

# OLD MARK LANGSTON

R. M. JOHNSTON.



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# OLD MARK LANGSTON

A Tale of Duke's Creek

BY

RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON

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1884.

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS

**MALCOLM AND CATHARINE DAVENPORT JOHNSTON**

WHOSE DISCIPLINE MADE MY CHILDHOOD SO CONTINUOUSLY  
BLESSED, THAT NOW, NEXT TO THE SOLACE OF  
CALLING TO MIND PERSONS AND THINGS  
THAT WERE THEN, IS THAT OF  
DREAMING OF SOME THAT  
WERE NOT





# CONTENTS.

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CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF DUKESBOROUGH . . . . .	7
II. VERMONTERS IN GEORGIA . . . . .	11
III. THE JARRELLS . . . . .	15
IV. IMPRESSIONS MADE BY THE NEW-COMERS . . . . .	21
V. MRS. TOLIVER AT HOME . . . . .	28
VI. THE PORTERS AND OTHER DUKE'S CREEK FOLK . . . . .	39
VII. MR. RIDDLE AND HIS HUMBLE ROMANCE . . . . .	52
VIII. MR. DUKE'S UNFORESEEN INTEREST IN THE JARRELLS . . . . .	63
IX. A RETIRED MAGISTRATE . . . . .	69
X. THE SCHOOL-MASTER CONTEMPLATES RETURNING TO HIS OLD PROFESSION . . . . .	74
XI. MR. DUKE VISITS THE SICK . . . . .	82
XII. DOOLANA LINES . . . . .	94
XIII. MR. RIDDLE'S EARLY MOTIVES AND OBSTACLES IN LEARNING HIS ART . . . . .	105
XIV. MRS. TOLIVER HAS A CHAT WITH REBECCA WOODBRIDGE ABOUT BOARDERS . . . . .	115
XV. LEWIS SANDERS . . . . .	123
XVI. A CONVERSATION AT DUKE'S MILL . . . . .	132
XVII. A CASE FOR THE RETURNING LAWYER . . . . .	139
XVIII. MR. RIDDLE AND BARNEY JARRELL MEET AT THE STORE OF PORTER & SANDERS . . . . .	149
XIX. THE VISIT OF AGGY TO MARK LANGSTON . . . . .	154
XX. A SUNDAY EVENING LETTER . . . . .	160
XXI. MR. RIDDLE IN DUKESBOROUGH . . . . .	166
XXII. MR. RIDDLE AT BARNEY JARRELL'S . . . . .	172
XXIII. WOODBRIDGE AND BARNEY JARRELL AT THE FORMER'S NEW ROOMS . . . . .	184

CHAP.	PAGE
XXIV. TALKS BETWEEN BROTHER AND SISTER ON A DELICATE SUBJECT . . . . .	188
XXV. A LETTER FROM LUCIUS WOODBRIDGE TO HIS COUSIN, JUDGE WELLBORNE, OF MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT. . . . .	199
XXVI. MR. DUKE AND BARNEY JARRELL ON THE CREEK BANK . . . . .	205
XXVII. BARNEY JARRELL'S EMBARRASSMENT . . . . .	218
XXVIII. COMMENCEMENT . . . . .	222
XXIX. SUSPICIONS FOLLOWED BY ENHANCED CONFIDENCE . . . . .	227
XXX. LITTLE POLLY GETS BETTER AND BETTER . . . . .	239
XXXI. REBECCA WOODBRIDGE PROPOSES TO RESIGN . . . . .	246
XXXII. MR. JESSE LINES SEEKS TO MAKE AN ADVANTAGEOUS TRADE . . . . .	251
XXXIII. DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE PARTY AT THE ACADEMY . . . . .	261
XXXIV. MR. DUKE AND MR. RIDDLE AT MARK LANGSTON'S . . . . .	266
XXXV. THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF MR. LINES . . . . .	274
XXXVI. BARNEY JARRELL VISITS MR. LINES BY NIGHT . . . . .	283
XXXVII. A PREDICTION BY MR. LINES IS VERIFIED . . . . .	295
XXXVIII. A CITATION FROM THE COURT OF ORDINARY, WITH SOME OF ITS RESULTS . . . . .	298
XXXIX. MRS. TOLIVER'S SPECULATIONS AS TO NEWS BROUGHT BY LEWIS SANDERS . . . . .	310
XL. ONE MORE VISIT FROM MR. DUKE TO HIS INVALID FRIEND . . . . .	316
XLI. SEPARATION AND UNION . . . . .	328
XLII. SETTLEMENTS . . . . .	335

# OLD MARK LANGSTON:

## A Tale of Duke's Creek.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE TOPOGRAPHY OF DUKESBOROUGH.

THE Dukes were among the very first to settle in the neighborhood wherein occurred what is herein told. They imparted their name to the creek one mile above their residence, and some years afterward, when a blacksmith's shop entirely, and a meeting-house mainly their own, had been erected at the cross-roads, a quarter of a mile east, they called the place Dukesborough. Ammon Duke was supposed to have come from an upper county of North Carolina, though, being a man apparently without desire of hereditary distinction, he was not wont to speak often or much of his family antecedents. He had come in a two-horse wagon, bringing a wife, with her one young male child (Kinsey by name), five or six negroes, and a considerable amount of money in specie. He grew rich apace. The withdrawal of the Indians across the Oconee and the Ocmulgee had opened the hither sides to easy and frequent settlement thereon. Ammon Duke offered early and persistent arguments in favor of a town there in the upper border of the county. It was a shame, he averred, to be de-

pendent upon Gateston, the county-seat, twelve miles below, for schools, groceries, dry-goods—everything, in fact, except preaching and blacksmithing. For it had not been very long after his first coming that he had taken up and sold thousands of acres, and a population of goodly numbers had settled in the country around. His arguments, with other causes, in time prevailed. In process of several years a few planters had consecutively purchased lots of from five to twenty acres and upward along the road leading west from the cross, and built residences thereon. Dukesborough, however, grew but slowly, notwithstanding the claims of its founder as to its eligibility for a large town. Even at the period of which I propose to write a portion of its history it contained less than a dozen families, although it had attained to considerable fame, far and near.

At that time Ammon Duke and his wife had long been dead, and Kinsey Duke, now a man of fifty-three, or thereabout, with his wife and son, Ammon, dwelt in the family mansion, on the only hill in the village. A “rusher” (such a man was called) had been Ammon Duke—intrepid, reckless of consequences to boldest endeavors, audacious in risks of person and fame, gaining success that often falls to such a spirit in pioneer existence. It was said that he died hard, and while berating the physician whom, calling in late, he repeatedly stigmatized as “fool” and “liar” for telling him his end was near, and urging him to turn his thoughts from earthly interests. The grief of his neighbors in town and country, or even his son’s, did not seem excessive. Some of his oldest negroes did mumble some affectionate regrets—nobody knew for what. Kinsey buried him, rather decently, by the side of his deceased mother, in the grove destined to become the main village cemetery, situated near the dwelling. So henceforward Kinsey ruled in Ammon’s stead.

Though Dukesborough was near three-quarters of a mile long, a brief description will serve for its topography. You understand it lost in width and populousness. The traveller, say he began at the beginning—namely, the cross-roads—would see the meeting-house to the left and the graveyard to the right. Advancing in a direction westward, after ascending an easy acclivity, he would observe, on his right, at the corner of the graveyard, the blacksmith's shop, which at this period had so lengthened its lines and strengthened its stakes as to have an annex, in which spokes, hubs, feloes, and axle-trees were made from timber as good as the world ever saw. Keeping his eyes to the right, he would now pass in view, at convenient distances themselves apart, first Griffin's shoe-shop, in the rear of which Griffin himself dwelt in a house not much bigger than the shop; then the Duke mansion on the hill, one hundred and fifty yards from the street; then Barfield's. Right here the road, not having foreseen that it was to become a street, getting rather clumsily down the acclivity to its incipient level, diverged somewhat south-westwardly, and so continued until it concluded to fork, and thus define that limit of the town. Up to the fork, with liberal allowance for calf-pastures and truck-patches between, were Duggin's store and residence, Mrs. Catlin's, and the Howells', the last at the extreme west end. The said traveller, supposing his attention hitherto had been confined to objects of interest on his right, must turn square round, if his purpose were to do Dukesborough thoroughly and soon. Yet, pausing a moment at this point, he might observe, at short distance from the fork, one prong of which extended due west and the other south, another meeting-house, not nigh so large as the one aforementioned, and of another denomination of Christians. It had its little graveyard also. Beyond, an expanse of un-

dulating country, covered with majestic growth, would invite him to penetrate. But, engaged with the investigation of Dukesborough, the tourist must take the back-track. A couple of hundreds of yards' walk would put him before Mason's residence, store, and post-office. Thence he would pass consecutively Mrs. Toliver's, Hallier's tavern, Barfield's grocery across the street from his mansion, Reuben Quillian's (opposite the Dukes'), and Colin Quillian's. Lingered, when a few rods beyond the latter, at the mouth of a lane that led due south, a moment's survey would show that it terminated at the academy grove, which was a mere extension of that around the church. Returned to the starting-point, he would now notice, if he had at first omitted, within the fork of the north and east roads, a small, clumsy-looking house, at present occupied by a new-comer.

It had been sometimes a disputed question whether this house, and the little church in the south-west fork, could fairly be regarded as being within the limits of Dukesborough. The lack of statutory enactments establishing definite corporate limits put off decision indefinitely. As to the north-east case, the spirit of contestation depended generally upon whether the occupant for the time being preferred to be considered townsman or countryman. For the south-west, Mrs. Catlin, the only Methodist in town, had often been heard to say that, as to whether her meeting-house was to be called a country or a town meeting-house, she was, and intended to remain, as independent as a wood-sawyer, so to speak; or, if people preferred a different comparison, a bob-tailed lizard; and that, as it would neither hurt the town for her meeting-house to be taken in, nor (especially) her meeting-house to be left out, she thought she might safely say for the latter that it was as independent as herself. Indeed, it is but fair to say that discussions

upon the subject were held mainly at Barfield's, and the negative side maintained by country people, who, manifestly outside of the pale of town society, seemed to wish to confine that pale to its most narrowly ascertained limits.

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## CHAPTER II.

### VERMONTERS IN GEORGIA.

SOME years before this time had begun in Middle Georgia, especially in this particular neighborhood, an impulsion toward intellectual culture higher than could be obtained in the State outside of Savannah and Augusta. The State University had been established mainly through the instrumentality of Abraham Baldwin, a native of Connecticut, who, little as is now known of him, was one of the greatest men of modern times. Yet native young men, educated in that and similar institutions outside the State, without exception, abstained from the profession of teaching, and teachers of competent attainments in classical and mathematical education had come, partly from the Middle, but mainly New England States. In this respect Vermont was especially notable. Otis Smith, Alonzo Church, the Bemans, Charles Mallory—all became men of fame, and all except one chose Georgia for their home. For this was before the Slavery agitation troubles, when a Georgian and a Vermonter had the same love for a common country and the same pride in the heroes of Kettle Creek and the Green Mountain Boys.

A school, considerably above the average of the "old fields," had been in Dukesborough for a considerable time. About five years before a few families in the village and

neighborhood, mainly the Quillians, Colonel Porter, and Mr. Duke, had united their efforts to establish a first-class academy. A large, two-story frame building was erected in the grove, and Lucius Woodbridge, from Vermont, was placed at the head. The enterprise succeeded beyond most sanguine hopes. During the last year there were about seventy-five boys and girls, half of whom were boarders at the different houses in the village. The teacher was a man of slight build, tall, of pale complexion, high classic features. His dark-brown hair hung in clusters almost to his shoulders. His deep bass voice contrasted well with his slender physique and gentle manners. For although a strict disciplinarian in school, out of it he was almost as suave as his sister Rebecca. He had been bred to the Bar, and in his native State had practised for three years with promising success. Apprehensions on the score of health induced him to seek a milder clime. The situation obtained at Dukesborough, intended by himself to be temporary, had proved to be agreeable and profitable, and he had held it already much longer than he had expected.

The school had grown so large that his sister Rebecca had recently come out and joined him as assistant, particularly to teach music to the girls, and for this purpose a long, one-story building had been added at right angles to the west end of the first. Rebecca was tall, lithe, fair, and rosy-cheeked: not very handsome, except when she moved, and especially when in conversation. Her mouth was deliciously sweet, and in exquisite harmony with her bright blue eyes. She was twenty-two, and her brother thirty years old.

