of the plain, and darted through the forest with the swiftness of an arrow, bearing his rider, wounded, and nearly insensible, beyond the reach of pursuit.

## CHAP. VI.

THE place to which Mr. Lee was conducted by his captors, was situated in a secluded valley, among a range of low hills. At a spot from which the underbrush had been cleared away, so as to form an open space, shaded by tall trees, a number of Indian warriors, armed and painted for war, were arranged in a circle, and seated upon the ground. In the centre, strongly bound to a tree, was a man of large stature, whose face was painted black—an indication, as Mr. Lee recollected to have heard, that the prisoner was doomed to death. Near the victim was a lady, also

also bound, in whom the eye of our young friend instantly recognised the companion of his childhood—the idol of his heart—the long-loved Virginia Pendleton.

The warriors of the newly-arrived party were received with much ceremony by their friends, with whom they took their seats, while Mr. Lee and Hark were placed within the circle. A conversation ensued, in which only the older and more conspicuous of the warriors participated. They spoke with deliberation, but with much emphasis; and from their pointing frequently towards the east, it was inferred that they were severally relating to each other the incidents of the late predatory excursion.

Their attention was then directed towards their prisoners, and the interest with which they referred to him who was bound to the tree, who was colonel

Hendrickson, showed that they exulted in his capture with no ordinary degree of triumph. One of the warriors approached him, and addressed to him a speech, in which he seemed to pour out a volume of eloquent hatred, contempt, and ridicule, upon the defenceless captive, often brandishing his tomahawk as he spoke, and describing, with gestures too significant to be mistaken, the tortures that were proposed to be inflicted. The unfortunate gentleman eyed him with perfect composure, and listened to his speech without shewing the least appearance of fear or irritation. Several warriors then placed themselves in front of the captive, and prepared to throw their tomahawks.

Mr. Lee, whose good-nature and chivalrous feelings began to be warmly enlisted, now sprung up, and rushing towards the victim, exclaimed to the torturers—"Gentlemen! gentlemen Indians!

dians! consider what you are about—don't murder the gentleman! If he has done you any harm, I'll be security that he shall make you ample satisfaction;" while poor Virginia shrieked and buried her face in her hands. In a moment George Lee was at her side—"Virginia, dear Virginia!" he cried, "don't be alarmed; they shall not touch you—I'll fight for you, while there is a drop of blood in my veins!" but the Indians did not intend to slay their prisoner. Paying no attention to the distress of his friends, which only afforded them amusement, they threw their tomahawks, one after another, in such a manner as to strike them into the tree immediately over his head, each striving to come as near as possible to the mark without actually hitting it. Others came, and threw spears in the same mode, and a variety of other means were used to torture and intimidate

their victim, and to induce him to degrade himself by showing some symptom of alarm; but all to no purpose: colonel Hendrickson was well acquainted with the habits of his enemies; he had prepared himself to die, and faced his savage persecutors with the composure of intrepid resignation.

The feelings of his companions in misfortune may be better imagined than described. The unhappy Virginia, though her high spirit enabled her to display a show of resignation, felt herself bowed down by this unexpected calamity. The calm fortitude of her brave relative, while it won her admiration and stimulated her courage, made her heart bleed for the sufferings of one so worthy of a nobler fate. Mr. Lee had ceased to entertain any fears for his own safety, but his love for Virginia, and his native goodness of heart, induced him to sympathize deeply with his

his fellow-sufferers; while Hark, who had withdrawn himself from observation as much as possible, was lying on the ground, coiled up, gnawing a bone that had been thrown to him, and hiding another which he had stolen, casting stealthy and watchful glances around him all the while, as if in constant dread of harm, but lying so motionless, that his eye alone afforded the slightest indication of his apprehension.

At length the shades of night closed in, and the warriors prepared for repose. Colonel Hendrickson remained tied to the tree; Miss Pendleton sat not far from him on the ground, but no intention was shown of offering her anything to lie upon, or any covering to protect her from the night air. Mr. Lee was more favoured, for as the Indians happened to have several blankets among the plunder recently taken, one of these was thrown to him. Our friend George immediately

immediately threw his blanket over the shoulders of Virginia, and obliging Hark to resign a similar present that had been made to him, was enabled effectually to protect the young lady from the cold. The Indians interposed no objection to these arrangements; though they look upon acts of gallantry with sovereign contempt, they know how to estimate a humane action, and thought none the less of Mr. George Lee, for this sacrifice of his own comfort in favour of *a woman of his tribe.*

Silence reigned throughout the camp. Not a sound was heard but the footstep of the armed sentinels, who moved incessantly about, watching the prisoners with jealous eye, and listening with intense eagerness to catch the most distant sound which might announce the approach of an enemy. As they glided slowly in the shade of night, rendered still deeper by the thick shadows of the overhanging

overhanging forest, and but slightly relieved by the faint glow of an expiring fire, they seemed more like spectres than human beings. Colonel Hendrickson remained in a standing posture, bound securely and painfully to a great tree, which was probably destined to be his place of execution. He knew that the Indians more frequently carry to their villages the prisoners destined to death by torture, in order that the women, the children, and the whole tribe, may participate in the horrid entertainment, and derive instruction in the dreadful rites of cruelty. A conformity with that custom might procure him a reprieve for a few days, though it would enhance the tortures that inevitably awaited him; while a more speedy death on the spot they then occupied would cut off all hope of rescue. Occupied with such reflections, it was impossible to sleep; but though denied repose,

repose, he was not without consolation. Colonel Hendrickson was a Christian, and in this trying hour, when enduring torture, and anticipating a lingering and excruciating death, he submitted with the most perfect composure to the will of the great Disposer of all events. He prayed silently, but with fervour and sincerity, in the full belief that he was heard, and that his was "the fervent effectual prayer of the righteous," which availeth much to the humble petitioner. His devotional feelings became quickened and elevated by this exercise, until at last the overflowings of his heart burst from his lips in audible and eloquent language.

Virginia, who dozed, but did not sleep, raised her head when these solemn accents struck her ear. The embers of a nearly-extinguished fire threw a faint glare over the figure of colonel Hendrickson, and rendered his features

distinctly

distinctly visible, while an impenetrable veil of darkness hung around. The forms of the Indian warriors could be barely distinguished, as they reposed on the ground, and raised their heads at this unexpected interruption. Their dim outlines only could be faintly traced in the uncertain light, except where, here and there, a scattered ray fell upon the harsh visage of a savage warrior, and for a moment lighted up the ferocious lineaments. The only object upon which the expiring blaze threw its beams directly, was the victim prisoner, whose person resembled the prominent figure in a gloomy and deeply-shaded picture. His appearance was strikingly sublime: his large frame, placed thus in bold relief, and dimly illuminated, assumed gigantic dimensions to the fancy of the beholder. His face was serene and tranquil, his full, bold eye, meekly raised towards heaven. Neither fear nor resentment

ment marked his features; all was hope, confidence, and calm self-possession: his voice was full and manly; his enunciation deliberate, though impassioned; his language, the bold, the beautiful, the affecting phraseology of the holy scriptures. Even the eye of the savage was attracted by this picturesque and striking spectacle, exhibited in the lone wilderness, and at the midnight hour; and all gazed upon it in wonder and in silence. They knew their prisoner to be a distinguished warrior, before whose arm some of the most renowned of their tribe had fallen; and when they heard his solemn voice, beheld his dignified composure, and saw him in the act of holding converse with the Master of life, under circumstances so calculated to impress the imagination, they regarded him as a being under supernatural protection, and were filled with awe. And although they would have felt a

dread

dread in approaching him at that moment, they were the more determined to rid themselves as soon as possible of so hated and so powerful a foe.

Gradually the fire became extinguished, a thick cloud gathered over the camp, and total darkness shrouded the spot. The voice of the prisoner ceased, the warriors sunk again to their slumbers, and all was silent. The sentinels renewed their vigilance, and as their eyesight could now avail nothing, other precautions were used to prevent any attempt to escape on the part of the prisoners. It was near daybreak, when colonel Hendrickson felt a hand passing slowly from his feet upward along his person—and then another hand which evidently grasped a knife. He knew that almost every Indian has some individual quarrel to avenge upon the white men, which he broods over in secret, until a favourable opportunity enables him

him to satiate his appetite for vengeance; and he supposed that some warrior who had lost a relative in battle, was now about to take that revenge which is so grateful to their lust of blood. Brave as he was, a chill crept over him, and the blood almost ceased to flow in his veins, as he felt the hand of the murderer, cautiously seeking out, as he supposed, the vital spot, into which he might plunge his weapon with the certainty of reaching the life of his victim. The point of the knife was pressed to his back, and he expected to feel the steel passing through from that direction, when the cord that bound his hands was suddenly cut, and in a moment he stood free from his bonds. His unknown friend glided away, with a step as noiseless as that with which he had approached; and the released prisoner had now to exert his own ingenuity in effecting his escape.

His

His determination was soon made. To attempt to release his companions would jeopard all their lives; and should he succeed in escaping with them from the camp, it was next to impossible that such a party could elude the pursuit of a large number of skilful warriors, who would follow them at the break of day, which could be little more than an hour distant. But he was himself a woodsman—hardy, cunning, and swift of foot; with a start of an hour, he believed he could outstrip the fleetest of the savage warriors, and bring a rescue to his friends, whose lives were probably not in immediate danger. He stole silently from the camp, passed the sentinels, and in a few minutes was rapidly making his way through the forest, with unerring skill, towards the waters of the Ohio.

Great was the astonishment, and bitter the imprecations, of the savages, when they discovered, at the first dawn

of

of day, the escape of their prisoner. They were almost frantic with disappointment and fury, and were ready to sacrifice their remaining prisoners to their rage. Suspicion very naturally fell upon them, as having been instrumental in the escape of colonel Hendrickson; but after a close examination, it did not appear that Mr. Lee or Miss Pendleton had moved. At length, a track, different from that of an Indian, was discovered near the tree to which the victim had been tied, and a yell of rage was uttered by the whole gang: it was the track of Hark Short, the snake-killer, who, it was now perceived, was also missing.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VII.

No sooner were these discoveries made, than the greater portion of the warriors set out in immediate pursuit of the fugitives, while a few remained to guard the prisoners. Mr. Lee and Miss Pendleton were now seated near each other, and for the first time had the opportunity of conversing together; and the latter, addressing her former playmate with the frankness due to so old an acquaintance, expressed her regret for his misfortune, while she could not help congratulating herself on having a friend near her at so trying a period.

"Ah, cousin Virginia!" exclaimed George,

George, " how willingly would I bear captivity, or even death, to do you a service!"

This speech savoured too much of gallantry for the time and place, and Miss Pendleton looked very grave.

" Dear Virginia," continued George, " don't be cast down; they will not have the heart to do you any harm. I have been a brother to you all my life —you have been kinder to me, and dearer to me, than a sister—and they shall not separate us, while I have a drop of blood in my veins."

" Thank you, cousin George," was all that Virginia could reply, while the tears started from her eyes. This touching proof of affection went to her heart, and her noble nature enabled her to comprehend the full extent of the sacrifice that her kind-hearted companion was willing to make for her. Had that affection flowed only from the friendship

ship of the playmate of her early years, it would have been most grateful to her feelings; but sensible as she was, that it resulted from a hopeless passion, which she could not encourage without insincerity, nor without cherishing hopes which she felt could never be realized, it distressed and pained her.