The reputation of the school spread far and wide. This present year had opened with near a hundred pupils. When they saw these things—every bench occupied, the certain



prospect that more would have to be made; when they saw that piano in the annex, the only one known or heard of except one apiece at Reuben Quillian's and Colonel Porter's; when they saw this special instrument set there for Miss Woodbridge to teach the native girls to play like she was known to discourse on another and a finer that she kept at Mrs. Toliver's, where she boarded, all—it was not worth while to try to deny it—all, including Quillians, Porters, and Dukes, felt what might as well be styled pride as satisfaction. As for music, excepting merely vocal, there had been prejudices against it, especially that produced by the violin. The inspirations imparted by that instrument sometimes, especially to young persons, had been suspected to have come from—well, some right out with it and said—the devil. The flute and flageolet, though not diabolical, were regarded as considerably carnal. But somehow, from the beginning, the piano was looked upon as harmless, and soon with favor, and it became pleasant to observe the sweetness that would overspread even elderly females when Harriet Quillian or little Eliza Porter would play “Days of Absence” or “Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine,” and the youthful, almost mischievous, smilings when the bigger girl, with unwonted boldness, would essay “The White Cockade,” “Leather Breeches,” or “Molly, Put the Kettle on.”

The coming of Miss Woodbridge was an important era. Mrs. Toliver, very tall, stout, now, at sixty-five or upward, in her second widowhood, while her two husbands slept side by side in the lower part of the garden at her plantation, a few miles south—Mrs. Toliver, as staunch a predestinarian as the best of them, as honest, as courageous, and as pronounced, was captivated at the start by the fair Vermonter. I hesitate to use the word *captivated* in connection with such a person as Mrs. Toliver, and I do so only

for want of a better. In a comparatively brief time she had, as it were, adopted this her only boarder, and made herself, or believed to have made herself, familiar with her whole list of pieces. There were "The Brattleboro' Waltz," "The River Waltz," "London," "Russian," and other marches; "Speed the Plough," "Money Musk," and "Kiss me Sweetly." There were Scotch and Irish ballads: "Kelvin Grove," "Bonnie Dundee," "Oh, believe me, if all," and "The Last Rose of Summer." Then there were also "The Troubadour," "The Minstrel's Return," "The Mellow Horn," "The Soldier's Tear," and others. The performer was as modest as she was skilful, and she had to be led, and sometimes even gently constrained, to do herself full justice in the opening of her career. Mrs. Toliver handed her generously around, and, whether at her own or the house of a neighbor where there was a piano (for pianos began now to be bought with some freedom in the town), would call placidly, yet with some slight authoritativeness, from her boarder's collection. She would not always have it precisely accurate, yet quite enough so to be understood by Miss Woodbridge, who would respond to invitations to give us, if she pleased, the "Battleberry Walls," "The Maelstrom's Returns," "The Miller's Horn," and, if Miss Woodbridge were not—and she hoped she were not—too tired, "The Downfall of the Past," by which the young lady understood "The Downfall of Paris."

## CHAPTER III.

## THE JARRELLS.

THE Dukes thought, of course, that it was their right and duty to be more interested than all others in newcomers. Dukesborough, if not their town, had been founded by them, bore their name, and the very ground on which the main meeting-house and academy stood, with the acres of broad, shady grove between and around, had been donated by them, to say nothing of the lion's share of money and lumber they had contributed besides. From their residence, upon the only hill in the village, they could see Dukesborough from one end to the other. Within these few years last past it had grown much in notability, if not in population; and they, as if conscious of their responsibility, were wont to claim credit, yet not loudly nor offensively, for what it had gained, leaving the debit of what it had failed to gain to be distributed among the other citizens, as they might acknowledge or compromise. Blacksmiths, shoemakers, such as these, the Dukes had to admit to be necessary in a town community aggregated of various elements. Yet Mrs. Duke, who had been born and reared on Broad River, had sometimes said, though without anything like harsh complaining, that to the Quillians mainly belonged the blame that such persons were not required to keep their places at the foot of the ladder of society. Not very long after her first coming, when the town was beginning to look as if it would be a town indeed, she had been heard to say

that she intended to wait and see where such mixing of high and low people would lead it. Having waited now many years, the town, so happy in name, yet remained in its same geographical position, the state of its society being less altered than its growth.

Mr. Duke of course was, and always had been, president of the board of trustees, because principally, among other reasons, he had been known to be the only one who cared for that honor. His native imperiousness of temper was not wont to exhibit itself here or in social circles. A silent, at times gloomy, man, he left the general conduct of board matters to the rest. What they proposed (not having leisure in the multitude of his own affairs for such less important work) he usually assented to with becoming reflection, hesitation, and reluctance. When it succeeded the family congratulated themselves upon it. The president had given a qualified assent to the call of Lucius Woodbridge. After he had come the success he had achieved was claimed to be attributable to the fact that he had been a constant boarder in the Duke family, and subject to their surveillance and counsel. When Rebecca was invited, rather with consent of Mr. Duke than after special consort with his colleagues, the family determined, as before, to wait for results before expressing decided opinions. When she came, and went to Mrs. Toliver's to board, they remarked calmly that, if matters should not turn out according to expectation, they were glad in advance that people would know where to fix the responsibility, or at least wherefrom to keep it. For of all persons in the village the Dukes liked Mrs. Toliver least.

Not nearly so much interest had been felt on the hill by the arrival, somewhat later, of the Jarrells. They had come in a two-horse wagon, and for several days had remained at

the camping-ground in the woods near the house before-mentioned in the north-east fork. The woods and the house belonged to Mr. Duke, and the latter happened then to be without a tenant. Seeing that the travellers did not move on, Mr. Duke rode up to their camp one morning, and after some chatting with Mr. Jarrell it was agreed that the latter would take the house near by for at least six months, half the rent paid in advance, the rest to be due a month before the expiration of the term.

"Seems like right, conversant, good-natured, independent kind o' fellow," said the landlord, in his curt, abrupt manner, to his wife and son, that night, when returned from one of his plantations.

"Where from?" asked the wife.

"South Carolina, he said. Fine, good-looking girl child, and one nigger woman. All the family seems to have. Adopted the child, he says; him a bachelor."

"Independent, you say, husband?"

"Rather so, but not unpolite. Just talks on. Don't say much; but don't seem to care particklar for nobody."

"Did he know who you were?"

"He didn't till I told him. When I did said he heard a man o' my name lived here, and the town was named after family. Heard that in Augusta, where they told him of the big school we had here."

"Did he say anything of his purposes, and how he expects to obtain his living?"

"Not particklar. Sort o' Jack-of-all-trades, said. Do a'most anything comes to hand. Going to look around for place to settle at. Maybe settle down to farming, if find place to snit—good land, cheap, and time to pay for it. Board girl somewheres, if he go on further. Send her to school."

"Yes, and I suppose the Quillians will be for taking them, perfect strangers, by the hand, as they do with everybody else."

"Oh, Belle," said Mr. Duke, feeling less complaint than his tone and words would have indicated, "don't run so on aristocracy. Free country. Quillians know that; and if one ain't as good as another, what difference, and what use making a to-do about it? 'Specially when people can't help themselves."

"I shall make no ado about it, husband. Other people have the responsibility of such matters in this town. Such as that I was not raised to. But I shall make no complaint."

"Saw the girl, pa?" asked Ammon, his son. "About how old?"

"Thirteen, or such a matter. Pretty girl. Looks smart, too. Nigger don't seem to have any manners. Hussey stared at me like never see white man before. Asked her where she got her manners; then she went off to the horses. Marster laughed; said she were natchelly scary, but never meant no impudence."

The child Amanda entered school at once. Her uncommon gifts, modest, graceful deportment commended her to teachers and pupils, and the signs of good-breeding in both her and her father placed them soon on good terms in society. Barney was a tallish, light-complexioned man, apparently not much beyond thirty, deliberate in his motions, considerate in speech. He spent his time walking about, chatting with whomsoever he got acquainted with, and doing little jobs, as mending wagons, yard-fences, and such other like work. The excellent start made by Amanda led to frequent intercourse between him and the school-master; and each having apparently found the other con-

genial, it was not long before they were upon terms of very friendly intimacy.

Some weeks passed, during which Barney had become considerably acquainted, not only in town, but in the country close around. One night, after supper, Mr. Duke and Lucius Woodbridge were sitting in the drawing-room by the fire. The former said,

"That fellow Jarrell seems to feel much at home, as if been born and raised here. You and him 'pears like quite friendly. Git anything out of him, Mr. Woodige?"

"I've not tried, Mr. Duke."

Association of years had not served to reconcile the young man to the rudeness of speech of his host.

"I mean, know much about him, and who he was, where he come from?"

"I have heard him say that he came here from the neighborhood of Winnsborough, South Carolina. I have not asked him what were his occupations there. But I believe it is generally supposed that they were about as they are here."

"Look strange man with family don't settle himself down in some sort regular business and get prop'ty, instead of piddlin about as he does."

"I incline to think, sir, that such is his intention whenever he can see his way clearly. At least, I have heard him say as much. He does not seem to be disposed to speak much about himself and his plans, and of course I do not inquire about them further than I am so led by what he says of his own accord."

"Smart young girl, ain't she?"

"His daughter, you mean? Yes, quite so."

"Sassy-looking nigger. Having but the one, I suppose they both natchelly spiles her. Generally case with these.

hussies that stay about the house, except mine. *They* know their places, and who they are."

Nothing farther was said then upon the subject.

Between Kinsey Duke and Lucius Woodbridge relations never had and never could have become cordial; they were too widely different for that. The younger had long desired to remove to another place; and once he had applied to Mrs. Toliver, whose was the only house in the village without boarders. She had declined to receive him, and his staunchest friends had urged him to remain in a family which, they knew, prided themselves on having with them the head of the school, and would resent his withdrawal. Besides, being one who was rather particular in his wants and tastes, and these having ever been specially regarded by Mrs. Duke, he had remained where he was until now.

It would have been interesting to one acquainted with his relations in that family to observe how skilfully yet independently he conducted himself. Mr. Duke had found long ago that his opinions upon any subject made no great impression upon his boarder; and, choleric, domineering though he was, he knew the limit of safe discussion, and not very often overpassed it. In politics especially the two were at very decided variance. In this respect, however, the Vermonter was in an almost infinitesimal minority in the neighborhood, and indeed through that whole section of the State—Colin Quillian being the only influential man in that part of the county that sided with him. Political parties were then styled *Troup* and *Clark*, and the contest between the two leaders who imparted these names had been long and acrimonious. The adroit tactics of Troup in dispossessing the Indians of their lands in the north-western portion of the State, and espousing a system of legislation by which every citizen was made a freeholder of rich,



virgin public lands—tactics which for a time involved the State in serious dispute with the Federal government—served at last to give to this consummate politician control of public affairs and enable him to hold it. The followers of Clark, however, still adhered to their chieftain, defeated, though unvanquished, and they hoped—in vain, as it afterward proved—to restore him to power. Not often, yet sometimes, Mr. Duke and his boarder must have their discussions. These were usually brief. The former soon got unduly excited, from the consciousness of being incapable of coping with his adversary in argument, and, convinced of the imprudence, if not the impropriety, of personalities, generally broke off and moved away. Additional coolness between the two had been growing since the arrival of Rebecca, and both had felt that separation was probable.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### IMPRESSIONS MADE BY THE NEW-COMERS.

ON the rest of the villagers the Jarrells made a good impression. Amanda rose speedily into some distinction, being found so bright and diligent in her studies, and so proper in deportment. In spite of her father's dawdling over jobs that neither occupied all his time nor brought in much money, he seemed to be universally liked. Aggy, even, having been found to be the best fitter of frocks in town, and as good a cook as the best, contributed her share to the well-doing of the family.

“Where did you learn all your smartness, 'oman?” asked Mrs. Toliver one day, at Reuben Quillian's, where the negress had been assisting in fitting a new frock for her daughter Harriet.

"I learnt what I know, ma'am," answered Aggy, "from my white people."

"I should of supposed that people that had one as smart nigger as you would of scuffled about and got more prop'ty o' some kind."

"I'm very much obliged to you, Aggy," said Mrs. Quillian, "and you must always call upon me whenever I can help you about your Miss Amanda's affairs, or your master's, or your own."

"Thanky, ma'am," said Aggy, and took her leave.

"There's something sort o' curious about them people, Sister Quillian," said Mrs. Toliver, when the woman had gone. "Poor as they are, they've got manners, even to the nigger. That nigger have belonged to a lady, sure as you're born. And as for Mandy, Miss Woodige say her brother say he hain't a s'perior in his school."

"He may well say that, Sister Toliver. Harriet is seventeen, and a hard student. She stands well in her classes—highest in some, I think; but she says that Amanda Jarrell learns with a rapidity that will place her before long at the head of the girls in the school."

"Do you know much about 'em, Sister Quillian, and who they was where they come from?"

"Nothing more than yourself, Sister Toliver, I suppose. I've never asked Amanda, and, of course, not Aggy, about their history."

Mrs. Toliver felt some, not all, of this rebuke, if indeed it was such. She was as good a woman as Mrs. Quillian, and she knew it. But there are various kinds of goodness.

"Miss Woodbridge," remarked Mrs. Quillian, "seems to be a very fine young woman."

"Ermakable fine," answered Mrs. Toliver—"ermakable fine, considerin'."

“Considering?”

“Yes, considerin’. Of course I know, Sister Quillian, what I’m a-talkin’ about, and you’ll be obleeged to say the same o’ yourself. Ef Miss Woodige were a Babbis’ I should say she were the religousest person in this town, no matter of what sect or sections; for, as fur as I can see, and I have watched her close, because I made up my mind many’s the year ago that, if I ever had another boarder of the female sections, I should watch her same as a hawk, and which, I tell you now, Sister Quillian, that young ’oman do more prayin’ than any person of whomsoever sections I know anything about, not even of exceptin’ of old Sister Catlin, who, as we all know, *have* to do a right smart o’ prayin’ more’n other people to try and make up for bein’ of a Methodist’. But as to who Miss Woodige pray to, and all what she pray for, nobody know, not even her brother; nor he wouldn’t know, as to that, if, instid of boardin’ with the Jooks, he were boardin’ with me along of her. I ast her one day, and I told her in course that it were none of my business, but yit I consated to ask her about so much prayin’ in a young person that didn’t seem to me would natchelly feel like they stood in need of sich a powerful amount o’ prayin’. I ast her, I did, what *made* her do so much of it. Instid of its hurtin’ of her feelin’s, she up, she did, and she laughed. And I do think, upon my soul, Sister Quillian, that when that young ’oman do laugh she have the prettiest mouth and eyes that I *ever*; and ef I was a young man—but, law me! which I ain’t, and which by no means I shouldn’t desires to be, and have always been, ef not satisfied, at leastways riconciled to the sections that the good Lord have put upon me and appinted to me, as it were; although I can’t but have consate sometimes that *ef* I had of been of a man person, and belonged to that sect and sec-

tions o' society, and had of been called—you understand, Sister Quillian—it may be it mout of been that I could of carried good Babtis' doctring a little furdur into the howl-in' wilderness, and of been more sagitated—or I mout ruther say sagaciated—as it were, to shet up old Sister Catlin in her wain and wanity argiments; though I cannot deny, and shouldn't wish to try to deny, that Sister Catlin—if so be I mout call her sister—is as good a neighbor as anybody ought never to want to live close by. Yit, Sister Quillian, as I was a-sayin', that young 'oman, when I ast her the question I did she laughed, she did, and she said that when she prayed she were a-prayin' for her sins, and which, as for them, she said they was mounting high. And now *warn't* that honest? But which also she 'lowed she prayed for the souls in purgatory, and which they was her father and mother, and warous besides that was done dead and goned, and which I told her that, good, bad, or indifferent, *I* should of supposed that they was now a past of prayin' for, because as the tree falls so it lays. But, 'ithout lettin' on so powerful much on that pint o' doctring, I says to her, 'Miss Arbecca,' says I, 'when *I* prays I prays to Godamighty; and though I in ginerly, when on my knees, I goes in mostly for myself, as in juty bound, for there's monstous few, if any, than by good rights ought to confess their sins ofener that what I do, yit I tries, when I go to the throne o' grace, to 'member some other people, and specially them that worshes idols up, and the sick, and the 'ficted, and the Gallio-like that keers for none o' these things.' But I wanted her to bar it in mind that when *I* prayed I prayed to God-amighty and him only. Now, what you supposen, Sister Quillian, that that young 'oman upped, she did, and said to me? She upped, she did, and she said, 'Missis Toliver,' says she, 'when your pastor, Mr. Holmes, was here I heard

you ask him to pray for Polly.' 'In course I did,' says I. 'Well,' says she, 'what you ask Mr. Holmes and other prayerful persons to do for you and yours I ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints to do for me and mine.' And, mind you, now, Sister Quillian, when it come to the cotin' o' Scriptor there's monstous few of any sect *or* sections that can git ahead o' her, that same young 'oman. In fact, she's a monstous fine young 'oman, Sister Quillian; and ef she were jes' only a Babbis'—"

"Well, well, Sister Catlin, if she prays as you say she does—"

"Prays, Sister Quillian! I tell you she's a more prayin' person than anybody in this town. Well, my opinion is she's on her knees offener than Sister Catlin or Br'er Mark. I'm bound to say it, she's freckwent thar, night, mornin', before goin' to the 'cademy, and arfter comin' back from the 'cademy, and at warous odd times betwixt *and* between. As to who all she pray too outside o' Godamighty *I* don't say, because I don't know, and I s'pose it ain't adzactly none o' my business, nor nobody else's, although I ken but have the curoosity to know somethin' about the warous idols o' sich people."

"You are right, Sister Toliver, in saying that it is not our business how she worships. You remember that her brother told the trustees frankly of her being a Catholic; but at the same time he said that she would not meddle with the faith of others, nor make efforts to change or alter it in any case. Of course she expected to be allowed the independent exercise of her own. As far as I have observed her course, it seems to have been remarkably upright and discreet, and her coming has certainly added already much to the tone of the school, good as it was before."

“Certainly,” answered Mrs. Toliver, with great cordiality, “that it have. Don’t you supposen, by no manner o’ means, Sister Quillian, but what I thinks as much of Miss Arbecca as anybody. We—that is, her and me—we never has nothin’ like any quarrelin’ about the worshin up of God in the deferent ways that me and her chooses. We has friendly talks, but them’s all; and nary one of us gits mad, like me and old Sister Catlin do sometimes, because it’s nothin’ but jes predigice, jes old natchel, hard-head predigice with her; yet we—me and Sister Catlin I’m talkin’ about now—we soon makes it up, because outside o’ that, I do think, upon my soul, that her beat for goodness ain’t to be found—no, no, by no manner o’ means; but yit, Sister Quillian, I kin but ast myself how it ever could of come about that two sich fine people, brother and sister, could ever of got so far apart in the one pint o’ the means o’ the salvation o’ their souls. As for Br’er Woodige, they say he’s way up in doctring, even beyant Br’er Holmes, and if he *ain’t* a preacher, the pra’ars he make ’s as lovely and as retchin’ to the very bottom o’ my heart as ever I got down on my knees to yit, and I’m sixty-seven year old, agoin’ on to my sixty-eight, and been a Babtis’ fifty-seven o’ them the first Sunday in this very month, and I’ve heerd a many a pra’ar enduring of my day and generation, good, bad, and indifferent.”

“I know little about it, Sister Toliver; but Brother Woodbridge told Mr. Quillian that his father, while a student of law in St. Alban’s, Vermont, became in love with and married his mother, who was a Catholic, and that of the two children born of their marriage he took the father’s and his sister the mother’s faith. Both parents died when Miss Rebecca was an infant. She was brought up by the mother’s and himself by the father’s relations.

The circumstances were such that none on either side thought proper to interfere, and the results became as they are. Brother Woodbridge said that their difference in this respect had never interfered with their affection for each other, and that always it had been the wish and expectation of both, whenever her age and education would so warrant, that she should live with or near him. The trustees, being made acquainted with all the facts, invited her to come and assist in the school."

"And they done a monstous powerful good thing when they done it, to git Br'er Woodige, in the first place, and her afterwards; and as for her of a-playin' on the peaner, and of her singin'— But you've heerd her, Sister Quillian."

"Oh yes. She does indeed play and sing remarkably well."

"I do think, Sister Quillian, that them 'Battleberry Walls,' and that 'Downfall o' the Past,' and that 'Malestrom's Return'— Well, it's jes curous to think how anybody that ain't a Christan—"

"Oh, my dear Sister Toliver! she is a Christian."

"Well, yes, she may be, up to a certain pint; and she do sing sometimes chunes—she calls 'em psalms and sich—and upon my soul and body, Sister Quillian, if some of 'em ain't jes that meltin' that, as for me, I jes has to git up and go into my room and set down and cry. They hain't any words in 'em, that I can understand; she say the lang-widges of 'em is dead, and I sposen may be mout that's what make 'em so meltin', not only on me but poor little Polly. Well, she's a monstons fine young 'oman, and a modester or a delicater about herself and her clothes I should sildom wish to see in or about *my* house; and the keer she help take o' Polly— Well, Sister Quillian, she moun't be a Babtis', but her goodness to that child show

that somebody or somethin' 's learnt her what Godamighty want done to the weak and the 'ficted, and she do for that child same as me, exceptin' that she's more tender like in the doin' of it."

The old lady drew out her handkerchief and wiped her eyes, continning: "She have been to my house now three months, agoin' on four, and I believe that precious little thing have got to love her more'n her grandpa afore he died, and as much as she do me. You see, Sister Quillian, she's more tender like than what I am, and the child, child as she is, know it. Well, I must be agoin'. I left Polly asleep; she'll miss me if she's awake, and 'specially if Miss Arbecca have not yit come from the 'cademy."

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## CHAPTER V.

### MRS. TOLIVER AT HOME.

MRS. TOLIVER'S worldly possessions, consisting of her house and lot in the village, her plantation, and about twenty negroes, a few miles below, had been accumulated by her and her first husband, Mr. Cox, who, dying childless, had bequeathed them all to her. Some years after his death his relict, overpersuaded, as she used to say, contrary to her expectations in that behalf, had married the late Mr. Toliver, who, in a small, unostentations, yet somewhat unctuous, way, was a Baptist preacher. About four years ago this second husband, whose antenuptial debts had been liquidated by his wife, departed this life, leaving to her, in addition to what she already had, nothing except his memory and an invalid grandchild, Polly Cheney by name, both of whose parents, his son-in-law and daughter by a former



marriage, had deceased before him. The widow managed this piece of property with greater care than that she bestowed upon the rest. Though of masculine figure and features, she was affectionate, pious, and the most indiscriminately charitable person in Dukesborough. An invalid child confided to her charge needed not ties of blood-relationship to obtain from such a woman long-continued and tender ministrations.

Considering the differences among the three women—herself, Mrs. Catlin, and Mrs. Reuben Quillian—their good neighborhood and their affectionate friendship were pleasant to contemplate. Mrs. Quillian, younger by fifteen years, was soft, gentle, sweet. Her cheeks, though now at fifty, had a smoothness and a sheen that harmonized well with her low, loving voice. Mrs. Catlin, of about the age as her nearest neighbor, as plain, as tall, though not as gigantic, yet approximated her in all points, physically and spiritually. From both the other two, and from the rest of the villagers, she differed in religious faith. The main Dukesborough Church had been planted by Silas Mercer, a man of great vigor of understanding and character, whose family name was destined to be made yet more notable by the career of one of its members, Jesse, who, in his time, extending over many years, was probably the greatest Baptist divine in the United States. It was a problem, to such as Mrs. Nancy Toliver, wholly insoluble, not so much how many other persons of common honesty and in their senses, as how a woman like Mrs. Catlin, acknowledged to be on a line with the foremost in all good works, could be other than a Baptist right there in sight, except for the slight rise at Barfield's, of the meeting-house that had been erected under the counsels of such a founder. But Mrs. Toliver and the rest would say, "We all know what prejudice is, and what it can do

with the very best people." And all except Mrs. Toliver tried to become reconciled to leave the case where it stood.