She endeavoured to change the subject; but the single-hearted George always came back to the same point, and continually exclaimed—"Poor Virginia!"—"Dear cousin Virginia!"—"To think that *you, you* should be here, a prisoner among savages!"

At length a new thought seemed to strike him; and starting up suddenly, he beckoned the Indian to him, who seemed to have been the chief person in the party by which he was taken. This person had seemed to claim George as his own prisoner, and had treated him with a show of kindness. To him

Lee now offered to give any ransom which might be demanded for the liberty of Miss Pendleton, assuring the Indian of his ability to comply with any contract which he might make.

The Indian, who spoke a little broken English, readily understood the proposition, and listened to it with interest.—"Hugh!" said he; "how much?"

George, who was no great hand at making a bargain, and was besides too much in love to think of standing upon trifles, replied eagerly, that he would give all he was worth for her liberation.

"Velly good!" replied the Indian, perfectly comprehending the offer; "how much—how much you got?"

George told him that he owned a thousand acres of land; but the Indian shook his head, and swinging his arms with a lordly contempt, as he pointed to the vast forest around them, gave the Virginian

Virginian to understand that he had land enough.

The Indian then inquired if he had any "*whiskee?*"

George had no whiskey, but said he had money enough to buy boat-loads of it, and promised to give his captor as much as would keep the whole tribe drunk for a month.

"Hugh! velly good!" exclaimed the delighted Indian; who then inquired for tobacco.

"Plenty, plenty, my dear fellow," cried George, who thought he was making a fine bargain; "I raise ever so much on my plantation every year. You shall have as much as you can use all your life!"

"How much hos?" inquired the warrior.

"Horses! no man in Virginia has more horses, or finer ones. I have more than forty on my plantation now, as fine blooded animals as ever you saw."

"How much?" inquired the Indian, who had caught the meaning sufficiently to see that a large number was intended to be expressed, but without understanding exactly how many.

George was at a loss how to explain, until the Indian directed him to hold up his fingers. He then held up both hands, to express ten.

The Indian nodded.

Mr. Lee repeated the operation, and the Indian nodded with still greater satisfaction; and this dumb-show was carried on until Mr. Lee had signified that he was willing to give forty horses, in addition to the whiskey and tobacco before stipulated, for the ransom of the lady of his heart.

Avarice is a passion which exists in some form in every state of society; the Indian can make all the other feelings and propensities of his nature bend to his interest, as well as the most civilized inhabitant

inhabitant of a commercial city. The wealth of George Lee had its usual effect upon his captor. Naturally distrustful, he had some misgivings as to the sincerity of so generous an offer, and he could hardly conceive how one man could be so rich as to possess so many horses, and such a quantity of whiskey and tobacco; but then Mr. Lee had an ingenuous countenance, and a rather imposing person and appearance, and, upon the whole, the Indian felt disposed to credit his word. Inasmuch, however, as he had proffered freely thus far, the crafty savage determined to try how far he might extort from the liberality of his captive; and he again inquired if Mr. Lee had nothing more to offer.

George considered, and muttered aside—"Yes, I have a great gang of negroes, but I can't give them to be roasted and eaten by the savages; no,

plague on it, I couldn't have the heart to send my black people here," and he prudently replied, that he had nothing more to give.

The warrior shook his head, and intimated, that unless more was offered, he should marry the lady himself.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the terrified lover; "take all I have—take my farm—take my black people! I have a hundred likely negroes—you shall have them all!"

"Nigger!" said the Indian, "velly good—help squaw to make corn—how much nigger?"

George had now to go through the tedious process of counting his fingers, frequently stopping, in hopes that the cupidity of the savage would be satisfied without taking all; but the latter possessed that faculty of the wily gambler, or the experienced merchant, which enables its possessor to judge from the countenance

countenance of the subject under operation, whether he is still able to bear a little more depletion, and continued to shake his head, until George declared that the black people were all counted. He then coolly remarked that he should keep the woman himself.

George flew into a rage, and then burst into tears.—"You unconscionable rascal!" he cried, "will nothing satisfy you? I offer you all I have in the world, for the liberty of this lady—I am willing, besides, to stay and serve you myself all my life. Set her free, you avaricious dog, and I will stay and be overseer for you among my own negroes!"

"The white man has a forked tongue," replied the warrior, calmly; "when he offered horses, whiskey, and tobacco for his squaw, I thought he was honest. White men are fools; they will give all they have for a pale-faced woman. But

when the white man offers to sell himself, to be a servant to the Indian women, and to send his squaw back to the thirteen fires, I know that he speaks lies."

So saying, he walked off. But the overture had a good effect. The idea of procuring a valuable ransom for Miss Pendleton, determined the Indians to treat her with kindness. A lodge of mats was prepared for her, and she soon found herself placed in a situation of comparative comfort. She was not an inattentive listener to the preceding conversation. The solicitude and generosity of Mr. Lee affected her deeply: but she was generous herself, and noble natures know how to receive, as well as to confer obligations. Conscious that her warm-hearted friend was offering no more than she would have freely given to redeem him, or any other human being from so dreadful a fate, she did not attempt

attempt to interfere, until he proposed to become a slave himself: then she exclaimed—"No! not so, George—cousin George Lee—dear George——" but he heard her not, and in the vehemence of his exertions in her behalf, he lost perhaps the tenderest words that she had ever addressed to him, since the days of their childhood.

But however Miss Pendleton's heart might have been awakened to sensations of gratitude, she felt that this was not the time nor place to indulge them; and in the exhausted state of her mind and body, she readily and hastily accepted the shelter prepared for her, and throwing herself, stupified with sufferings of various kinds, upon a mat, endeavoured to find repose. She had sunk into a feverish slumber, when she was awaked by the noise of loud and triumphant shouting. The camp was again crowded with Indian warriors; the party

which had gone in pursuit of the fugitives was returned; they had overtaken colonel Hendrickson, and that unfortunate gentleman was again a prisoner. His fate was now sealed. The determination which had originally been formed, of carrying him to the village of the captors, to be publicly sacrificed, was now abandoned; and the savages determined to gratify their eager thirst for his blood, by torturing him at the stake, without further delay. He was again bound, and preparations were made for the awful solemnity. Some of the savages employed themselves in painting their faces and bodies, to render them the more terrific; others were whetting the edges of their tomahawks and knives; and some were endeavouring to excite their own passions, and those of their companions, to the utmost pitch of fury, by hideous yelling, by violent gesticulations, and by pouring out bitter

bitter execrations upon their defenceless prisoner.

"I saw you in the dark and blood-ground," cried one, drawing the back of his knife, in mockery, across the throat of the victim; "you killed my brother there, and I will have your heart's blood!"

"You slew my son," shrieked a hoary-headed savage; "his bones lie unburied in the villages of the white men—his scalp is hanging over the door of your wigwam, but his spirit shall rejoice in the agonies of your death!"

"You led the warriors of your tribe to battle," exclaimed a young warrior, at he flourished his tomahawk over the head of the veteran pioneer, "when the long knives met the red man on the banks of the big river—my father fell there—your foot was on his neck—I will trample on your mangled body; the wolf shall feed upon your flesh—the

bird of night shall flap her wings over your carcase, and the serpent shall crawl about your bones!"

"Revenge is sweet!" shouted one.

"Revenge! revenge!" echoed many voices.

"It is good and pleasing to the spirit of the warrior, to witness the death-pang of the enemy he hates!" exclaimed another human monster.

"The white man is our enemy!"

"He is the serpent that stung our fathers!"

"He is the prowling fox that stole away our game!"

"He is the hurricane that scattered our wigwams, and destroyed our corn-fields!"

"He drove us from our hunting-grounds, and trampled, in scorn, upon the bones of our fathers!"

"His knife has drunk the blood of the red man; the blood of our women and our children is on his hands!"

"Let

"Let him perish in torture!"

"Let him be slowly consumed by fire!"

"The great Spirit will laugh, when he sees the white man writhing in agony!"

"The spirits of our fathers will rejoice —they will shout and clap their hands in the world of shades, when they hear the shrieks of the white warrior!"

These exclamations were uttered severally by different individuals, in the Indian tongue, with which colonel Hendrickson was acquainted, in the emphatic tones of savage declamation, and with that earnestness of gesticulation which renders their eloquence so impressive. There were others who addressed the victim in coarser language, loading him with opprobrious epithets, and pouring out the bitterness of their malignant hearts, in copious streams of vulgar invective. And now the wood

was

was piled about the victim; torches were lighted, and blazing brands snatched from the fire, and the hellish crew, flourishing them around their heads, danced round the prisoner, with that malignant joy with which devils and damned spirits may be supposed to exult in the agonies of a fallen soul.

At length a chief stepped forward, and commanded silence—"White man," said he, "are you ready to die?"

"I am!" replied the brave Kentuckian, in a calm tone: "the white man's God has whispered peace to my soul."

"Can the God of the white man save you from torture? Can he prevent you from feeling pain when your flesh shall be torn—when your limbs shall be separated, one by one, from your body, and the slow flames shall scorch, without consuming, your miserable carcase?"

"My God is a merciful God," replied the undaunted pioneer; "his ear is ever open

open to the prayers of those who put their trust in him: he has filled my heart with courage: I have no fear of death—blessed for ever be the Lord God of Israel!" Then raising his eyes upward, he exclaimed, with devout fervour—"Make haste, oh God, to deliver me! make haste to help me, oh Lord! Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul—let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my heart!"

Virginia, who had thus far endeavoured to restrain her feelings, now rushed forward, and gliding rapidly through the circle of warriors, threw herself upon her uncle's bosom, exclaiming in frantic accents—"Let us die together!" while Mr. George Lee, who had gazed on the preceding scene with stupid wonder, sought to follow her, determined to share her fate. Being prevented, he swore that it was "the most infamous transaction

tion he had ever witnessed, and that if he got back to old Virginia, he would have satisfaction, at the risk of his life."

And now the whole fury of the savage band was ready to be poured upon their devoted but heroic prisoner, when the report of a single rifle rang through the woods, and the principal chief, who stood alone, received a death-wound. A volley instantly followed, and every ball being aimed by a skilful hand at a particular object, brought one of the Indian warriors to the ground; in another minute, a band of hardy backwoodsmen, headed by Fennimore and Colburn, rushed into the camp. Before the Indians had time to array themselves for battle, the bonds of colonel Hendrickson were cut, and Fennimore had passed one arm round Miss Pendleton, while he prepared to defend her with the other. The assailants rushed upon the savage band, and hewed them down with

desperate

desperate valour. Colonel Hendrickson snatched up a war-club, and plunged into the thickest of the fight. Nor was George Lee backward; he first sought Virginia, and finding her supported by the young soldier, he caught up a weapon, and mingled in the battle, with more hearty good-will than he had for some days shown for any operation in which he was called upon to join, except that of eating. The valour and skill of the backwoodsmen soon prevailed. It was impossible to withstand their fury. Colonel Hendrickson seemed a new man; he shouted until the woods resounded with his battle-cry, and his friends, animated by the sound of his voice, returned the yell, and pressed on with determined vigour. They literally cried aloud and spared not. The Indians sounded their terrific war-whoop; but that cry, so dreadful to the white man, so full of thrilling horror to the

the hearts of the borderers who have heard it in the lone hour of night, breaking in upon the repose of the wilderness, and ringing the death-knell of the mother and the infant, was drowned in the louder shouts of the Kentucky warriors. The first fire had reduced the savages to a number less than that of the assailants, and they now stood opposed to men who were their superiors in bodily strength, their equals in courage, and in all the arts of border warfare. Thus overmatched, they maintained the fight for but a little while, when they began to give back; the whites still pressed on, cutting them down, with the most revengeful hostility, at every step. The battle soon became a massacre, for the Kentuckians not having lost a single man, the disparity of force was becoming greater every moment; and those who had so often witnessed the scenes of savage barbarity, or mourned over the affecting

fecting consequences of that unsparing warfare, now dealt their blows with unrelenting animosity.