The late Mr. Catlin had had built, mainly at his own expense, the small meeting-house at the other end of the village, sustaining, to the great one at the east fork, relations somewhat like that of a synagogue of the Getto, in Rome, to the cathedral of Saint John Lateran. Seldom was religious service held there, the congregation being limited to Mrs. Catlin and three or four other humbler country people, though usually Mrs. Toliver, and sometimes the Quillians, with whatever inward protests, attended out of respect for their neighbor, and in acknowledgment of her habitual presence at all exercises in their own church.

This religious difference made none in social intercourse. The Quillians were thoroughly tolerant, and they especially, together with another member from the country, soon to be herein introduced, gave to the community its religious tone, and that was marked with brotherly kindness and charity. As for Mrs. Toliver and Mrs. Catlin, I am not sure that the enjoyment of each other's society was not enhanced by their religious difference. Pronounced characters as they were, both rather militant, one decidedly so, the other, if not aggressive, at least dauntless in defence, each served as a foil to the assaults of the other's doctrinal warfare. High times they sometimes had at one and the other of their dwellings. Yet they seemed to love each other the more after such disputes, and scarcely a day passed on which one did not send the other some kindly inquiry or some sweetmeat, which atoned for every item of acrimony. Mark Langston, brother of Mrs. Toliver, several years her senior, used to have his quiet, confidential chats with Brother Reuben Quillian about these ladies and their frequent hot controversies.

"Both of 'em, Br'er Quillian, seem to have the notion,

every time they meet, that they're goin' to convert one another right then and there, 'specially Sister Nancy, and which, of course, she have the right side o' the case, ef she only knowed how to manage it; but which they both get mad as two settin' hens ef the tother don't come in immediately, though they makes it up and loves one another the same, and I sometimes think even better, arfter they've had one o' their blow-outs. For the fact is, they're both of 'em monstous good and fine women. But my expeunce is, Br'er Quillian, that, as a general thing, women, ef they don't know how to argy like men, yit they're more strenuous on pints o' doctring, and harder to be jerked loose from 'em, 'specially when they git to jerkin' at one another. In sech a case my expeunce is, nary one of 'em seem to know, 'pear like, where to git hold o' the tother, but they jes' shets their eyes and goes to grabbin' at one another, so to speak. Ah well! God looks at the heart more than perfessions. I'm more and more convinced o' that."

Wide apart as the two were in religious opinions, they could not but frequently meet in close combat with javelin and spear, even with sword and buckler. Yet their warfare, if stormy, was bloodless, and their truces early and hearty. Mrs. Catlin was fond of visiting Mrs. Quillian and Mrs. Toliver. When entirely calm in her mind she went to the former and rested sweetly under the influences of that meekest of women. When she felt a spur of friendly pugnacity, or imagined it to be her duty to exhibit herself before one whom she knew ever disposed to attack her dearest convictions, or her feelings, from accidental and unknown causes, were strung more or less beyond their ordinary tension, she went to Mrs. Toliver's. Two other motives, co-operating, made her a more frequent visitor here. The one was to see Miss Woodbridge and hear her play and sing, and the

other to visit the invalid child, Polly Cheney. And be it said, in memorial of good women of all creeds in that primal time, that visitation of the sick was regarded and practised as a duty second only to belief in God and our Redeemer. Seldom a day passed in which Mrs. Catlin did not bring or send something in token of affectionate sympathy. The child, who had for years been confined to the house, and mainly to her bed, from an infirmity of the spine brought on by a fall, whose understanding gradually grew to partake of the weakness of her physical frame, loved this charitable neighbor next to her grandmother and Rebecca Woodbridge.

The young lady had a hearty sense of humor, and enjoyed the discussions of these two, occurring often in her presence, and sometimes even at Polly's bedside. Many a bout had herself had with her hostess, but ever with preservation of entirely good-temper on both sides. They were at such vast distance asunder that they could combat coolly and deliberately. The efforts of the older combatant had been employed mainly on the line of attempting to persuade the younger to dispense, one by one, with some of her numerous gods. Good-humored, sometimes even merrily, were these contests. But with Mrs. Catlin and Mrs. Toliver each was wont to complain to Rebecca that the other would never listen to argument. Mrs. Toliver especially had often declared that if her neighbor would listen to reason she would settle the hash for her in fifteen—well, at the outside, twenty minutes.

Polly, used to these discussions, had grown to regard them as mere friendly chattings between her grandmother and her "Aunty Catlin," as she called the latter. Lately, however, a certain matter had begun to agitate her mind.

On the same afternoon of Mrs. Toliver's visit to Mrs.

Quillian aforementioned, when Rebecca had returned from school, and the old lady had stepped over to her next neighbor's, Polly told Rebecca that she had heard her grandma say that she had come nigh making a Baptist of her aunty that afternoon when the latter had broken away. Then Polly gave it as her opinion that her grandma had gone over there to finish up the business.

"And oh, Miss Arbecca! you ought to of heerd—"

"'Have heard,' Polly, not 'of heerd.'"

"Have heard grammar and Aunty Catlin, how they went on when the old Dominicker heu's chicken fell in the chicken-trough."

"How was that, darling?"

"Oh, you'll have to get grammar to tell you; but it was so funny, and, what must I say?—intrusting."

"*Interesting*, you mean, I suppose?"

"Grammar says *intrusting*. But she tells me I must try to learn to talk like you."

Hereat Mrs. Toliver came in, disappointment plainly written on her face. She laid on the table her portable Bible, almost jerked off her sun-bonnet, and, as she threw it on the bed, said,

"How you feel, Polly?"

"Better, grammar."

Polly, according to her own account, was always growing better.

"Glad to hear it, precious. But oh, Miss Arbecca, the predigice, the predigice o' some people! Where you sposen I been?"

"Polly said she thought you had gone to Mrs. Catlin's."

"Well, well! The child, she see me gether up my Bible. Grammar's child's the smartest of all the childern, ef she *ain't* been to school. But oh, Miss Arbecca, the

predigice, the predigice! for it ain't nothing *but* predigice; for, exceptin' o' that, she's as sensible and good a person o' the female sections as they is in this town or this whole county, and, not a-exceptin' of even Sister Quillian, I believe, on my soul, she'd be the religiourest."

"Can't bring her around yet, eh, Mrs. Toliver?"

"No. I had her onst this evenin' where she couldn't squeal, nor not even chirrup, so to speak, and a leetle more and I'd of elinched the nail on her; but somehow, to save my life, I couldn't lay my hand at the minnte on the passage o' Scriptor I wanted; and I were a-sarchin' for it, when she up, she did, and she scooted, a-sayin' she had to make some wafers for Polly, and which you know she do make the best wafers of ary 'nother person in this town; and which I don't know, Miss Arbecca, whether you know it or not, but them Methodist' women—at least, them that lives where their preachers in general stops when they goes a-prowlin' around in their mirations—them women *has* to learn how to do good cookin', because them preachers, so they tell me, they has appetites, they do. *Appetites* is the word. But that ain't neither here nor thar. To-day I see, or I could but consate I see—for somehow the words and the idees come to me freer and easier 'n common—and I were a-pinnin' of her down, and I see the iron were hot, or at least-ways warm, and I wanted to strike before it got cold agin, and I found the passage o' Scriptor, and I car'd it over to her. Well, now, you think she didn't?—Well, in course she had too much respects to laugh right in my face when she see the Bible in my hands and it open; but she smiled, she did, in a way off yonder kind of a way, and she said the passage didn't bar on what we was a-talkin' about, and which— Here, Polly, is the wafers; and ain't they nice, and ain't Annty Catlin good to grammar's precious darlin'?"

A young negro woman had brought in the plate of wafers, saying her mistress had sent them, and wanted to hear from Miss Polly's own mouth how she felt.

"Oh, thanky, Rachel. Tell Aunty Catlin they're so nice, and tell her I'm a great deal better."

"That's a precious. Grammar loves to see her child thankful, and 'specially to her aunty, that's so good to her."

When the servant had gone Rebecca remarked,

"Polly tells me you and Mrs. Catlin had a good deal of talk about chickens."

"Law bless us! Did you hear that, precious? We was at the funder end o' the back peazer, and grammar thought her baby was asleep. Aunty Catlin must of talked powerful loud. My voice is natchelly a strong voice, but I tries to rigerlate it, 'specially when Polly, or, as to that, when any sick person is asleep, or ought to try to go to sleep. Well, you mind, Miss Arbecca, me and Sister Catlin—because me and her calls one another Sister, although we're as fur apart as the ragin', mounting seas—we was a talkin' about of infant baptism—"

She paused a moment, regarded Polly with some apparent momentary concern, and proceeded, but evidently there was some blank in the report she was making.

"And while we was a-talkin' thar on the back peazer my old Dominicker hen—and she may not be sich a layer, Miss Arbecca, as some, that is, sich a monstous powerful layer, but (I'll say it open and above-board) she's the best setter, hatcher, *and* raiser in all this whole yard o' chickens. Well, now, you jes listen to me, if you *please*: that hen, right in the mist of me and Sister Catlin a-talkin' on that very pint, she comes up, she do, to the chicken-trough, a-fetchin' of her chickens to git water. Sister Catlin were a-lookin' at

them hen and chickens, while I were a-explainin' o' the doctring as I knowed the blessed apostles laid it down and 'pinted to be follered. For that's one o' her ways, Miss Arbecca, and which, *ef* she'd listen to me, I'd conwince her in no time. I were jes a-cappin' o' the climack, when she ups, she does, and she say, 'What a fine hen, Sister Toliver, and what a fine passel o' chickens, to be shore!' Well, Madam Miss Arbecca Woodige, the words wa'n't scacely outen her mouth before one o' them chickens—he were a little rooster—he leaned, he did, too fur over the age o' the trough, or he were jes natchelly too smart, and, lo and behold, he hop off—anyhow, he got right smack into the water. Well, now, young 'oman, *ef* ever you see a mad hen, then was the time; for you know, or, *ef* you don't, you mout know, that hens with young chickens is like some women, and don't seem they can be satisfied without a-fus-sin' other with their young 'uns or about 'em, and old Lady Dominicker are that kind in particklar. But this time I could but see she were in the right. She sot on to that little rooster and she pecked him here and she pecked him thar, and he hollered and he hopped, *and* he hopped and he hollered, until he hopped out agin, and she yit give him a wipe on the back of his head arfter he were out. Sister Catlin and me," she continued, still laughing heartily at the recollection, "we both, well, we jes *had* to laugh—her so mad, and him so pitiful. But now," again becoming serious, even stern, "I don't think a idee ever struck me so suddently as the idee of all that a-happenin' right thar while we was on the pint o' the babtizin' o' childern, and they a not knowin' no more o' its wallue nor what it's for than that same little rooster, and I says to her, 'Thar,' says I, 'Sister Catlin, you see that the very hens and chickens is agin it.'"



"Only the hens, my dear friend, it seems, from your account," said Rebecca, laughing heartily.

"Bless your soul and body, madam, she wouldn't give up that much, and she declared the case wa'n't in pint; and then I thought on that passage o' Scriptor where it says about the beholdin' o' the fowels o' the ar, but to save my life I couldn't cote it quite at the minute, nor light on the book and chapter and veerse whar to find it, and before I could light on it she ris, she did, and she scooted; but, law! the iron had done got cold, and you jes as well of beat on it with your fist, let 'lone a hommer. It only go to show what predigice 'll do with even good people, and if that 'oman were jes only a Babtis' she'd be a saint. And ain't them nice wafers, precious? And ain't Aunty Catlin good to grammar's child?"

"That she is, and so is grammar, and so is Miss Arhecca. I love all of 'em."

The old lady carefully gathered up the crumbs that had fallen upon the child's breast, and smoothed the bedclothes, saying the while, "She's the precioucest, thankfulest child in this whole town, I don't keer how big it is."

A tear dropped from her eye. She turned away, took out her huge handkerchief, and gave a snort that, but for its frequent occurrence at that little bedside, would have been startling to hear.

"It do look like," she said, as she was leaving the room, "that I never will git over these bad colds."

When she had gone Polly said,

"Miss Arbecca, grammar didn't tell you all Aunty Catlin said, and how the talk begun. I heard aunty say *I* ought to be baptized, and grammar said she wanted it done, and they was a-waitin'—"

"'Were waiting.'"