So long as the battle raged round the spot where Miss Pendleton stood, Fennimore joined in it, supporting her with his arm, and shielding her with his body, while he performed a soldier's duty with his sword. But when the Indians began to give way, he withdrew from the fight, and gave his whole attention to his fair charge. Not so Mr. George Lee; animated with a newly-awakened fury, smeared with blood, and shouting like a madman, he rushed forward among the foremost, beating down the stoutest warriors with his war-club, and taking full satisfaction for all the fright, the sufferings, and the hunger, he had endured. While thus engaged, he saw the Indian who had captured him, and had saved his life, struck down by a sturdy backwoodsman, who was aiming the deathblow at his prostrate foe.

"Don't

"Don't strike!" cried George, "that's a good fellow—he treated me well——"

But he spoke to deaf ears; the tomahawk fell, and the only Indian in whom he had seen any thing to conciliate his goodwill, slept with the mangled dead.

"Bless me!" cried George—"what a bloody business! They are all alike—Indians and Kentuckians—a blood-thirsty set."

Having uttered this moral reflection, he drew his gory hand across his brow, to wipe off the big drops of perspiration. The battle swept on past him, like a heavy storm, which no human hand can stay, and his momentary pause gave him time to look round. The ground was strewed with the dead and dying; wherever he turned his eye, it fell on distorted features, and gaping wounds, from which the crimson current still flowed. He stepped forward, and the blood gurgled under his footstep. Groans and convulsive

convulsive breathings fell upon his ear. His heart sickened at the scene of horror, and he slowly retraced his steps to the camp fire of the vanquished Indians.

Colonel Hendrickson and young Colburn, who fought side by side through the whole contest, were the last to relinquish the pursuit. The veteran seemed to be animated with a supernatural strength and activity, and to be actuated by an inhuman ferocity. Wherever his blow fell, it crushed; but his fury was unabated. Blood seemed to whet his appetite for blood. As he struck down the last enemy within his reach, he halted, and his eye seemed to gloat upon the victims of his revenge. His cheek was flushed, his nostrils distended, and his muscles full of action, like those of a pawing war-horse. In a moment this excitement began to subside, and he exclaimed—"God forgive my soul the sin of blood-guiltiness!"

Colburn

Colborn looked at him with astonishment.

The veteran turned towards him, and said—"Young man, I have this hour shewn how frail are our best intentions. I was once a soldier of some note; but when I became a Christian, and felt the obligation to love all men, and forgive my enemies, I determined to fight no more, except in defence of my home or country. I even prayed that I might have strength to forgive an injury which had rankled in my bosom for years. You were too young to remember my boy—my only son, who was butchered in my presence by this very tribe. Dearly did I revenge his death, and devoutly did I afterwards pray that I might forgive it. For years have I disciplined my feelings so severely, that I had thought the last spark of hatred was extinguished, and that my last days would glide away in charity with men—

men—in peace with God. When I stood a prisoner, bound to the stake, and expecting a miserable death, I endeavoured to subdue every vindictive feeling. I prayed that I might die the death of the righteous, and felt that peace which the world cannot give nor take away. When it pleased God to cut my bands asunder, it was my right and my duty to defend the life which He spared, and the friends who were dear to me. But no sooner did I raise my armed hand, than all my former feelings of vengeance against the race who had slain my child were kindled up. Hatred, long smothered, broke forth with implacable fury, and I tasted the sweets of revenge. It was a bad, a wicked feeling. It is a dreadful—an unholy passion. Take warning from me, my young friend; never let the passion of revenge find a place in your bosom. It will poison your best

best enjoyments—destroy your noblest feelings—and make shipwreck of your purest hopes. God preserve you from hating as I have hated—from suffering as I have suffered!"

## CHAP. VIII.

SEVERAL days had succeeded the termination of the adventure described in our last chapter, and the parties were all assembled at the mansion of colonel Hendrickson. This was a house somewhat larger than ordinary, built of hewn logs, after the plain but comfortable fashion of the country. There was not the slightest attempt at ornament, but every thing was substantial and neat; and a stranger might see, at a glance, that it was the abode of hospitality and abundance. A large farm, lying around, consisted of extensive fields, newly cleared, whose deep rich

soil was now heavily loaded with luxuriant crops of tobacco and corn. A large number of negroes, decently clothed, cheerful, and contented, were engaged in the various labours of agriculture.

The colonel's family consisted of himself, his wife, and an only daughter, a beautiful girl of eighteen, who combined in her person and manners the truly feminine gracefulness, the easy politeness, the cordiality, and frankness, so remarkably characteristic of the ladies of Kentucky, who unite, with singular tact and elegance, the noble independence and generous kindness of their country, with the gentleness and delicacy appropriate to their sex.

This young lady was now walking, arm in arm, with William Colburn, on the beautiful lawn in front of the house. It was one of those fine autumnal days, which are thought to be peculiar to the western

western country, when the atmosphere is mild, and in a state of perfect repose, the leaves of the forest are tinged with a variety of rich and gorgeous but pensive hues, and every natural object wore the sober drapery and the serene aspect of the departing year. The sun shone brightly—the soft warm air created a delightful sense of luxurious enjoyment; and the young couple that sauntered together, conversing in expressive glances, and tones of confiding affection, were not the least interesting objects in the picturesque landscape.

Miss Pendleton sat at a window, with Mr. George Lee. This young gentleman was as much in love as ever, and as difficult to be persuaded that it was not altogether possible and proper for his fair relative to return his passion. It was beyond the power of language, and the art of logic, to convince him that he had not the best claim to her

affections. He was a gentleman of good family, and had an ample estate; he had been her companion from infancy, and had loved her from the first dawn of reason. These arguments he now urged, for the hundredth time, with all the eloquence of which he was master, not forgetting to insist on the priority of his suit.

"Who is there, cousin Virginia, who has loved you as long as I have? or who will ever love you half as much? When we were children, did I not climb the tallest trees in the woods, at the risk of my neck, to gather grapes for you, or to catch young squirrels or birds for you to play with?"

"I am inclined to think, cousin George, that you had a natural propensity for such feats, which required but little stimulus to bring it into action."

"There it is again! I have been trying all my life to convince you of my love

love for you—and you will never believe it."

"Do not do me injustice; I have always known your feelings—have always been sincerely grateful for your kindness—have always valued and prized your friendship——"

"Friendship! there it is again; it is a shame to call such devoted love as mine by the cold name of friendship. I love you better than my own life; I have shown that."

"You have indeed," replied Virginia, with much emotion; "and I should be most ungrateful not to be deeply affected by your kindness, by an affection so long continued and disinterested. But it is painful, Mr. Lee——"

"Don't, don't call me *Mr. Lee.* You know, Virginia, I can never stand that. Refuse me, if you will—but don't treat me as a stranger."

"I was only going to remark how

painful it is to see you persevere in a suit which I have never encouraged—and which I have so often—so very often—declined. I feel towards you, cousin George, all the affection of a relative; if you were my only brother, my feelings and sentiments in regard to you could hardly be different from what they are. More than this we cannot be to each other."

"There it is again—that is just the way you always wind up. I can't for my soul understand you. *Why*, if you love me so much, will you not marry me?"

Miss Pendleton, though grieved, and even shocked, at the perseverance of her generous but silly lover, could not repress a melancholy smile as she replied—"Because there is a great difference, George, between sisterly affection, and that love which is necessary to happiness in marriage."

"Well,

"Well, I cannot for my life see that. I love you like a brother; yet I wish to marry you, to live for you, to die for you, to do any thing for you, that would make you happy."

"But if marrying you would not conduce to my happiness, what then?"

"Dear Virginia, you could not help being happy. I should be devoted to you. I have a large fortune, a fine house, plenty of servants, and every thing that heart could wish."

"Let us drop the subject, Mr. Lee, now and for ever."

George rose, and walked across the room.

"So you are determined not to marry me?"

"I have always told you so."

"Virginia, it is not for myself that I care; it is for your happiness that I am interested. I cannot bear to leave you here in this cabin, in these wild woods,

and in the neighbourhood of those dreadful savages. Say you will go back to the Old Dominion, live with my mother, and be my sister; let me divide my fortune equally with you; and I will never again ask you to be my wife."

She was deeply affected. She had always known that this simple young man, although almost an idiot in intellect, was generous, and sincerely attached to her. She had seen him forsake an affluent home, and pleasures to which he was fatally addicted, to follow her to the wilderness. She had been the innocent means of leading him into captivity and suffering. There he had shown his devotion to her, in the most extravagant, yet touching, offers of self-sacrifice. All this passed rapidly through her mind; and his last offer brought tears into her eyes.

"No, George," said she, rising, and offering her hand, which he grasped with

with a lover's eagerness, "I cannot accept your offer, nor is it necessary—I cannot be your wife; but if ever I should need a friend, or a brother, I will frankly apply to you—if ever I shall be destitute of a home or a protector, most willingly will I seek them under your mother's roof." So saying, she left the room.

While this scene went forward, colonel Hendrickson and Mr. Fennimore were engaged in close consultation in the garden. Mr. Fennimore, after communicating the facts with which the reader is already acquainted, proceeded as follows:—"Major Heyward having satisfied me that my mother had no legal claim upon him, added that he had already made his will, by which he had bequeathed his whole estate to Miss Pendleton, who had been brought up as his adopted child, and who, having been reared in the expectation of being his sole heiress, could not now be disinherit-

ed without injustice; nor could his affection for her, which was that of a father, permit him to make any disposition of his fortune to the prejudice of her interest: but he desired to be reconciled to my mother, and spoke of making some provision for her. That will, you are aware, has been lost. I am the heir at law of my uncle, and I have come to you, as the legal guardian of Miss Pendleton, to say that I intend to fulfil strictly his intentions. This instrument contains a formal relinquishment and transfer to her, of all my right, title, and claim, to the whole of my deceased uncle's estate. This was one of the objects of my visit here; the other is to bring to justice the murderer of major Heyward, who I am satisfied is Micajah Harpe, and who, with the assistance of our friend Mr. Colburn, I have traced to this neighbourhood."

"That paper," replied the colonel, "I shall

shall not accept, without consulting Miss Pendleton. I had determined to divide my own property equally between her and my daughter. I shall apprize her of my intention, and let her decide for herself on your offer."

"But I hope, my dear sir, that you will advise her that it is her duty to accept that which of right belongs to her."

"If my advice is asked," said colonel Hendrickson, "I will give such as I think it becomes my niece to accept. You are the proper heir of your uncle. Had he left all his property to her, he would have done wrong; and I shall certainly not advise her to avail herself of your generosity."

## CHAP. IX.

A HAPPY company was assembled that evening at the mansion of colonel Hendrickson, consisting of the agreeable and interesting personages mentioned in the last chapter, together with several young people who had dropped in during the afternoon, and who were, of course, expected to spend the night; for in this region of generous living and abundant hospitality, a visit of a few hours is a thing not to be thought of; the fashion of *making calls*, which furnishes such pleasant occupation to the city belle, is not practised; and a young lady always carries with her, on such occasions, a wardrobe

wardrobe that will serve for at least a week.

Colonel Hendrickson was comfortably seated in his arm-chair, by the side of an immense fire-place, filled with one of those enormous piles of wood, which the Kentuckians build up, in the hospitable desire of giving a warm reception to their friends; while the door was judiciously left wide open, to admit a free circulation of frosty air. The apartment was spacious, and the plain old-fashioned furniture, consisting of a few articles, each of which was particularly large and inconvenient, was such as may be readily imagined by those of my readers who are acquainted with the habits of the more wealthy of the pioneers; and those who have not that advantage, may fancy it what they please, for it has little to do with the story. One article, however, must not be passed over, because it is characteristic of the times and the country—

country—this was a bed, covered with a snow-white counterpane, and surrounded by a fine suit of curtains; for as cabins—by which we mean log-houses—however large, contain but few apartments, all of them are occupied as sleeping-rooms, and the common sitting-room is always my lady's chamber. One consequence of this fashion is, an excessive and even ostentatious neatness, rendered necessary by the fact, that every apartment is open to the inspection of visiters; and another is, that the mistress of the mansion must be an early riser, that her room may be put in order before breakfast, and the visiters must retire early at night, to avoid encroaching upon her regular hours.

There was an engraved portrait of general Washington hanging over the fire-place, and above it a rifle, with a powder-horn and shot-pouch. Of the rest, it is enough to say, that the whole interior

interior of this primitive dwelling bore evidence that it was the residence of comfort and abundance—that it was the habitation of a fine, liberal old gentleman, and a handsome, neat, industrious, stately, old lady. It was, as we have seen, forty years ago, and this worthy couple were both revolutionary patriots, who, having served their country well in their respective departments, were now enjoying their laurels in content and competency. The worthy lady, who sat in the corner opposite to her husband, diligently plying her knitting-needles, still retained traces of great beauty, and wore an air of demure sedateness, mingled with a feminine, lady-like grace, that contrasted finely with the bold, manly countenance of her lord. She was a dear old lady; few of the girls were as handsome, and none of them looked half so natural. Her soft eye beamed with benevolence, the

charities

charities of life were in her smile, and even her snow-white cap had a matronly and christian-like appearance, which invited respect. Over the back of her chair hung the almanac for the current year, conveniently at hand for frequent reference, on whose margin might be seen numerous marks, made with a pencil, or still oftener with the point of a needle, denoting certain days on which remarkable events had happened in the family, such as the birth of a negro, or a brood of chickens, or the sale of a crop of tobacco; and marking the times in the age of the moon most proper for planting particular seeds, or shearing sheep, or weaning children.

When supper was announced, the whole party was seated round a large table, loaded with substantials, well cooked, and piping hot. Other people may know the luxury of good eating, but the Kentuckians practise it. Before

fore the master of the house was an ample dish of fried chickens, dressed with cream and parsley, a little farther up were venison steaks, then fried ham; then there was cold ham, and chipped beef, and sausages, and, better than all, there was a fine dish of *hominy*, and a noble pile of sweet-potatoes. Of the eatables composed of bread-stuffs, served in various shapes, no one who has had the misfortune to be *raised* north of Mason and Dixon's line, can form an adequate conception. The biscuits, white, light, spungy, and smoking hot —the wheat bread, smoking hot—the corn bread, smoking hot—and the cakes, almost red hot—these are luxuries which defy the power of description, and the excellent qualities of which can only be estimated truly by that infallible test which the old adage supposes to be necessary in reference to a pudding. There was no lack of sweatmeats and pastry; but

but the pride of the feast were the great pitchers of milk—sweet-milk, sour-milk, and butter-milk; for, after all, milk is the staff of life, and is a thousand times better than the cold water so much lauded by modern philosophers. There were other good things; but we shall content ourselves with mentioning a capital cup of coffee, and leave the reader to form his own conclusions as to the comforts of a tea-table in the backwoods.

After supper, when the company were again ranged about the fire, the conversation took a lively turn; hunting, war, and love, naturally became the leading subjects. The old, when they are benevolent, love the conversation of the young. Genuine simplicity of character is always shown in a relish for hearing the sentiments, and witnessing the joys of youth. Persons of the strongest minds often read children's books

books with interest, and mingle with delight in their sports. Colonel Hendrickson was one of those. Although dignified in his manners, and even austere in his appearance, he could unbend, and win the eager attention of a youthful circle by his cheerful sallies. On this evening he was in high spirits, and joined freely in the mirth of his guests. —"I will tell you," said he, "a very singular *hunting adventure*, which happened when Mrs. Hendrickson and I were both young people——"

"Mr. Hendrickson," interposed the venerable lady mildly, but with a little spice of one having authority, "I would not tell that story now."

"Why not, my dear? It is a good story."

"But you have told it so often, Mr. Hendrickson."

"No matter for that, my dear; our guests have never heard it.—You must know,"

know," said he, while the young folks all assumed the attitude of eager listeners, " that my father was a wealthy farmer, in the western part of Virginia. We lived near the mountain, and I learned to hunt when I was a mere boy. We had plenty of servants, and I had little else to do than to follow my own inclination. At fourteen I used to break my father's colts, and had gained the reputation of a daring rider; at the same age I could track a deer as successfully as the most experienced hunter; and before I was grown, I had been a volunteer among the Indians. At sixteen I began to get fond of going to see the young ladies; so that between my gun, my father's colts, and the girls, I was in a fair way of growing up a spoiled boy. Things went on in this way until I was twenty-one, then the Revolution came on, and saved me. War is a good thing in some respects; it

it furnishes employment for idle young men; it brings out the talents, and strengthens the character of those who are good for any thing; and disposes of many who would otherwise hang upon society, and be in the way of better folks. I joined a company that was raised in the neighbourhood, and was made an officer; and off I went, in a gay suit of regimentals, mounted on a fine horse, with a capital rifle in my hand, and a heart full of patriotism, and courage, and love. Perhaps you all want to know who I was in love with?"

Here the old lady began to fidget in her chair, and threw a deprecating look at her spouse, who nevertheless proceeded—"I was just of age, and my old dame there was seventeen, when the war broke out. Our fathers' estates joined, and we had known each other, intimately, from childhood. She was generally allowed by every body——"

"Mr.

"Mr. Hendrickson," exclaimed Mrs. Hendrickson, "I would leave *that* out."

"To be remarkably handsome," continued the colonel; "and what every body says must be true. She was, really, although I say it myself, a *very great beauty*."

"Well, I declare—you ought to be ashamed, Mr. Hendrickson!" interrupted the lady.

But the husband, who was used to these scattering shots, very composedly continued his story.—"She was a regular toast at the barbecues; and general Washington, then a colonel, once drank her health at a county meeting."

This reminiscence was better received by the worthy matron, who took a pinch of snuff, and then left the room, not without throwing a look of pride and affection at her good man as she passed; but as the tale was becoming rather personal, as respected herself, she remained

remained absent until near the close of it.

"I cannot say that we ever fell in love with each other; for our mutual affection commenced with childhood, grew with our growth, and filled our hearts so gradually, that it may be said to have formed a part of our natures. As for courtship, there was none; I rode to meeting with Caroline every Sunday—went with her to the races and barbecues—danced with her at every ball, and spent half of my time at her father's house. When returning home late in the evening, after an absence of several days, I used to stop at her father's, or at my own, just as happened to be most convenient; and felt myself as welcome at one as the other: but no explanation had taken place. When equipped for service, the last thing I did, before we marched away, was to go there in my new regimentals,

to

to take leave. She wept; but my mother and sisters did the same, and I thought nothing of it at the time.

"I was gone more than a year—was in several engagements — and went through a great variety of hardship and suffering. We were poorly paid, badly fed, and terribly thrashed by the regulars, while learning the discipline which enabled us to beat them in return. At length our company was completely destroyed; some were killed, some taken prisoners, some got sick, and a few grew tired of being patriots. The remainder were discharged, or transferred into other companies; and I obtained leave of absence. I had lost my horse, spent all my money, worn out my clothes, and had no means of travelling, except on foot. Patriotism, young gentlemen, was a poor business then, and is not much better now. Like Falstaff's honour, it will not set a limb; and I found

found to my sorrow that it would not keep out cold, or furnish a barefoot soldier with a pair of shoes; but it warmed the hearts and opened the doors of all true whigs; and I generally procured a meal and a night's lodging, at the close of each day's travel, under the roof of some friend to the cause of liberty.

"I had lately thought a great deal about Caroline. It was not until I parted from her, that I knew how necessary she was to my happiness. I now recollected her remarks, and recalled with delight the amusements in which we had participated together. When lying upon the ground in my cheerless tent, or keeping guard at some solitary outpost, I amused the weary hours in forming plans for the future, in which she was always one of the *dramatis personæ*. When any thing agreeable occurred, I longed to tell it to her; and when in trouble, I could

always fancy how entirely she would enter into my feelings, and how tender would be her sympathy, could she be at my side. I had no doubt that her sentiments were similar to my own; yet when I recollected that no disclosure had been made, or pledge given, on either side, and that she was not even bound to know of my attachment, I condemned myself for having taken no precaution to secure a treasure, without which the laurels I had won would be valueless, and life itself a burthen.

"In order to get home, I had to pass the door of Caroline's father, and I determined to stop there first, curious to know whether I should be recognised in my wretched garb, and how I should be received. I was as ragged a rebel as ever fought against his unlawful king. I had no shoes on my feet; my clothes were faded, torn, and dirty; my long hair hung tangled over my face. I had

had been without a razor for some time, and this scar which you see on my cheek, was then a green wound, covered with a black patch. Altogether, I looked more like a deserter, or a fugitive from a prison-ship, than a young officer. The dogs growled at me as I approached the house, the little negroes ran away, and the children of the family hid behind the door. No one recognised me, and I stood in the hall where most of the family were assembled, like some being dropped from another world. They were engaged in various employments; as for Miss Caroline, she was spinning upon a large wheel, in the farther end of the room; for young ladies then, however wealthy their parents, were all taught to be useful. She looked at me attentively as I entered, but continued he work; and I never felt so happy in my life, as when I saw her graceful form, and her light step, while she moved for-

ward and backward, extending her handsome arm, and displaying her pretty fingers, as she drew her cotton rolls into a fine thread. The ingenuity of woman never invented a more graceful exercise for showing off a beautiful figure, than spinning cotton on a large wheel.