“ Yes, ma’am, were waiting for me to git—”

“ ‘ Get.’ ”

“ Get stronger, and be able to erlate a expeunce, and Annty Catlin said it wasn’t no use to be talkin’ such talk. That’s what *she* said, and she said it was a mighty important thing, and danjous in the bargain. Do *you* think I ought to be baptized, Miss Arbecca?”

“ By all means, darling, by all means, when—when the time comes. But grammar’s the one to talk with about that.”

“ But, Miss Arbecca, even ef they was to carry me to the creek, I couldn’t stand up to be baptized.”

“ Well, precious, they could make some arrangement about that. Grammar would see to that.”

“ But, Miss Arbecca,” she persisted, “ how could I erlate a expeunce? I don’t even know what that is. I’ve never learnt how to read. Grammar started to try to learn me; but the doctor said she had to stop it, because my head couldn’t stand it. I can say the Lord’s Prayer, and I can say *my* prayer; but I haven’t had the chance to learn a expeunce; and what will they do?”

“ Never mind now, darling. Something, I trust, will be done in good time. There, now, be quiet, and go to sleep.”

She took her hand and gently stroked it with her own. Under that influence Polly soon fell into sleep. The young woman knelt and leaned her head upon the bed for a few moments, then rose, and repaired to her chamber.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE PORTERS AND OTHER DUKE'S CREEK FOLK.

HENRY PORTER, who had been a colonel in the war of 1812, now about fifty, dwelt four miles west of Dukesborough. His mansion, a large, two-storied building, with front and back piazza, stood in a grove of oaks, interspersed with hickory, poplar, and chestnut. His store, at the foot of the grove, three hundred yards distant, stood on one of the main thoroughfares from the west to Augusta. He owned some three thousand acres of land and about seventy-five slaves. His wife, sister of the Quillians, who had borne him many children, but seen them all depart in infancy except one, had died, leaving the last—Eliza by name, then three and now eleven years old—who, boarding with her uncle, Reuben Quillian, attended the Dukesborough school.

Between Colonel Porter's and Dukesborough, on the north side of the road, were the plantations of Reuben and Colin Quillian. In the neighborhood, especially on the south side, dwelt quite a number of moderately well-to-do farmers; and not only Duggan's store, in town, but that of Porter & Sanders, did a satisfactory trade. For Lewis Sanders, who had begun as clerk, had been the colonel's partner for five or six years, and, in so far as were concerned the responsibilities, both of purchases and sales, might as well have been considered the leading man in the firm.

One Friday evening, in April, Lucius Woodbridge, his sister, Harriet Quillian, and Amanda Jarrell went, on invitation, with Eliza, to remain, as many as would do so, until

Sunday. The invitation to Amanda had been at the special instance of Eliza, between whom and her quite a friendship had arisen. They were to go on a fishing excursion to Duke's Creek and the mill-pond on Saturday morning. The creek, originating in the north-west corner of Colonel Porter's plantation, ran parallel with the road, a mile north of his mansion, for about three miles, when, diverging to the south-east, it made its way to the Ogeechee, and joined it at a point two miles east of Dukesborough. As this was an uncommon occasion, Eliza succeeded in persuading Lewis Sanders to go along with the party, an event most unusual with him, so devoted and punctual a man of business was he. Miss Woodbridge, you may be sure, as well as all who had heard Eliza talk about her home, had heard of him. Lucius Woodbridge had also sometimes alluded to him, as a gentleman of whose society he regretted that he had not had more frequent enjoyment.

People familiar with Duke's Creek of to-day, not remembering what once it was, would smile at the idea of a fishing excursion, even for recreation, along its stream. For its waters have dwindled, in lapse of time, by the destruction of the encompassing forests. They have survived the Dukes and their descendants of that name; but, slow, sluggish, yellow, they seem as if they cannot do such a thing with another generation. Yet, in the times herein named, Duke's Creek was clear like crystal, deep, and, though not rapid, because of the wide, low grounds, and delayed by the mill-pond, it neither hastened nor rested in its six miles' course to the river, and it abounded in bream, red-belly, the sucker, and the eel. Those who had leisure to angle by day could gather within a couple of hours strings sufficient for several meals. Others, especially negroes, were wont to repair there at night, armed with long-handled gigs,

and spear the game as, attracted by the pinc-torches, they came from beneath the banks and darted up and down and across the clear stream.

After breakfast the party set out on foot. The woods, ever undulating with hill and level, seemed as if they could not have had imparted deeper green and shade. Honey-suckles, bubbly-blossoms, yellow jasmynes, haw, wild plum, chestnut, and chincapin, even sweet-gums and young hickories, loaded the air with sweetness. They strolled slowly along, and saw and listened how the birds and gray squirrels disported in this their season of wooing. Eliza had several times spoken to Miss Woodbridge of Lewis Sanders, with his six feet (papa had said that was exactly his height), his sandy hair, his sober, silent, sweet ways.

“And oh! Miss Rebecca, he’s up, Lewis is, like papa and Uncle Reuben and Colin, in books, such as history and—and newspapers. But you’ll have to draw him out, he’s so bashful; and if you can draw him out he’s just charming, Lewis is.”

This in private; to Lewis, in like manner, thus:

“Now, do you put off them silent, say nothing ways you have before company, sir, and make Miss Woodbridge see that you and the rest of us are somebody, and have a pleasant time here. If you don’t I’ll never speak to you again.”

Leisurely along they moved on the bright morning, up and down, on the levels, and chatted, and smelled the green woods and the dewy earth, and listened to the varied music. When they had reached the last rising ground, at the yonder foot of which coursed the creek, they saw two men, one standing, the other sitting on a block newly sawed from the trunk of a large white-oak that lay extended on the margin of the road. The latter, once tall and strong, now bent with age, sat with his coat off, his thin, white

hair thrown back and hanging nearly a foot in length behind his ears. In his right hand he held a mallet, in his left a froe; at his feet was a cross-cut saw, and near by a stack of short pieces of timber, newly rived. The other was apparently fifty years old, stout of body, but slender of limb, a trifle over medium height; his hair also was thin and white, yet not from age—it had been thus always. It clung in close, tight clusters around his head. His beardless face, white when not excited, on occasion could instantly become red. He looked like a man who, though conscious of having sufficient personal attractions, was not disposed for that reason to neglect other matters becoming the deportment of a gentleman. He wore his best suit of homespun clothes; his hat, though not new, had been recently brushed with care; the tags of his striped cravat hung low upon his prominent chest, and the corner of his spotted handkerchief peeped with studied coquetry from one of his coat-tail pockets. If it had been a Sunday and a Dukeborough meeting-day he could not have been gotten up better. As the party approached he was standing, slightly swayed backward, his left arm akimbo, his right grasping three or four reeds whose stocks rested upon the ground, while their tops towered ten feet above his head. Three or four small round gourds were hanging by twine strings from his neck.

“Oh,” cried Eliza, “if yonder ain’t Uncle Mark and Baldy!”

She ran forward. The younger man, laughing loudly the while, lifted her upon a higher block beside the one on which the other was seated, and continued to laugh as the two fondled each other’s hair.

“And, bless my soul!” said the old man, “how you do grow, Lizy? How are you? and how’s your pa?”

"We are both just as well as we can be. But, Uncle Mark, you haven't been to see us in ever so long."

"Why, I were there twice last week, and once this, precious."

"Ah, but, you see, *I* wasn't there. Now, if you want to see *me*, Uncle Mark, you must come of a Saturday or a Sunday. I board now, I do; didn't you know it?"

"Oh yes—oh yes."

"Yes, I go to school in Dukesborough, and board with Aunty Quillian, and I can't see company at home now except on certain days."

"Didn't I tell you, Uncle Mark," interposed the younger man, "how she were a-growin' in more ways 'n one? Jes listen at that talk for one o' her age."

"Good place to board at, your aunty's," continued the elder. "I don't think you're apt to forgit to say your praars of a night in that house, Lizy."

"You may 'pend on that, Uncle Mark. I don't suppose that Aunty Quillian would let anybody, 'specially a girl like me, stay in her house that didn't say her prayers at night."

"Mornin', Lewis; mornin', ladies; and—why, bless my soul, if it ain't Br'er Woodbridge! I didn't know *you* ever come out on such frolics as this. And—yes, Br'er Quillian's daughter; and—why, this is Mr. Jarrell's little girl, ain't it? To be sure. And—"

"This is my sister, Brother Langston, who has lately come out from Vermont."

"Oh, yes. They told me about her. Sister Nancy sent me word to come in to see her and hear her play on the peana. Mornin', ma'am. I expect you're as clever as your brother."

"No, indeed, sir," answered Rebecca, "that I am not."

"More so, Brother Langston—decidedly more so," said the brother.

"Not Babtis', so they told me."

"No, indeed," answered Woodbridge, "but—"

"Well, well, Br'er Woodbridge, it ain't all in people's professions, nor not nigh as much as in the kind o' lives they lead. Defernt people has defernt idees about churches, and I'm one that believes nobody's conscience ought to be interfered with nor thought less of, when they do the best they can to act up to it. Goin' a-fishin', I see. But, Lizy, you mustn't run up and down and talk and laugh too loud, or you'll skeer the fish and make 'em run under the bank. Here's Baldy to go 'long with you. He knows the ways o' the fish on Duke's Creek. He heerd about your comin', and, you see, he prepared hisself. He brought me a fine mess this mornin'."

"Mornin', ladies all," said the younger man, with complacent gallantry. "Mr. Woodidge, mornin', sir. The kernel and Lewis told me yisterday o' the present occasion, and inwited my presence. Mornin', Miss Harriet; mornin', Miss—" When he saw Miss Woodbridge face to face he swayed his back still more, with apparent danger of overturning the stack on which he was leaning.

"That's Br'er Woodbridge's sister, my son," said Mr. Langston.

"Yes, sir, Uncle Mark, that were my suspicions and presumptions. Your most obedient, madam."

She courtesied to his salutation, and the smile upon his face broadened, as he was thinking up some remark that might be worthy of the occasion.

"Hello, Baldy!" said Lewis Sanders. "Don't you know a fellow, or can't you speak to him in such presence?"

"Gracious me, Lewis! I didn't think to re-cognize you in



such a prevous splendid company. I knowed you knewed nothin' 'bout fishin', and so I perwided some fishin'-poles and bait-gourds; and, as for Lizy's pole, I knewed nobody 'd be thinkin' about her havin' one fittin' to transact with, and that's what mainly 'sponded me to the invitation, and which— Well, now, Uncle Mark, will you jes' lo and behold the pole they've give to that child!—and to— I susposes that Mr. Lewis Sanders have lost all his manners, as him nor, as to that, nobody else hain't interjoosed me to the tother young 'oman, though I knowed in course it were Mr. Jarrell's daughter."

"Yon, Lewis," said Eliza, "I don't know where your manners are gone, that you can't introduce Baldy to Mandy."

"Begging a thousand pardons, Miss Jarrell, will you please to allow me to introduce Mr. Riddle?"

Amanda gracefully approached and extended her hand. Mr. Riddle, taking it, held it only for an instant; then, letting it go, backed yet farther, and, with a blush and a yet broader smile, said,

"Prond o' your acquaintance, madam. Fine prevous mornin' for goin' of a-fishin'. I knewed Lewis 'd fetch but one bait-gourd, and you two *young* ladies 'd have no satisfaction a constant a-runnin' to him for bait, and so I perwided for all, at least o' the female sections o' the conge-gation. These poles, arfter Lizy have had the first pick and chice, the rest o' the present females may divide 'em accordin' to their warious perlapsities. That one? I'm afraid that's too heavy for you, precious. Ah, now! that's the one for you—keen, light, supple. I'll carry your bait-gourd. Might dirty up your apon."

"And don't let her muddy up her frock, Baldy," said the old man, "and have to git scolded when she go home."

"Now," said Eliza, "Uncle Mark, I'm going to 'range the party. Pa said, as it was my party, I was to have the 'rangement of everything. Mr. Woodridge, you and Harriet are to fish together. Lewis, you are to wait on Miss Rebecca; and as for you, Baldy, you've got to follow Mandy and me wheresomever we want to go, and do whatsomever we want you to."

"That," said Mr. Riddle, bowing, and swaying, and broadening to his utmost, "were just my own prevous desires for the transactions, madam."