"I thought she looked pensive; but her cheek was as blooming as ever, and her pretty round form, instead of being emaciated with grief, had increased in stature and maturity. I felt vexed to think that she was not wretched, that her eyes were not red with watching, nor her cheeks furrowed by tears. I endeavoured to speak in a feigned voice, but no sooner did the tones meet her ear, than she sprang up, eagerly repeated my name, and rushing towards me, clasped both my hands in hers, with a warmth and frankness of affection, which admitted no concealment, and left no room for doubt. The whole family gathered

thered round me, and it was with some difficulty that I tore myself away.

"When my good mother had caused me to be trimmed, and scrubbed, and brushed, I felt once more the luxury of looking and feeling like a gentleman. I passed a happy evening under my native roof, and the next morning, early, shouldered my rifle for a hunting excursion. My friends thought it strange, that after the hardships I had so recently undergone, I should so soon evince a desire to engage in this fatiguing sport. But I had different game in view from any that they dreamed of. I took a by-path which led to the residence of a certain young lady, approaching it through a strip of forest, which extended nearly to the garden. Caroline was in the garden. I thought she was dressed with more than usual taste, and she certainly tripped along with a livelier step than common. I leaped the fence, and in a mo-

ment was at her side. I shall not tell what passed, nor how long we stood concealed behind a tall clump of rose-bushes—nor how much longer we might have continued the *tête-á-tête*, if the approach of some one had not caused Caroline to dart away, like a frighted deer, while I retreated to the woods, the happiest fellow in existence.

"I strolled through the forest, thinking of the pleasant interview, recalling the soft pressure of the hand that had trembled in mine, the exquisite tones of the voice that still murmured in my ear, and the artless confessions that remained deeply imprinted on my heart. It was some hours before I recollected, that in order to save appearances, I must kill some game to carry home. How many fat bucks had crossed my path while I was musing upon this precious little love-scene, I know not; I had wandered several miles from my father's house, and

it

it was now past noon. Throwing off my abstraction of mind, I turned my attention, in earnest, to the matter in hand, and, after a diligent search, espied a deer, quietly grazing in an open spot in full view. I took aim, touched the hair-trigger, and my gun snapped. The deer, alarmed, bounded away; and not being very eager, I renewed the priming, and strolled on. Another opportunity soon occurred, when my unlucky piece again made default—the priming flashed in the pan, but no report followed. As I always kept my rifle in good order, I was not a little surprised that two such accidents should follow in quick succession—and I began to consider seriously, whether it might not be an omen that my courtship would end in a mere flash. Again and again I made the same attempt, and with a similar result. I was now far from home, and night was closing around me; I could not see to hunt any

longer, nor was I willing to return home without having killed any thing. To sleep in the woods was no hardship, for I had long been accustomed to lodging upon the hard ground, in the open air; indeed, I had been kept awake most of the preceding night, by the novel luxury of a feather-bed. Accordingly I kindled a fire, and threw myself on the ground. I never was superstitious; but my mind was at that time in a state of peculiar sensitiveness. My return home, the sudden relief from privation and suffering, the meeting with my family, and the interview with Caroline, had all concurred to bewilder and intoxicate my brain; and as I lay in the dark shade of the forest, gazing at the few stars that twinkled through the intervals of the foliage, some of the wild traditions of the hunters occurred to my memory, and I persuaded myself that a spell had been placed upon my

my gun. When I fell asleep, I dreamed of being in battle unarmed, of hunting without ammunition, and being married without getting a wife; the upshot of the whole matter was, that I slept without being refreshed.

"I rose, and was proceeding towards a neighbouring spring, when a strain of singular music burst upon my ear. It was so wild, solemn, and incoherent, that I could make nothing of it, and became more and more convinced that I certainly was bewitched; but, determined to see the end of this mysterious adventure, I hastened towards the spot from which the sounds proceeded. As I approached, the tones became familiar, and I recognised a voice which I had known from childhood. I had rested near the foot of a mountainous ridge, at a spot where a pile of rocky masses rose in tall cliffs abruptly from the plain. Against the bald sides of these preci-

 pices,

pices, the rising sun now shone, lighting them up with unusual splendour. On a platform of rock, overhung by jutting points, from which the sound of the voice was returned by numerous echoes, knelt a superannuated negro, whom I had known from my infancy. From my earliest recollection, he had been a kind of privileged character, wandering about the country, and filling the various offices of fiddler, conjurer, and preacher. Latterly he had quitted fiddling, and taken to philosophy, most probably because ambition, the last infirmity of noble minds, had induced him to seek higher honours than those achieved by the triumphs of the violin. The old man was engaged in his morning devotions, and was chanting a hymn, at the top of his voice, with great apparent fervour and sincerity. I made up my mind, in a moment, that he was the very conjurer who had placed a

spell

spell upon my gun, and, perhaps, upon my courtship; for he had long served as a kind of lay-brother at the altar of Hymen, and was famous for his skill in delivering *billet-doux*, and finding out young ladies' secrets—moreover, his name was Cupid. As soon as his devotions were concluded, I approached, and disclosed, with perhaps more seriousness of manner than I felt, and certainly with more than I would have acknowledged, the mysterious conduct of my gun, which was as good a rifle as ever a man put to his shoulder, and my suspicions that some necromancy had been practised. The old man was overjoyed to see me, for I had danced to his violin many a long night; he uttered some very profound and philosophic moral reflections, upon the rapidity with which little boys grow up into big men—complimented me upon my improved appearance, and safe return from the wars;

and assured me that I looked '*mighty sogerfied.*' Then proceeding to inspect my unlucky weapon, he first examined the lock, then drew the ramrod, and having searched the barrel, handed it back, exclaiming, with a most sarcastic grin—'Please goodness! massa Charley, how you *speck* your gun go off, '*out* no powder?'

"The truth broke upon my mind with the suddenness of an explosion. I stood with my finger in my mouth, like a boy caught in a forbidden orchard, a lover detected in the act of swearing allegiance upon his knees, or an author whose wit has flashed in the pan. The simple fact was, that in the pleasure of courting, and the delight of winning my old dame there, who, plain as you see her now, was, as I said before, in her young days allowed to be a great beauty, I had totally forgot to load my gun! But old Cupid kept my secret—I kept my

my own counsel—Caroline kept her word, and I have always had reason to consider that as the best hunt I ever made."

CHAP.

## CHAP. X.

When colonel Hendrickson had concluded his story, it was found that the hour of retiring to repose had arrived. Mrs. Hendrickson arose, and placed a large family bible and a hymn-book upon the table; for these worthy people, as we are happy to say is the case with a great many families in this region, never separated for the night without bowing down together in worship. The colonel read a chapter in the holy book, selected a hymn, in the singing of which the whole circle joined, and then kneeling down, prayed with fervour and solemnity. There is no worship which impresses

impresses the imagination, and warms the heart, like that of the family. When in the silent hour of night, those who are joined together by consanguinity and affection, kneel together—when the father prays for his children and dependants—there is a touching interest and moral beauty, in the scene; and we know not how any, who profess the doctrines of Christianity, can neglect so serious a duty, or deny themselves so delightful a pleasure.

Just as they were about to retire, a loud barking of the dogs announced the arrival of other visiters, who proved to be a party of boys, sons of the neighbouring farmers, going to hunt the raccoon. They had called to borrow the colonel's favourite dog, who was famous at catching these animals. Mr. George Lee, delighted with any thing in the nature of sport, immediately proposed to the other gentlemen to join the party, but

but they declined participating in any amusement which was considered as being more properly suited to boys. But George was not to be baulked in his humour. A refusal from Virginia Pendleton had always the effect of driving him to the sports of the field with renewed ardour, and he now joined the lads in their excursion, with hearty good will.

The party consisted of a number of lads, some of whom were nearly grown, and others quite small. They carried axes, and blazing torches, and were followed by a number of dogs. On reaching the woods, the dogs scattered in different directions, in search of their game; and the human animals strolled carelessly along, waiting for a signal from their brute companions. The atmosphere was still, but frosty; it was a clear and starlight night, but the heavy mass of decaying leaves, that still cloth-

ed

ed the tops of the tall trees, rendered the darkness impenetrable, except where the torches carried by the hunters threw a bright glare immediately around them, as they passed along. The stillness that reigned through the forest was profound. As the hunters moved, the leaves rustled under their footsteps, and their voices breaking in upon the repose of nature, seemed to have an unnatural loudness; and when they stood still to listen, nothing could be heard, but now and then a distant faint sound of the tread of a dog, leaping rapidly over the dried vegetation, or the scream of an affrighted bird.

They pursued no path, but strolled fearlessly through the coverts of the forest, directed only by their acquaintance with the local features of the country. They often paused to listen. The dogs continued to hunt, taking wide circuits through the forest, and returning

ing at long intervals, one by one, to their masters, as if to report progress, or to ascertain what had been the success of others. All at once a barking was heard, falling upon the ear so faintly, as to show that it proceeded from a distant spot. It came from a single dog, and announced that he had fallen upon the scent of a raccoon; and in a few minutes a change in the tones of the animal, which became more lively, intimated that he had chased the game to its hiding-place. The other dogs, on hearing this sound, all rushed eagerly towards the spot from whence it proceeded, followed by the hunters at full speed. They found the successful dog sitting at the foot of a large honey-locust tree—or as the boys expressed it, "barking up a honey-locust," with every appearance of triumphant delight.

The first thing which was now done, was to collect a quantity of fallen limbs, which

which were piled into a large heap, and lighted by means of the torches that had been brought for this purpose. In a few minutes an intense blaze shot upwards, throwing a brilliant glare of light upon the surrounding scene; and the animal for whose capture these preparations were made, was seen standing on a bough forty feet from the ground, endeavouring to conceal itself, while it gazed downwards in alarm and wonder. A loud shout announced the delight of the party on beholding their game, the dogs evinced an equal degree of pleasure, and it would have been hard to tell which animals—the human or canine—experienced the greatest degree of enjoyment in the sport.

The young men now threw off their coats, and began with their axes to cut down the great tree in which their prey had taken refuge. It was several feet in circumference; but that which would have

have been considered, under other circumstances, a laborious task, was cheerfully undertaken in the eager pursuit of amusement. Blow after blow fell upon the solid trunk in quick succession, and the woods re-echoed the rapid and cheerful strokes of the axe. Two of the hunters wielded the axe on opposite sides of the tree, striking alternately, with regular cadence, and with such energy and skill, that every blow made its appropriate impression; others relieved them, from time to time, by taking their places; while the smaller lads continued to supply fuel to the fire. At length the work was so nearly accomplished, that a few more blows only were required to complete it; and all of the party, except those engaged in chopping, retired to the side of the tree opposite to the direction in which it was expected to fall, gathering together all the dogs, and holding them fast by main strength,

strength, to prevent them from running under the falling tree, and being crushed by its descent. Nor was it an easy matter to restrain the eager animals, for no sooner did the great tree begin to totter and creak, than they began to whine and struggle, showing the greatest impatience to rush forward and seize their prey, as soon as he should reach the ground. The tall tree slowly bowed its top, trembling for a moment as if balanced, then cracking louder and quicker, and at last falling rapidly, tearing and crushing the boughs that intercepted its downward progress, and stretching its enormous length on the ground with a tremendous crash. The neighbouring trees, whose branches were torn off, and whose tops were disturbed by the sudden rush of air accompanying the fall of so large a body, bowed their heads over their prostrate comrade, waved their splintered limbs, and then relapsed into

into their original state of majestic repose.