"I'm sorry, Miss Rebecca, but I never let Baldy be anybody's beau exceptin' of mine."

"Ain't she the smartest thing that perwades of all Georgy?" inquired Mr. Riddle, audibly, of all around.

"Because, Miss Rebecca," continued the child, "next to pa and Uncle Mark, he is my best friend—better 'n Lewis, for Lewis won't always do all I ask him, and Baldy will; and he can play the fiddle ever so nice; and he shall go home this minute, if you say so, and fetch it, and play for us while we are fishin' up and down the creek. I'll send him for it right away, if you want to hear him. He don't live but a mile from the creek."

Mr. Riddle smilingly awaited definite orders.

"Oh, Lizy!" said Mr. Langston, "Miss Nancy, as Baldy calls her, would skeer all the fish and run 'em under the bank. People, darlin', can't expect to be a-fishin' and a-fiddlin', not both of 'em together."

He smiled serenely upon her as he yet held in his hand her abundant brown hair.

"Lizy," said Lewis, "I think you'd better order Baldy to come to the house to-night, and bring Miss Nancy."

After reflecting a moment, she seemed to conclude that that was best.

"You do that, then, Baldy. Hear?"

"Yes, madam," said the gentleman, his pale-blue eyes glistening, partly from the fun of the occasion, and partly from his intense admiration of "Lizy."

"Godamighty bless you all!" said the old man, as all, except Lucius Woodbridge, taking their leave, moved on.

"You made me blesh, Lizy," said Mr. Riddle, as he, with her and Amanda, were travelling along in advance of the others—"you made me blesh like the mornin' rose to want me to 'splay my ign'ance before the splendid perrformance of such a magnanimous school-mistess of the present occasion, and—"

"Now, Maudy, you know," said Eliza, "that deceitful man knows that he haven't any ignorance to 'splay. But Mr. Woodbridge, Baldy, says we mustn't say '*splay*, but *display*. Never you mind. You fail to do what I tell you if you feel like it, and don't care about knowing what's good for you."

"Ain't she," he tried to whisper to Amanda—"ain't she the smartest thing in that schoool-house?"

"No whispering," said Eliza, "and 'specially things that ain't so."

At the ford of the creek they waited for Lucius Woodbridge, who came up half an hour afterward.

"Mr. Woodbridge," said Eliza, "I almost began to think you had quit us all for Uncle Mark. You had a long talk with him. Ain't he sweet and good?"

"That he is. I had been long thinking I ought to make him a visit, and, meeting him upon the road, I concluded I might just as well make it then and there."

"What did you and Uncle Mark have to talk about so long?"

"Several things, my dear. But I supposed you were

all at your work, and had gotten, by this time, some distance down the stream."

"No; I was afraid you might get lost hunting for us; and then," looking mischievously at Lewis and Mr. Riddle; "I didn't know but that these men would get pestered and mad with one 'nother how to divide Cousin Harriet. So I said we better wait, and we waited."

"Thanks for your apprehension, Eliza—for my part of it, that is—and pardon from all for keeping you waiting."

"And they are Mr. Langston and Mr. Riddle, of whom I have heard Mrs. Toliver and Eliza often talk?" said Rebecca to Lewis.

"The same. The old man is a wheelwright, though he comes of good family, the colonel says, on his mother's side. He gets all the timber from the colonel's woods, and I have heard him say often that Mark Langston is the very best man he ever knew."

"He has, indeed, a most serene and rather distinguished-looking face and demeanor. Is he so poor that he must yet do what seems quite hard work?"

"He is poor; but he continues to work from choice rather than necessity. He dwells in a right good house, on the first rise from the creek. Two negroes, a man and his wife, live there, and do his domestic work. They belong to the colonel. Uncle Mark, as we all call him, is very fond of the colonel and Mr. Riddle, and, I believe, has come to have quite a friendly interest in myself."

"But what a curious man is the other!"

"Yes, so he appears to those, especially ladies, who see him for the first time. Yet he is a man of excellent character and standing. He was greatly embarrassed at meeting you, of whom he has heard so much from Eliza, and his loud speech, laughing, and other rather spasmodic deport-

ment were intended mainly for his own relief and to avoid making an unfavorable impression upon you. I heard Eliza whisper to him that she had told you what a great gentleman he was, and that he had to be on his p's and q's. That was quite enough to put him on his stilts, for he adores Eliza, and thinks her opinions are of greatest importance. An odd genius is Baldy, in looks, ways, and speech; but a man of excellent sense, a most faithful and efficient friend to those he likes, and as ardent, though not an aggressive, opponent to whom he positively dislikes. I know, however, of but one person for whom he has decidedly hostile feeling, and that is less on his own account than of Uncle Mark, whom he has ever loved and revered with his whole heart."

They went to their work; but the air was so fresh, the woods so dense, and green, and white, and red, and pink, and sweet-smelling, the notes of the creek-birds so soft and liquid, that by the time they had reached the saw-mill, where they were to lunch, Mr. Riddle, as noted a fisherman as fiddler, now become somewhat at his ease, had to laugh at the slender string.

"What I 'nominates," said he, merrily, "as *town-fishin'*. Instid of a-baitin' of their hooks and a-tellin' of 'em when and how to jerk, as I supposed were my main transactions on this immegiant occasion, these ladies has had me a-preambulatin' after honeysuckles, and redbuds, and bubby-blossoms, and sweet-bottles, and all such; and I see the same is to be observated of you two fel—gentlemen, 'specially Lewis, though I knewed he knewed nothin' o' the transactions o' the catchin' o' fish, not even horny-heads; and I don't supposing that Mr. Woodidge have condescended not so mighty powerful much to come down from school-keepin', and have patience with things that a man have to have patience if he expect to get outen them a

string worth carrying home, and even flingin' into the fryin'-pan."

"Mr. Sanders and I," said Rebecca, "and, so it appears, brother and Harriet, have mainly been gathering flowers for our botany classes."

"Oh yes, Baldy," said Eliza, "Miss Arbecca have classes in botany as well as music, and it would do you good, I jest know it would, to hear them big words—some of 'em bigger than any of yours. She say I may begin to study it next year, and when I do there'll be somebody else in our neighborhood besides you that can talk big words. I'll let you know that."

She ran to the wagon to fetch the basket.

He shouted with triumphant laughter, looking at her with highest admiration as she ran; then, turning to Miss Woodbridge, he asked,

"Ain't she a marracle, madam?"

"Very bright, and good, too."

"Good, madam! She's as perfec' and prevous a angel as they is outen heaven."

In the midst of the repast, as they were seated on logs that had been hauled and deposited near the mill, Mr. Duke rode up on his horse. Tall, large, ruddy-faced, his intention seemed at first to alight, as he placed one hand upon the pommel of his saddle and was about to grasp the horse's mane with the other. At that moment a laugh at some trick of Eliza from Mr. Riddle, whose back was turned toward him, made him look up and take a survey of the whole party. Then, without dismounting, he rode within a few feet, and, halting, said,

"Morning, gentlemen, ladies. Didn't know Mister Woodidge, Mister Sanders ever went fishin'. Mister Riddle great fisherman, I know. Glad you all come here."

Mr. Riddle was in the act of offering another piece of chicken to Rebecca Woodbridge. At the sound of these words he turned. Swaying himself as far back as possible, and assuming one of the smiles which emotion of any sort always overspread his face withal, said,

"Won't you 'light, Mr. Duke, and jine in the pleasant transactions o' the present occasion, sir? It would be a honor, sir, to us all, and to the saw-mill, and likewise the grist-mill below."

"Well, believe not," answered Mr. Duke, evidently somewhat embarrassed by words that he knew were not intended to be regarded by himself as cordial. "No, thanky, Mr. Riddle. Got business. Hope you'll enjoy yourselves. Come here whenever please, Mr. Woodidge, and all the rest of you."

These sentences came forth like bolts as his great sorrel pawed the ground, switched his tail, and shook the green boughs in his bridle-stall.

"Fine-lookin' man," said Baldy, as he rode away, "and ride a fine horse, and own a fine prop'ty, and a termenjous big one."

After the repast there was a separation, Woodbridge, with Harriet Quillian and Amanda, returning to Dukesborough, and the rest to Colonel Porter's.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MR. RIDDLE AND HIS HUMBLE ROMANCE.

MR. RIDDLE much preferred to be called by his Christian name—and that shortened from Baldwin to Baldy—by his friends, among whom all his acquaintances might be classed, except Mr. Duke and possibly one other.

Baldy's musical repertory, however excellent within its circle, was limited. "Billy in the Low Grounds," "Sally Goodin," "The Gusty Flirt," "Jenny Wiggins, the Wool-winder," "Blankets and Pins," with several jigs, styled, some of them, "Step and Fetch it," "What you Come for?" "Go 'long off'n here," and others similar comprised his sportive pieces, while the serious, or, as he styled them, the "solemncholly," were limited almost entirely to "The Sea-side Shores" and "The Walls o' Jericho." He had not been known, except upon very few occasions, to play in concert with other musicians. There appeared in his execution to be something that discouraged such concert. He was a musician who was wont to vary the time of his tunes according to circumstances, as the state of his own feelings, the impression he considered himself to be exerting upon his audience, and (especially when playing with others) the apprehension he felt that his colleague, or colleagues, as the case might be, would reach the close in advance of him. He seemed ever to regard such colleagues not only as rivals but adversaries. His habit, on finishing any piece, of whatever character, was to give one final, brief stroke away up



on the E string within an inch of the bridge. The musician, it is probable, did not live who could anticipate him at this triumphant note, on the consummation of which he would take down his bow and smile complacently as his adversary came on up to the goal alone. If the latter stopped in the midst, or afterward complained that he could not play in satisfactory unison with him, he would answer, with a chuckle,

“That’s your lookout, my dear fine fellow, and not mine.”

So far from objecting to such contests, he rather liked them, regarding them as friendly trials of speed, and he liked them the more because he always foresaw that he would prevail. This he made a point always of doing, and he would do it even if he had to jump over any number of bars. It had been his boast that he had never met up with a fiddler—no, not even a nigger fiddler—who could beat him there. “Fact,” he would say: “soon as I made up my mind I could play the fiddle I made her up that I’d never be beat in its transactions, and that I’d be prevous and primary or nothin’.”

Of all the auditors he had ever had Miss Woodbridge seemed most impressed by his performance. This gratified him intensely, the more so because of his own unbounded delight at hers. The Porter piano was the first he had ever seen, and even the crude performances of Eliza had pleased him greatly. After supper, when Miss Woodbridge went with spirit into the “Brattleborough Waltz” and others, he was transported. Never had he felt so embarrassed as when called upon to succeed her in the evening entertainment. He would have pleaded that his E string was weak, and that, from sheer forgetfulness, he had left at home the resin for his bow. But Eliza, according to his express directions,

had had a new string of silk twisted for his use, and when the resin difficulty was presented she went for his waistcoat-pocket and drew out a piece large enough to last any reasonable fiddler for several weeks.

Giving his accustomed laugh at detection, he rose, took the instrument, and, screwing his face into grimaces meant to indicate the varying struggles of the strings against being put into satisfactory tension, he began his preliminary work, and with that also began the enjoyment of his principal auditors. The grimaces made by the musician as he turned the screws, blowing and whistling the while with decisive anger into the nuts whenever they refused to hold to the pitch he assigned, the calm, brave sense of finally established and acknowledged ownership with which he drew the bow over the chords, when satisfactorily adjusted, pleased the young woman from Vermont to the degree that, even before the music began, her handkerchief had to be applied both to her eyes and her mouth.

He opened with "Jenny Wiggins, the Wool-winder." In this first essay before so distinguished a listener he scarcely did himself full justice. He seemed to have an idea of an imaginary colleague who was endeavoring to outstrip him in the race. To this idea doubtless was to be referred the excited haste, which, if the lady from whom the piece was named had employed it in her work, must have led to some entanglement of her threads. He scraped away, patting his foot continuously and heavily upon the floor, and when he was through any competitor must have been impelled to feel ashamed of himself for the distance at which he would have been left behind. Miss Woodbridge seemed to be in great emotion. Colonel Porter observed it, and immediately cried out, in hasty congratulation,

"Bravo, Baldy! I never knew you to make Jenny do

her winding so fast. An industrious young woman that, Miss Woodbridge, eh?"