No sooner did the tree strike the ground, than the raccoon darted from among its quivering branches, and bounded away, pursued by the whole yelling pack of dogs and boys; and now there was shouting and scrambling. Surrounded by so many foes, the raccoon was soon brought to bay by a young dog, who paid dearly for his inexperience, for the enraged animal turning suddenly, struck his sharp teeth into the head of the dog, who yelled lustily with pain: this occupied but a second; the raccoon resumed his flight, and the beaten dog, whining and bleeding, slunk away. Again and again was the hard-pressed animal obliged to face his pursuers, who now headed him in every direction that he turned, and more than one dog felt his keen bite. The human tormentors crowded around, interfering no further than

than by encouraging the dogs with loud shouts; and the sport went bravely on, until the raccoon suddenly springing at the trunk of a large tree, clambered up, and with a few active bounds, placed himself out of the reach of his pursuers.

Another fire was now kindled under the second tree, which happened to be of a less formidable size than the first, and the indefatigable hunters went to work again with their axes. The raccoon was less fortunate than before, for when the tree fell, he was completely surrounded by his enemies, who took care to prevent him from again "*treeing*." It was astonishing to see the fierceness and success with which this small animal defended himself against so many adversaries of superior size; the sharpness of his teeth, and the quickness with which he snapped, rendered his bite severe, and his sagacity in seizing upon the most vital and sensitive parts of the bodies

bodies of his assailants was remarkable. He sprung often at the eye, the lip, and throat of the dog who ventured to engage him; and it is always observable that a dog who is a veteran in such affairs, or, as the hunters say, "an old 'coon dog," has a face covered with scars, an effect probably produced by the skill of the canine animal, in protecting the rest of his body, by presenting his front only to his foe. It was impossible, however, to contend long against such unequal numbers; several of the dogs were sent yelling out of the fight; but at last, one more experienced and bolder than the rest, rushed in, seized the brave little animal by the throat, and in a moment worried him to death. The whole combat, though lively, fierce, and eventful, lasted but a few minutes.

The dogs were again sent out, and soon succeeded in chasing another victim into a tree, and the same proceedings

ings were thereupon had, as a lawyer would say, as in the case aforesaid; and in the course of the night several raccoons were taken, in a similar manner, so far as respected the kindling of fires, and chopping down trees. In other particulars, however, there was a considerable variety of incident. A veteran old male raccoon fought like a determined warrior, and sold his life dearly, while one of smaller size, or of the softer sex, fell an easy prey. Sometimes the unhappy animal was crushed to death by the fall of the tree in which it had taken refuge; and sometimes, after an immense tree had been felled with great labour, it was found that the wily game had stolen away along the interlocking branches, and found refuge in the top of another. Then the fires were renewed, and the bright glare usually enabled the hunters to discover the fugitive closely nestled in a fork, or at the junction of a

large limb with the body of the tree, where it lay concealed, until curiosity induced it to show its face, in the sly endeavour to take a peep at the operations going on below, or some slight motion betrayed a protruding paw, or the quivering tip of the tail. Occasionally the young dogs committed the disgraceful mistake of "treeing" a lazy fat opossum, in the branches of a slender sapling, from which it was quickly shaken down, and beaten to death ignominiously with clubs.

The hunters were nearly satiated with sport, when it happened, that the dogs, on striking a trail, went off with great vivacity, following it to a considerable distance, to the surprise of their wearied masters; for the raccoon runs slowly, and on finding itself pursued, immediately climbs a tree. On they went, full of hope, the scent growing more and more fresh, and the dogs barking louder, and with greater animation, as they

they proceeded, until the game was driven to a tree. The fire was lighted, when the trembling of a bough showed that the animal was springing from one tree to another, where new operations were commenced, and the axes were striking merrily, when an alarm from the dogs was heard, and it was found that the wily game, after stealing from tree to tree, had descended to the ground and dashed off. Away went the dogs and boys again, in higher spirits than ever, for the ingenuity and boldness of the animal showed that nobler game was now started, and that they were on the trail of a wild cat, who was so closely pressed, as to be again obliged, after a gallant run of about half a mile, to take refuge in the branches of a tall oak, which happened to stand apart, so that the animal could not leap into a neighbouring tree. Fires were now lighted all round the spot, so that a considerable

space was illuminated with the brilliancy as great as that of noon-day; the cat was seen, with back erect, and glaring eyeballs, looking fiercely down; the axes were plied with renewed vigour, and the oak was soon prostrated. Greater precautions were now used to prevent the escape of their prey; the youths, armed with clubs, formed a large circle, and the dogs rushed in from different directions. The enraged animal sprung boldly out, bounding with vigorous leaps, showing his white teeth, and growling defiance. The dogs, highly excited, dashed fearlessly at their prey, and a hot engagement ensued, for they had now to cope with one of the most ferocious brutes of the forest—one which, though not large in size, is muscular, active, cunning, and undauntedly fierce. Fighting with teeth and claws, he inflicted deep wounds on his eager assailants. Growling, barking, hissing, and shouting,

ing, were mingled in horrible discord. Dried leaves, and earth, and fur, were thrown into the air, and the slender bushes were crushed and trampled down by the maddened combatants. Surrounded, and attacked on all sides, the furious cat fought with desperation; sometimes springing suddenly up over the heads of his assailants, he alighted on the back of a dog, fixing his teeth deep in the neck, driving his sharp claws into the throat on either side, and bearing down the agonized and suffocated animal to the earth; and sometimes overthrown, and fighting on his back, bitten and worried from every direction, he sprang at the throat of one of his tormentors, sunk his deadly fangs into the jugular, nor released his hold until the dog quivered with the pangs of death—until wounded, torn, bleeding, and exhausted, he was overpowered by numbers. Thus ended, in triumph, a most *glorious hunt.*

The night was nearly wasted, and the sportsmen, now several miles from home, began to retrace their steps. After proceeding a short distance, they divided into several parties, each taking the nearest direction to their respective habitations. One of the youths agreed to accompany Mr. Lee to colonel Hendrickson's; and our friend George, after expressing the delight he had experienced in the "capital sport" which they had enjoyed, bade them a hearty good night, and marched off with his young guide, through the dark and now-silent forest. Fatigued with several hours of severe exercise, they sauntered slowly along; and as the hunter walks habitually with a noiseless tread, their footsteps fell silently on the leafy carpet of the forest. The death-like repose of the woods afforded a strong contrast to the fires which had lately gleamed, and the sounds of conflict that had awakened

the

the echoes of the wilderness. Although the darkness was almost impenetrable, the guide moved forward with unerring skill, keeping the direct course, without deviation, climbing over hills, on whose summits the star-light glimmered faintly through the foliage, or descending into vales, where not a gleam of the light of heaven broke in upon the solitary travellers.

At length they crossed their former track, at a spot where one of the fires had been lighted. The fuel had been heaped up at the foot of a dead tree, of considerable magnitude, and as the pile had been great, and the heat intense, the flames had enveloped the trunk, extended upwards to the branches, and lighted the whole fabric in a blaze of glowing fire. They first saw this beautiful sight from the summit of a neighbouring hill, from which, though still distant, it was distinctly visible—a tree

of fire, standing alone in the dark forest! The trunk presented a tall column of intense redness, round which the flames curled, and rolled, giving to this majestic pillar of fire the appearance of a waving motion; while the branches and twigs were all lighted up, and completely enveloped with the glowing element, and parts of them were continually breaking off and falling to the ground, like drops of blazing liquid. As they stood gazing at this splendid exhibition, several figures were seen moving in the light, close to the burning tree, which were ascertained to be those of men and horses; and the hunters felt their curiosity excited by the appearance of horsemen in this solitary place, at such an hour. Mr. Lee proposed to approach them, and ascertain their character; and the guide, equally inquisitive, consented, with some hesitation, and after suggesting the propriety

of

of using caution. Deeds of violence had lately been perpetrated; and the young forester whispered, that for some days past, when the men of the family were at work in the fields, at some distance from the house, his mother had kept the doors fastened all day, and if she heard a footstep approaching, hid her children, and armed herself with a rifle, before she looked out, to ascertain the character of the visiter. The butcheries of the Harpes had filled the whole country with dread.

Thus prepared, they advanced, cautiously, towards the fire, and came sufficiently near to distinguish two men, stout, ill-looking, and completely armed. They frequently looked suspiciously around, and listened, like men expecting to be pursued, and resolved to be on their guard; and as they stood exposed in the broad glare of the light, there could be no doubt that they were the

indentical ruffians who had disturbed the peace of these new settlements, and against whom the whole community was about to rise in vengeance. Each of them held by the bridle a fine horse, panting as if from a hard ride. There was another person with them, to whom one of the men was speaking, in earnest and authoritative language, and who was recognised, at a glance, by Mr. Lee, as his late companion, Hark Short, the snake-killer.

After conversing a few minutes, the men mounted their horses, and rode rapidly away, plunging their spurs into the sides of their spirited steeds, and riding over obstacles, and through brush, with fearless and careless speed. Mr. Lee waited until they were out of hearing, and then advanced to the fire to speak to Hark; but the boy, on hearing his footsteps, ran nimbly away, without waiting to ascertain who it was that approached;

proached; and the hunters resumed their homeward way, which led in a direction opposite to that taken by the Harpes.

## CHAP. XI.

It was nearly noon, when Mr. Lee rose the following morning: he found colonel Hendrickson, and all his guests, waiting for him to accompany them in a ride to the house of a neighbouring gentleman, where they had engaged to dine. When he communicated the intelligence of having seen the Harpes on the preceding night, the gentlemen expressed great regret at not having heard it sooner, and determined to go in a body the next day, in pursuit of the ruffians.

The horses were soon at the door, and the gay party began to mount, each of the

the young gentlemen selecting a favourite fair one for his own special charge, as is customary and proper in all well-regulated parties of pleasure. Mr. Lee, who considered that he had a prescriptive right to wait upon Miss Pendleton, was advancing to assist her to mount her horse, when he perceived that Mr. Fennimore had already taken her hand; and turned back, jealous, mortified, and almost determined that he would not join the company. The blood mounted into his cheeks, and his brow lowered, as he stood irresolute—a momentary paroxysm of rage struggling in his bosom, against his native good-humour and habitual politeness.

Colonel Hendrickson saw his embarrassment, and with ready politeness endeavoured to remove it.—"Mr. Lee," said he, "I must show you a few acres of fine tobacco, as we ride along. I suspect you are a good judge of such matters;

ters; your father, if I recollect, was a famous tobacco-raiser."

George bowed, and silently walked with his host towards their horses.

"Cousin George," said Miss Pendleton, with one of her sweetest smiles, as he was stalking sulkily by her horse's head, "will you have the goodness to arrange that rein for me?"

The cloud passed from his brow, as he placed his hand on the bridle.

"Not that one, George—the other. Thank you—there—that is exactly right. You are going with us, cousin George?" and, bowing gracefully, she rode off, escorted by Mr. Fennimore; while George Lee, completely conciliated by this little manœuvre, swore, internally, that she was the sweetest creature in the world, and that Fennimore deserved to be shot.

As the gay company filed off in couples, Mr. Lee and the colonel lingered

ed in the rear; the latter pointed out his tobacco crop, his corn, and his turnips, talked of his horses, and then turned the subject to hunting, and told some stirring anecdotes of backwoods adventure.

George listened until he became interested, and, before the ride was over, had recovered his usual spirits. But still he was not satisfied. To give up Virginia was sufficiently painful, but to see another carry off the bright prize, was more than his slender stock of philosophy could bear.

They found a large party assembled to dinner. We shall not stop to count the roasted pigs and turkeys, the juicy hams, the fat haunches of venison, the bowls of apple-toddy, and the loads of good things on which they were regaled. More important matters lie before us, and urge us forward to the sequel of this history.

After

After dinner, when the gentlemen were strolling in the open air, Mr. Lee whispered to Mr. Fennimore, that he wished to converse with him in private, and led the way to a retired place.

Fennimore noticed his discontented air, and an expression of defiance on his features, and followed him in silence, wondering what was to be the subject of their secret conference.

When entirely out of hearing of the rest of the company, Mr. Lee demanded, in a haughty tone—"I wish to know, sir, whether you intended to affront me by your conduct this morning?"

"Most certainly not," replied Mr. Fennimore, in a cheerful tone. "I am even ignorant of the circumstance to which you allude."

George had invited his rival to this conversation, in the determination to quarrel with him, at all events. The conciliatory tone of Fennimore disarmed him,

him, for a moment; but having, like most men, when acting under the influence of passion, predetermined not to be satisfied, he returned to the charge.

"Do you say, sir, that you do not consider it an affront, to have stepped between me and a lady that I was about to conduct to her horse?"

"If I had done so intentionally, I should say I had been guilty of great rudeness."

"Then you assert that you did not do it purposely?"

"I do, sir," replied the officer, composedly; "and I will add——"

"Well, sir?" exclaimed George, pricking up his ears, and expecting to hear a defiance which would lead to the result that he wished to provoke.

"I will add, with great pleasure, that if unintentionally I was guilty of such seeming rudeness, it is due to my own character,

character, and to your feelings, that I should ask your pardon."

A soft answer turneth away wrath. George was too much of a gentleman, and had too much native good-humour, not to be reconciled by the politeness and good sense of these replies. He gave his hand to Fennimore, and then walked up and down, for some time, in great embarrassment.—"And so you won't quarrel with me?" said he, at last.

"Not willingly, Mr. Lee," replied Mr. Fennimore, laughing; "I have seen such evidences of your prowess lately, that I would much rather fight by your side than against you."

"Would you do me a favour, Mr. Fennimore?"

"With a great deal of pleasure, sir."

"Then just insult me, if you please; say any thing that I can ask satisfaction for; do any thing that I can take offence

fence at, and I will thank you as long as I live."

"I am sorry I cannot gratify you, Mr. Lee," replied Fennimore, much amused; "but, really, I like you too well, to feel any desire to forfeit your friendship."

"Well, if you will do nothing else to oblige me, will you go to the woods, and let us shoot at each other, for amusement?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Lee," replied Fennimore, in the best humour possible.

"Tell me one thing, if you please, sir, and I have done—are you in love with Virginia Pendleton?"

"How shall I answer you?" replied Fennimore; "to say I am, might argue presumption; to say I am not, would show a want of taste."

"Well, sir, allow me to put you on your guard. It is useless to court her. She will not have you. I have been courting her these ten years, and have offered

offered myself fifty times. It is perfectly useless, sir, to court her. I know her well—she is determined not to marry. She is the finest woman ever raised in Virginia—but she will not marry any man—I have ascertained that."

"I thank you, Mr. Lee, for your friendly warning; and should I be unsuccessful, I shall recollect that I have ventured contrary to a friend's advice."

"Recollect another thing, if you please, sir—I have a prior claim to that lady's affection, which I will maintain at the risk of my life."

"Nay, but, Mr. Lee——"

"Excuse me, sir—I have made up my mind on that point: any man who marries Virginia Pendleton must fight me first."

So saying, Mr. George Lee walked off, leaving Fennimore a little provoked, and very much amused; though upon reflection, he felt only sympathy for this amiable

amiable young man, who, with an excellent heart, and the most gentlemanly feelings, was betrayed, by the weakness of his intellect, and his perseverance in a hopeless passion, into the most extravagant absurdities.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XII.

THE Harpes had heretofore escaped punishment, in consequence of a variety of peculiar circumstances. The scene of their barbarities was still almost a wilderness, and a variety of cares pressed on the people. The spoils of their dreadful warfare furnished them with the means of violence and of escape. Mounted on fine horses, they plunged into the forest, eluded pursuit by frequently changing their course, and appeared unexpectedly, to perpetrate new enormities, at places far distant from those where they were supposed to lurk. More than once were the people lulled

lulled into security, and the pursuit of the ruffians abandoned, by the supposition that they had entirely disappeared from the country, when the conflagration of a solitary cabin, and the murder of all its inmates, awakened the whole community to lively sensations of fear, horror, and indignation.

Miss Pendleton heard of these atrocities with shuddering. Thrice had she seen one of these assassins, under circumstances calculated to excite the most dreadful apprehensions. On each occasion his hand was raised against her life; and his malignant scowl seemed to announce the existence of some deadly feud against her. But why she should be thus an object of vengeance and pursuit, she was totally unable to discover, or even conjecture.

In the mean while, the outrages of these murderers had not escaped public notice,

notice, nor were they tamely submitted to. The governor of Kentucky had offered a reward for their heads, and parties of volunteers had pursued them; they had been so fortunate as to escape punishment by their cunning, but had not the prudence to fly the country, or to desist from their crimes.

On the morning after these wretches had been seen by Mr. George Lee, the intelligence arrived of their having murdered a woman and all her children. The vengeance of the whole community was now roused to the highest pitch, and it was determined to raise parties, and hunt down the murderers. Horsemen were seen traversing the woods in every direction, eagerly beating up all the coverts, and examining every suspicious place where it was supposed the outlaws might lurk.

A man named Leiper, who had some renown as an active and successful hunter,

ter, and who was both muscular and brave, headed a small party. The ruffians were encamped in the woods, at an obscure wild spot, distant from any habitation; and were seated on the ground, surrounded by their women and children, when the hunters came so suddenly upon them, that they had only time to fly in different directions. Micajah Harpe, the larger of the two brothers, sprung upon a fine blooded horse, that he had taken from a traveller but a day or two before, and dashed off, pursued by the whole party; while his brother, not having time to mount, stole silently away among the brushwood, and escaped notice.

Micajah, who was kept in view by the pursuers, spurred forward the noble animal on which he was mounted, and which, already jaded, began to fail at the end of five or six miles. The chase was long and hot, and the miscreant

continued to press forward; for although his pursuers had one by one dropped in the rear, until none of them were in sight but Leiper, he was not willing to risk a combat with a man as strong, and bolder than himself, who was animated by a noble spirit of indignation, against a shocking and unmanly outrage. Leiper was mounted upon a horse of celebrated powers, which had been borrowed from the owner for this occasion. At the beginning of the chase he had pressed his charger to the height of his speed, carefully keeping on the track of Harpe, of whom he sometimes caught a glimpse as he ascended the hills, and again lost sight of in the valleys and the brush. But as he gained on the foe, and became sure of his victim, he slackened his pace, cocked his rifle, and deliberately pursued, sometimes calling upon the outlaw to surrender.

It was an animating, but fearful sight, to

to behold two powerful and desperately bold men, armed, and mounted on gallant steeds, pursuing each other so closely as to render it almost certain that a mortal struggle must soon ensue. At length Harpe's horse, having strained all his powers in leaping a ravine, received an injury which obliged him to slacken his pace, and Leiper overtook him. Both were armed with rifles. When near enough to fire with certainty, Leiper stopped, took a deliberate aim, and shot the retreating ruffian through the body; the latter, turning in his saddle, levelled his piece, which missed fire, and he dashed it to the ground, swearing that it was the first time it had ever deceived him. He then drew a tomahawk, and waited the approach of Leiper, who, nothing daunted, drew his long hunting-knife, and rushed upon his desperate foe, grappled with him, hurled him to the ground, and wrested

the weapon from his grasp. The prostrate wretch, exhausted with the loss of blood, conquered, but unsubdued in spirit, now lay passive at the feet of his adversary.

Leiper was a humane man, easy, slow-spoken, and not quickly excited, but a thorough soldier when his energies were aroused into action. Without insulting the expiring criminal, he questioned him as to the motives of his late atrocities. The murderer attempted not to palliate or deny them, and confessed that he had been actuated by no other inducement than a settled hatred of his species, whom he had sworn to destroy without distinction, in revenge for some fancied injury. He expressed no regret for his bloody deeds. He acknowledged that he had amassed large sums of money, and described some of the places of concealment; but as none was ever discovered, it is presumed he did not declare

declare the truth. Leiper had fired at Harpe several times during the chase, and wounded him; and when Harpe was asked why, when he found Leiper pursuing him alone, he did not dismount and *take a tree*, from behind which he could have inevitably shot him as he approached, he replied that he had supposed there was not a horse in the country equal to the one he rode, and that he was confident of making his escape. He thought also that the pursuit would be less eager, so long as he abstained from shedding the blood of his pursuers. On the arrival of the rest of the party, the wretch was dispatched, and his head severed from his body. This bloody trophy was then carried to the nearest magistrate, before whom it was proved to be the head of Micajah Harpe; after which it was placed in the fork of a tree, where it long remained, a revolting object of horror. This spot is still called

*Harpe's Head*, and the public road which passes near it is called the Harpe's Head Road.

Colonel Hendrickson and his friends had ridden out to join in the pursuit, and had been scouring the forest some hours, when they met a party who informed them of the death of Harpe, and they turned their horses' heads homewards. They were passing over a high but level tract of country, whose surface was undulated by gradual swells, and covered with a thick growth of timber; to their right was a hilly, broken tract, called "*the Knobs*," in which these villains had often harboured. In front of them was a region of open brushy land, destitute of trees, and which seemed to have been lately a wide prairie, with no other covering but grass. Mr. Lee, whose feelings seemed to be less social than usual, was riding by himself in advance of the party; when at a spot where

where two roads crossed, he was surprised to see Hark Short, leaning against a tree, in an attitude of fixed attention. He was so completely absorbed as not to be at all conscious of the approach of Mr. Lee, until the latter spoke to him. —"What's the matter, Hark?" said he: "have you found a big rattlesnake?"

Hark started as he heard the voice, and looked timidly round. His features, usually melancholy, now wore an expression of fear and horror. Without answering the questions of Mr. Lee, he raised his eyes wildly; and George looking upward in the direction indicated by the glance of the boy, beheld the bleeding head of Harpe! For a moment he felt his own faculties bewildered, and a shuddering sensation crept over him, as he gazed at this shocking spectacle; but a recollection of the crimes of the delinquent, who had been

punished in this summary manner, changed the current of his feelings, and he exclaimed, sharply—" Is the boy mad? Is it so strange a thing that a murderer should be put to death?"

Hark only groaned, and looked perplexed.

" This wretch was an acquaintance of yours, it seems; you appear so much concerned about him, that I am inclined to have you taken up as an accomplice."

" No, don't—don't, if you please, stranger," exclaimed Hark.

" Then tell me why you seem so much interested in the death of that murderer."

" Who—that gentleman?" inquired Hark, stupidly, pointing to the mangled relic.