"I never—never—" answered the young lady, in tears, but she did not get on another word.

"Oh, yes, kernel," said Baldy, "she were *said* to be the most industrous and transactionous young person of her sections in them days."

Miss Woodbridge nearly screamed with admiration of this female of an older time.

In spite, however, of the gayety of Mr. Riddle's disposition, and the prevalence of the sportive over the serious in his collection, it was well known that his favorite pieces were the "Sea-side Shores" and, especially, "The Walls o' Jericho," the former of which was rather upon the dividing line, and understood to lead, though with some abruptness between, to the latter, portions of which were intensely tragic. The "Sea-side Shores" might be regarded as intended to call off the too merry-hearted and thoughtless, though without harsh rebuke, from scenes of fun and frolic to those wherein were to be presented emotions and actions the most passionate and awful. "The Walls o' Jericho" were designed by the composer, believed and so affirmed by Mr. Riddle to have lived at a period of remote antiquity, to represent the fall of that city on the Dead Sea before the armies of Israel. In preparing for this piece Mr. Riddle, as on all previous similar occasions, behaved as if he wished it to be understood that all thoughts not in harmony with the theme had departed from his mind, and should do so from others. The smile which characterized his face, and of which it never could become wholly divested, compromised by endeavoring to become that of anger or compassion rather than cheerfulness.

"This chune," said he, grinning painfully with the labor

of resining his bow, "have to have for its transactions a awful powerful sight o' rawsom; and these here strings," he added, while cautiously straining up the two lower, "has to be fotch up to the A pitchin'."

From the very beginning of the performance, such was the awful solemnity, that Miss Woodbridge, who was undoubtedly the most competent judge of music there, was so overcome by her feelings that she had to cover her face, at times, with her handkerchief, lean her head upon the piano, and sob. As the rendition advanced the musician announced, in series, the varying attitudes and conduct of the assailants and the besieged. In due sequence were heard: "The Izzleites a-perceedin' fur to git ready to march forrards," "The Izzleites actilly a-marchin'," "The Jerichoites a-laughin' at and a-makin' game o' the Izzleites, when they seed the rams' horns," "The tootin' o' the said horns, and the Jerichoites a-beginnin' to laugh on t'other side o' their mouths." Even to a person not familiar with this portion of Scripture history it had been plain to see all along that, however thoughtless may have been the Jerichoites, the Israelites meant business. Already the perspiration was flowing down the face of Mr. Riddle, but, in the storming of the heathen city, the warrior had no time for pausing. Quick as lightning, or thereabout, he pushed back with his nose the sleeve of his right arm, twanged with his fingers alternately the second, third, and fourth strings, announcing the while, "The walls o' Jericho a-perceedin' to fall;" and then, as he screamed, "The said walls actilly a-fallin'," he lowered his left side, elevated his right, and sawed the lower strings in a way that few sounds, from whatever source, could have surpassed in the attempt to realize despair, death, and destruction. Seven times these last two stages were represented in literal accord with his-

toric facts. When the piece was over the musician laid down his bow and his fiddle, began to mop his face, his hands, and his wrists, and looked as if he was sure that not one stone had been left upon another in the ill-fated city.

"Oh, Mr. Riddle! Mr. Riddle!" cried Miss Woodbridge through her tears. "That was simply spl-en-did! I had no idea—" Then she had to yield again to her sobs.

"The town couldn't stand the horns—eh, Baldy?" said the colonel.

Baldy, his passion cooled, answered, gayly, "No, kernel. Old Jerry had to go, and she went."

Really impracticable as had been the attempts of other musicians to play in concert with him, he was surprised and delighted when, on the colonel's suggestion to that end, he afterward led off on a gay piece, Miss Woodbridge engaging to follow at a distance as little remote as possible. On him the effect was positively ravishing when, after looking intently, not at the piano, but his fiddle-bow, she flew along behind him with the rapidity of the wind, and immediately after his last stroke near the bridge came down instantly with her little finger upon the highest key.

"You never heard the 'Wool-winder' before, madam?"

"Never, upon my honor, Mr. Riddle."

"And jes catch it up so natchel and spontunous?"

"Yes indeed."

"Well, it's the most remarkable and prevous transactions— I supposing it's edgocation."

"*And* genius, Baldy," suggested Colonel Porter.

"Oh, laws of mercy! kernel, don't talk about genus. I see *she* were thar minute I lay eyes on her this mornin'."

Not long afterward, saying to Eliza that he had informed his mother that he should return home that night, she, commending strict filial obedience, let him go.

After he had gone Colonel Porter said,

"Lewis, it is plain that Baldy feels that at last he has met, if not his superior, at least his equal in music; and I cannot say—Eliza might be most likely to know as to that—but I am not sure that the heart of our friend has not been sensibly touched by to-day's and especially to-night's experiences."

"Yes," said Eliza, in a distressful tone, "I'm afraid that Baldy's done fell dead in love with Miss Woodbridge, as I wanted, not him, but—somebody else to do," and she looked with resentment toward Lewis Sanders. When, in response to this, the three broke out into laughter she said, "You may all laugh as you please, but *I* don't know anybody that's more charming than Baldy. But I mean to tell him that he mustn't, and is too old, and—but I *do* think he is *perfectly* charming." She flushed with she did not precisely know what.

"That's right, darling," said her father, taking her in his arms. "Stand up squarely to your friend and your father's, and the friend of whomsoever he regards worthy of the friendship of the brave fellow he is. Papa loves to see his baby so faithful."

He dried upon his breast her tears. They had some soft whisperings. He seemed well pleased with her complainings, and she with his consolings. Hugging her closely as he dismissed her for the night, he said, in a low tone,

"Never mind, precious. Baldy will not forget. He's quite able to take care of himself."

She slid from his lap, ran to Miss Woodbridge, kissed her, and, after shaking hands with Lewis and raising her finger portentously in his face, embraced her father, and went off to bed.

"Baldy has had a little romance in his time, Miss Wood-

bridge," said the colonel when Eliza had gone, "and it is that about which the dear little thing was concerned when she spoke of him in such terms. I suppose he has told you of it, Lewis? He has never alluded to it with me but once, and that was shortly after its termination; while he was meditating a course of action from which Mr. Langston discouraged him."

"Once—only once," answered Lewis, "he spoke of it to me. It was the only time when I have seen him shed tears. Those he averred, however, were on Uncle Mark's account; but it was plain to me that some were on his own."

"He has talked with Eliza about it more than any one else, and her concern to-night was for his fidelity to his dead love."

"The lady is not living?"

"Oh no; dead many years ago, when he was not more than nineteen or twenty. She was Mr. Langston's daughter, to whom he had been attached since her infancy. Suddenly, when not more than fourteen years old, she ran away with Mr. Duke."

"I had heard Mrs. Toliver say that Mr. Duke's first wife was her niece, but she mentioned no circumstance of the connection."

"No one had suspected that they had any special liking for each other until their actual marriage. Mr. Duke was in the State of Virginia, where he had been in the habit, for four or five years, to resort for the purchase and sale of negroes. Just before his return Albert Semmes, a bachelor, neighbor and warm friend of Mr. Langston, whose only daughter had always been his pet, died, leaving a bequest of a considerable estate of land and negroes to her. Within a month after Mr. Duke's return he and the girl ran off together and were married. She died within a few months,

in Virginia, whither Mr. Duke had again repaired; and, about a year after that return, he married his present wife, and has not been engaged since in negro speculations. He administered on his wife's estate, and, as the law then allowed and does still, obtained it all. The mills where you were to-day are on the tract, a very valuable one. Ammon Duke, Mr. Kinsey Duke's father, had been long desirous of obtaining it for the purpose of erecting these mills, but, poor man, he did not long survive their completion. The mother of the child broke down under her affliction and died a year afterward. Mr. Langston, however, bore himself up, being then, as now, the very firmest, best man I ever knew.

“It was touching to observe the effect of all this upon Mr. Riddle. For a period of considerable duration it was evident that he suffered from his disappointment to a degree that excited everybody's sympathy. He rallied, however, after some time, and with the rally came a decided change in deportment, and apparently in character. From being uncommonly silent, shrinking, even of a religious turn, he became loquacious, pronounced, and, although continuing ever to be a man of excellent principles and habits, grew to be rather fond of being considered wild and reckless of others' opinions. He never liked Mr. Duke, but I am sure it was, more than any other reason, because he believed that the latter did not treat Mr. Langston altogether as he should have done. He had never had another love, though in ladies' society he professed himself quite a beau. What influences may have been exerted upon him, Lewis, lately, which made Eliza somewhat uneasy, is to be seen hereafter. She—Baldy's only confidante—I fear would lose her faith in the permanency of true love if he should ever forget Emily Langston.”



"That is not possible, colonel," she answered, "to any trial to which he—at least, very lately—has been subjected."

The next morning, after breakfast, Rebecca retired to her chamber for an hour or so. Eliza spent the while in chatting with her father and Lewis about matters in the school and town generally, and especially about their guest.

"And, oh, papa! Miss Woodbridge is the religiousest person you ever saw, I expect, although you see her laugh and talk, and play dancing tunes, and go on so; and she says more prayers, everybody says, than anybody in town, not even excepting of old Missis Catlin. And, oh! you ought to of heard Uncle Reuben laugh once at old Aunty Toliver's a-saying that, by good rights, them two ought to say more prayers than the rest, because, not being of Baptises, they needed 'em more."

"Good!" cried the colonel, he and Lewis both laughing heartily. They were neither of them Church members—as, unfortunately, was the case with very many leading country gentlemen. They had, however, profound respect for the Church.

"I hope, Eliza," said her father, after his laugh, "that you don't neglect your prayers. *You* need them, I think, my dear, though, on the whole, a right good, and certainly a very dear, little darling."

"Of course I do—every night, and sometimes, 'most always, of a morning. And it's to be hoped that you and Lewis do sometimes. But I'm not certain, as *I've* never caught you at it, neither one of you."

"You hear that, Lewis?"

"Oh, Lizy prays for me," answered Lewis.

"Indeed I do. But that ain't going to do you any or not much good without you pray for yourself."

“Bring him up, Lizy,” said her father—“bring him up ; or, rather, bring him down.”

Then he grew serious.

“I am glad to know, darling, that you do not omit your prayers, and that you pray, as I supposed you did, for Lewis. That is right. Whenever Lewis prays I expect he prays for you, though I never inquired of him about his prayers. We do best, I think, my daughter, when we pray and say little or nothing about our prayers or those of others. Your Aunty Toliver, as you call her, is one of the best women in the world, and Mrs. Catlin is as good as she is. Miss Woodbridge seems to promise to be as good as either. I am sure, however, that the more any one of them prays, and the less she concerns herself about the prayers said by others, the more acceptable to Heaven will be her own.”

Eliza would now have grown very serious herself but that Miss Woodbridge came forth, bright as the morning. They spent the forenoon in chat, and in reading aloud from books and the last weekly newspaper. Once they strolled around the quadrangle, on the sides of which were the negroes' cabins, every one with its shade-trees in front and its small garden behind. The visitor was pleased with the order of all, and the evident happy condition of these dependent beings. There were rude seats beneath several oaks in the grove between the mansion and the public road. On one of these, after dinner, when the colonel had led Eliza to another, Lewis and Miss Woodbridge seated themselves and conversed until the hour of departure.

“Mr. Sanders and myself, Miss Woodbridge,” said the colonel, “thank you cordially for the honor and pleasure of this visit, and I enjoin upon Eliza to beg you to repeat it soon and often.”

"A fine woman, Lewis," he said, when she was gone. "A Catholic. But what difference does that make? My sister tells me that she is a model in all particulars, even religious."

"She seems so, indeed," said Lewis, following the carriage with his eyes.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### MR. DUKE'S UNFORESEEN INTEREST IN THE JARRELLS.

His easy manners, his cheerful temper, his faculty of accommodation to various tastes, gave to Barney Jarrell early access to the good opinions of all. Being a man-of-all-work, who worked cheaply, he must grow to be considered a convenience in the community. He did not profess to be a carpenter. Yet, Mr. Duke having mentioned one day in his hearing his need of a new smoke-house, Barney proposed, unless Mr. Duke saw how he could do better, to put it up for him, especially as the pay he would receive would go a reasonable way toward defrayal of rent. What were the preliminaries we cannot say, but the work was done by Barney, and apparently to the satisfaction of his employer.