" Yes, that miscreant, who has been put to death for his crimes; what do you know about him?"

" Well, I don't know *nothen*, in *peticklar*."

The

The other gentlemen now rode up, and on learning the subject of conversation, insisted that the boy should disclose all the particulars that he knew respecting the ruffians, of whose history little was known.

"I never saw that gentleman," said Hark, "till since I came out here to Kentuck."

"But I understand," replied colonel Hendrickson, "that a lad, who I have reason to believe was yourself, assisted these ruffians in escaping, when arrested some weeks ago, and went off with them."

"Anan!" exclaimed the lad.

Colonel Hendrickson repeated, and explained what he had said.

"'Spose I did cut the strings—was there any harm in that?"

"Certainly—aiding in the escape of a prisoner is a criminal offence; and it is my duty, as a magistrate, to bring you to punishment for it."

"Would you punish me for cutting the strings, when the Indians had *you* tied to the pole to be roasted!"

This was an appeal which was not easily parried. The colonel acknowledged his obligations to Hark, and at once disclaimed any intention of arresting him, but on the contrary offered him his protection.—"And now," said he, "I want you tell me all that you know about Harpe."

"Will you let me go arter that?"

"Yes."

"Won't you beat me, afore you turn me loose?"

"No, my lad, nobody shall touch you. You did me a good turn, at the risk of your life, and I will repay it, at the risk of mine, if necessary."

"Well—I never seed Harpe, as I know on, in peticklar, till that night."

"Had you never heard of him?"

"Well—not in peticklar—only what mammy said."

"What

"What did she say?"

"She told me that 'Kage Harpe was a powerful bad man. She used to get mad, and curse him a hour."

"Did she ever tell you any thing that he did?"

"Not in peticklar—only that he killed every body that he got mad at—and that he would kill her and me, if he got a chance."

"Why should he wish to kill your mother?"

"I axed her that myself, but she wouldn't tell me."

"Why then did you release Harpe, when you saw him for the first time in custody?"

"I couldn't help it."

"Why not? Come, tell us all about it—nobody shall hurt you."

"Well—Harpe told me that he was my father!"

"And then you cut him loose?"

 "Yes—

"Yes—wouldn't you cut your daddy loose, if any body had him tied?"

"Hark," said George Lee, "you must go with me to Virginia, and live with me—I will take care of you."

"I reckon I can't go?"

"Why not?"

"Cause I don't want to."

"Would you not like to live in a fine house, and have plenty to eat, and nothing to do?"

"I don't like to live in houses."

"You don't! What is your objection?"

"Well—I can't say, in peticklar—only I'd rather live in the woods. I can do just as I please in the woods, and be as happy as a tree-frog."

So saying, Hark began to move off. He cast a look of terror towards the remains of his inhuman parent, as he retired. It was not affection, nor regret, which chained his glance to this revolting

ing object, but a kind of instinct—a superstitious reverence for the only remaining being whose blood was kindred to his own, mingled with a dread of human punishments, that seemed to have been instilled into him in infancy, and which was the master-spring of all his actions. He quickened his pace on finding himself at liberty, walked rapidly away, and never was seen again in that region; nor is it known, with any certainty, what ever became of Hark Short, the snake-killer. It is most probable that he perished in the wilderness; although it is altogether possible, that he may still be killing reptiles on some distant frontier of our vast country.

A company of people now arrived, who had in their possession a number of articles which had been found in the camp of the Harpes. Among the rest was a small tin case, which was filled with

with papers. Mr. Fennimore having hastily looked over this, expressed a wish to examine it more at his leisure; and it was, accordingly, placed in his charge. The fatigued woodsmen separated; and colonel Hendrickson conducted his friends once more to his hospitable mansion.

Their arrival was joyfully welcomed by the family, who had been under great apprehensions during their absence. Miss Pendleton, though much shocked at some of the particulars which they related, could not but feel relieved, when she heard that the enemy of her peace was no more.

Fennimore, who had concealed from his friends, as they rode home, an interesting discovery which he had made, advanced to her, with a face beaming with joy, and presenting to her a parchment, remarked--"I am happy, Miss Pendleton, to have it in my power to restore

restore to you this document. It is the will of my uncle Heyward, and places you in full possession of all his estate. Allow me to congratulate you on your good fortune."

"I do not know, Mr. Fennimore, whether I ought to accept the bounty of my uncle, which, by making me rich, deprives you of your natural inheritance."

"Happily for us both," replied the officer, "that is a question which need not now be argued; major Heyward, who had the undoubted right to dispose of his own property, has made the decision, and we have only to acquiesce."

Mrs. Hendrickson, who seldom spoke, except when spoken to, but who, with the sagacity peculiar to her sex, in matters relating to the heart, had made some shrewd observations on the deportment of these young people towards each other, now remarked, in her quiet way—

way—" If there is any difficulty about the property, perhaps you had as well let *me* keep that instrument, until you can devise some plan for holding the estate jointly."

Virginia blushed deeply; and Fennimore, very gaily, handed the parchment to Mrs. Hendrickson.—" On those terms, madam," said he, " I most cheerfully deposit this document in your keeping, and shall, on my part, submit the controversy to your decision."

George Lee, when he heard that the *will* was found, danced and capered about the room like a boy—wished his cousin Virginia joy a hundred times—and shook Fennimore cordially by the hand, swearing that he was the cleverest fellow in all Kentucky; but when he saw what he considered proof positive, that Fennimore was a successful candidate for the hand of her who had so long been the object of his affections, he left

left the room, and began to make immediate preparations for his return to his native state.

## CHAP. XIII.

### *The Conclusion.*

SEVERAL years had passed away, since the occurrence of the events recorded in the preceding pages. Captain Fennimore and the fair Virginia had been married, and were residing near to colonel Hendrickson. William Colburn was united to the colonel's only daughter, and was settled in the neighbourhood; and as no evidence to the contrary is before us, we are authorized in believing that both these couples were enjoying the most uninterrupted matrimonial felicity.

The

The best friends, however, must sometimes part; and captain Fennimore found it necessary to leave his pleasant home, and his agreeable wife, to attend to the affairs of their joint estate in Virginia. The farm formerly occupied by major Heyward was rented out; but the tenant had erected a house on a part of the land distant from the spot where the former mansion had stood.

Captain Fennimore, feeling a desire to revisit the place where his uncle had resided, and his wife had grown up from infancy to maturity, rode over, one day, to the ruins of the old house. The lane was still kept open, but was grown up with weeds and briers. The lawn around the house preserved something of its former verdure and beauty; but the garden was overrun with bushes, whose wild and tangled limbs were strangely mingled with the remains of a variety

of

of rare and ornamental shrubs. Indigenous thorns, and domestic fruits, grew side by side, and wild flowers mingled their blossoms with those of exotic plants. There is nothing so melancholy as such a scene, where luxury and art are beheld in ruin, and their remains revive the recollection of departed pleasures. There has always seemed to me to be something peculiarly desolate in the appearance of a deserted garden, where the spot, once adorned with taste, and cultivated with assiduous care, has been suffered to run into wilderness. Nowhere are the efforts of nature and art so harmoniously blended, as in the garden; nowhere does embellishment seem so appropriate, or labour so productive. There is something quiet, and innocent, and peaceful, about the beauties of a garden, that interests the heart, at the same time that the senses reap enjoyment.

While

While captain Fennimore was strolling pensively about, he discovered a horseman riding up the avenue towards the same place. On reaching the large gate which opened into the lawn, the person halted, and remained sitting on his horse. Fennimore, supposing that it might be some one who had business with himself, walked slowly towards the gate; but before he reached it, and while concealed from the stranger by a cluster of bushes, he was surprised to hear the voice of the latter, as if in conversation with another person.

"She is not at home, eh?" said the voice; "well, tell her I called, boy, d'ye hear?—tell her Mr. George Lee called."

Fennimore, curious to know to whom Mr. Lee was speaking, advanced a few steps, so as to see, without being exposed himself; and was suprised to find that no person was within sight but themselves. Mr. Lee was mounted on a fine horse,

horse, and completely armed, with a sword, a pair of large pistols, and a rifle. He wore his father's revolutionary uniform coat, buff waistcoat, and cocked hat, and, thus accoutred, formed an imposing figure. His countenance wore the flush of habitual intemperance, together with the mingled wildness and stupidity of partial derangement. After sitting silent for a few minutes, he drew his sword, and exclaimed—"Gentlemen, I pronounce Virginia Pendleton to be the most beautiful woman ever raised in the Old Dominion, and I am ready to make good my words. You understand me, gentlemen! There she sits at her window—she has made a vow that she will never marry, and I stand here, prepared to cut any gentleman's throat who shall dare to pay her his addresses. Gentlemen, shall we hunt tomorrow? Pass that bottle, if you please, Mr. Jones—no heeltaps. My compliments

ments to Miss Pendleton, boy, d'ye hear? and tell her, I called to inquire after her health."

Then drawing himself up, he saluted with his sword, and sheathed it, took off his hat, bowed towards the spot where the house had been, and kissed his hand; after which, he wheeled his horse about, and rode with a slow and stately pace down the avenue.

Poor George! he had fallen a victim to the evil example of an intemperate father, and the intrigues of an ambitious mother. With a heart tenderly alive to the best charities of human nature, and a disposition easily moulded to the purposes of those with whom he associated, he might readily have been trained to respectability and usefulness, and although he could never have become a brilliant man, he might have been what is far more important, an amiable and worthy citizen. But his weak intellect,

assailed

assailed by the seductions of pleasure on the one hand, and by dazzling schemes of ambition on the other, became unsettled, and at last totally destroyed. His vigorous constitution enabled him long to outlive the wreck of his mind, and he continued for many years to visit the ruins of major Heyward's mansion, dressed in the fantastic habiliments which we have described. He remembered nothing which occurred after his ill-starred journey to the frontier; and the events of his early life were mixed up in his memory in the most singular confusion. He continued to be the devoted lover of Virginia Pendleton, and nothing ever ruffled his temper except the mention of her marriage, which he always denied with indignation, as an insult to her and himself; while the recollections of his early love were mingled with visions of bacchanalian orgies, and with hideous dreams of bloody encounters with

with the savages. Many years afterwards, when his cheeks were furrowed, and his hair grey with premature old age, he might still be seen, mounted on his sleek hunter, clad in his ancient uniform, with his hair powdered, and his long queue neatly tied, riding with stately grace, every day, along the old avenue, paying his imaginary morning visit to the idol of his heart.

He was followed by an old negro valet, as grey and nearly as stately as himself, who humoured all the fancies of his master, until it was supposed that the faithful black began to be tinctured with the madness which he had affectionately humoured, and spoke of Miss Virginia Pendleton with the most unaffected gravity, long after that lady was the mother of a numerous and thriving colony of young Kentuckians.

Mrs. Lee mourned over the disappointment of all her hopes, in the bit-

terness of unavailing repentance. When our errors affect only ourselves, the pang of remorse may be borne with patience; but when they have extended to those we love, and our own conviction comes too late to restore peace to the bosoms we have ruined, the cup of wretchedness is fatally poisoned for the remainder of a miserable life. She never smiled, and was never seen to weep; and bore the sufferings which only a woman's love can know, with a dignified resignation, of which woman's fortitude alone is capable.

FINIS.

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