The job led to more familiar acquaintance of these two than seemed likely to occur otherwise. For the Dukés, as we have seen, were particular persons about such things, though Mr. Duke felt himself secure enough in his high position to ignore the differences in social rank.

During the process of construction Mr. Duke could not but remark how volubly Barney could converse in the midst of his work, and yet omit none, even the minutest, of its

details. Himself had never been a fluent man in conversation, not even among his inferiors. Yet somehow he suffered himself to be drawn out by this cheaply working mechanic, and was surprised by the amount of information he was led to impart about the origin of Dukesborough and the things that had made it known in history.

And who was Barney? he condescended to intimate his desire to know. Whence was he, and what were his projects and expectations? Barney, without intermission of his hammer or his saw, answered with a freedom he had not employed with those less entitled than his landlord to know his antecedents. Indeed, he told some things about his family which, he said, he preferred, at least for the present, to be regarded as confidential. Mr. Duke responded to this confidence readily, and exhibited an interest that persons of Barney's rank in the village would not have supposed him capable of.

"You say the child's mother and father both dead?" asked Mr. Duke one afternoon.

"Keep the board even with the gauge, Dave," Barney said to a negro of his employer who was assisting. "There, that will do. Yes, sir, Mr. Duke."

"Your brother's or your sister's?"

"Brother's. (Don't put your nails out of a line with those above them.) His wife died ten years ago, he five years after. On his death-bed he gave Amanda to me, with a request."

Then Barney, the lumber for weather-boarding being exhausted, set Dave to work to prepare more. Taking his hat, as if about to suspend his work and go home, he remarked,

"Amanda's mother, Mr. Duke, was an orphan, whose family were unknown to her and her adopted father. Noth-

ing could be found out about them by my brother in his lifetime; but before he died he commended to me the pursuit he had followed to no purpose."

"What was the name of your brother's wife?"

"Even that was not precisely known, Mr. Duke. She was known as Amanda Perkins, whose parents had been supposed to have dwelt in South Carolina, though some said they suspected them of being of this State. Did you ever know any of that name?" ("Ho there! Dave, be sure to saw those boards, when you have planed them of the right length and straight.")

"My brother could never trace his wife's parentage in that State, and lately we have heard that some of the name were in Georgia, and well-to-do. One would suppose that if they knew that a poor girl like Amanda was close kin to them they would take some interest in her."

"Was that in South Carolina?"

"No, sir; in Virginia, where my family then resided."

"There some o' that name in Georgia, especially over betwixt Oconee and Oemulgee. Some of 'em got prop'ty, I think. I've heard my father say there was many of that name in Virginny. People might lived there, and didn't want known about their child."

"There was no doubt of that, Mr. Duke," said Barney, carefully brushing the sawdust from his hat; "at least, on the part of the man who left her, and who claimed to be her father."

"What about the mother?"

"She died in the neighborhood, at a camp where she, her husband, and two servants had stopped for the night."

"Man make no provision for her child?"

"Yes, after burying his wife decently he left with an inn-keeper near by the child and some money, and went away,

saying he was going to his home, about a hundred miles away, and would return in a few weeks with his widowed mother, who would take the child. He was never heard of afterward."

"You say that was in Virginny? I thought you were from South Carolina."

"I am immediately. But I am a native of Virginia. I lingered in South Carolina on my way."

"Heard nothing about what wanted to know?"

"I did not."

"What you say the man's name was?"

"He called himself Perkins. I did not expect to get any information there. Circumstances, possibly of not very great significance, led me to suspect that perhaps the man I sought was, if living, a Georgian. I was led to place more importance in them from having heard that Middle Georgia especially had been settled in great part by Virginians, and that many of these traded in the old State. And then I had been thinking for some time of removing to this fine region and settling in it, thinking I could do better in a new country than an old."

"And come to Dukesborough, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Amanda needed more schooling, and even as far as Augusta I heard of the fine school here."

"Don't suppose the man's living yet, do you? Must have died, seems to me."

"He was represented as a young, hearty man, and the probabilities seem to me in favor of his being yet living. If he can once be identified, don't you suppose, Mr. Duke, that when he sees what a fine girl Amanda is he would recognize her?"

"Don't know so well about that. So long ago, Mr. Jarrell."

"And he may have made other ties, eh?"

"Just so."

"At all events, I shall give him the opportunity, if I should find him."

"Long hunt, seems to me, Mr. Jarrell. People of that name, as I told you, live over t'other side the Oconee; but I doubt if you'll find your man among 'em; but you might try."

"I have no idea, Mr. Duke, that that was his name, but that he assumed it for the purpose of misleading those who might institute search for him."

"Name o' God, man, what 'll you have to go on? If the man is a-living I can hardly think he was the father o' the child, to leave it that way."

"It would indeed seem so, Mr. Duke," said Barney, sadly. "God knows how it all was, and how it stands now. I cannot but trust somehow that He will bring it out some time or another."

Mr. Duke looked at the young man, and seemed to feel sympathy with his case. He spoke with a cordiality not common with him, commended prudence, and proffered such assistance as Barney might need in any of his purposes. He had known, he said, where matters of the sort that now interested him, which persons for family reasons had tried to conceal, when they were at last discovered, had had no effect but to subject parties to regret that they had not remained in ignorance concerning them. People ought to be extremely cautious, especially after so long a time had elapsed, and make no positive, declared movement without the clearest testimony, such as would stand in the courts.

Barney received his admonitions and offers of aid with thanks. The subject was not broached between them during the continuance of the work on the lot, nor for a con-

siderable time afterward. Barney continued the habits with which he had begun—working, picking up acquaintances, and making himself agreeable with all whom he met.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### A RETIRED MAGISTRATE.

AMONG the acquaintances that Barney Jarrell had made was one which in time he found more interesting than he had foreseen when obeying the suggestions, partly charitable, that led to it. In a one-storied house, ancient-looking, but mainly from neglect of painting and other repairs, half a mile east of the village, dwelt Jesse Lines, his wife, and his daughter, Doolana, his only offspring, now about twenty-five years of age. In his early manhood he was for some years a justice of the peace for that militia district. Although the jurisdiction of that order of magistrates was then limited in money claims to thirty dollars, yet these sometimes aggregated very largely. Judgments being rendered thirty days after the bringing of suits, whereas those in higher courts required six months, creditors—especially those who, as well as their debtors, resided in the country, at considerable distances from the county-seats—were accustomed to have promissory notes, of whatever amount, taken in what were called “small notes,” for the debt. Added to this jurisdiction, these officials gave attestation to legal instruments, divided with ministers of the Gospel the solemnization of marriage contracts, and sat on preliminary trials for the commitment, bail, or release of persons charged with criminal offenses.

Squire Lines, though he made money, did not attain



great reputation, except for undoubted capacity in his judicial career. His administration having been contemporary with one of the State's most notable judges, Thomas Dooly, he had named his daughter in honor of him. Even before his retirement from the bench he had bought from Ammon Duke, on reasonable terms, as was supposed, this mansion, with three hundred acres appertaining, and, from Kinsey, a family of negroes that were parcel of those bequeathed by Albert Semmes to Emily Langston. How he could have accumulated all this property within a time so limited there had always been speculations, but none entirely satisfactory. He was a favorite, even an honored, magistrate with both the Dukes; and Kinsey was heard to say, after his removal, that the district in choosing to go further than Jesse Lines might fare worse.

Without dreaming that such was the case Jesse Lines had married well with a woman a year or two his senior. The last twenty years of his life had been spent, besides a general direction given to his farm, mainly in speculating on a limited scale with horses, wagons, trumpery of various sorts, purchased at executors', administrators', and insolvent debtors' sales, including promissory notes of doubtful solvency. It was always a wonder with what speed he could brighten up a broken-down piece of property and sell at a good margin. As for collecting of bad debts, the truth is, that whenever a debtor, however trifling in himself and invisible his means, found that Jesse Lines owned his paper, if he did not find means to pay up the whole, for the sake of avoiding ceaseless and relentless pursuit, as a general thing he would propose a compromise that would yield a high profit on the risk. His activity in trade continued long after he had been disabled in one of his legs by the kick of a horse, that he had pampered too luxuriously after

getting it, for almost nothing, an exhausted jade, from a wagoner. This infirmity having proved incurable, had kept him for the last fifteen years at or about home. He usually lay upon his bed or a cot, and nursed his lame leg with care that, in the lapse of time, grew into affection and tender commiseration. It had often been said of this leg that, instead of hindering, it assisted its owner in matters of worldly interest, as if from remorse for the suffering it inflicted on its owner or gratitude for the kindly treatment it received. For the pity he extended to it could not but sometimes excite corresponding emotion in others' breasts. While making a trade, either at home or a neighborhood sale—whither he would manage to have himself hauled in a spring-wagon—he would pat his “orphing,” as he called the invalid member, with touching softness, and look as if, and would so declare, that but for its poor sake he would never even think of trying to get any more of the perishing goods of this miserable world.

Sometimes this wagon would take him and the “orphing” to the house of a debtor, where his small negro boy would drive him to the gate, or, if the latter were large enough for such ingress, to the very door. Being invited to alight, he would or would not, according to his satisfaction with the answers received to the questions he had put, and the inspections he had made of the portable property on the outside of the dwelling. At such times he would carefully note down in his memorandum-book, among other things, the suggestions that the wife or other ladies present would make touching salves and liniments for the wounded and afflicted, thankfully promising to try them; and seldom did he fail to carry or send word that he had done so; and, although they of course could not cure, yet they had certainly helped him. Such visitations were apt to be followed

very soon by sending him some money, if even a small amount; for it was well known that otherwise the constable would seize if only a wheelbarrow or a mangy calf which the creditor had seen with his own blessed eyes and knew to be subject to levy and sale.

He had now grown old, and, although eager as ever for the accumulation of property, yet his fondest ambition had become now to see his daughter suitably married during his lifetime. From her very infancy he had tried to inspire this daughter (whom he had named in the pride of his connection with the Judiciary of the State, and in special honor of its renowned representative) with ideas that, to his mind, seemed of the loftiest. Latterly, as the care of the only ward he had ever had seemed to be telling more sensibly than heretofore upon him, he had been growing extremely anxious for such a consummation of this daughter's destiny in the liew he had proposed as would serve to smooth the decline that he foresaw to be at no vast distance from its end. With all his ambition Jesse Lines knew himself to be a man of judgment, and he had often said to himself that it would be a mistake in him to look too high for his daughter's settlement. Yet, like some other parents dominated by such a passion, sometimes he inwardly, as if in dreams, vaulted to the very highest. Lucius Woodbridge had been making such progress in reputation, and especially in getting and laying up money, that for a while he had thought of setting a trap for him. The young man occasionally visited at the house. Jesse was sure that he knew mainly why. He kept his trap and made his triggers, but somehow the setting was delayed, for reasons considered by himself sufficient.

For many years the only regular visitor he had had was Kinsey Duke. Richer though the latter had constantly

grown, he had never ignored his father's and his own friend. Always friendly, always obliging, always sympathetic, always patient with his moroseness, Mr. Duke had been. Not a very cheerful visitor, for he was never a very cheerful man. Very lately his want of cheerfulness had seemed more noticeable. Jesse Lines ruminated.

Barney Jarrell was not a man to be satisfied with residing so close to a man, especially one aged and invalid, without making his acquaintance, and rendering, if possible, such service as was due to one in his condition. He therefore called upon Mr. Lines not very long after he had settled, saying to him, in his kind, candid way, that, having heard of Mr. Lines being somewhat of an invalid, he, being his nearest neighbor, had called to pay his respects and offer any service that the behests of good neighborhood might demand. A suspicious person always, it was also policy with Jesse to behave abruptly, especially with strangers, in order to conceal the art he possessed in getting from them what he wanted. He knew they would attribute such conduct to his age and sufferings. He looked at Barney pityfully for a while. He had heard of him, and his wife and daughter had told him of the favorable impression that the whole family had made upon the community.

"I don't know, mister— What you say your name were?"

"Jarrell. I sign myself, Mr. Lines, 'Barney Jarrell.'"

"*Sign* yourself that?"

"Yes, sir." Barney reddened a little at the emphasis the old man employed in the word "sign," and looked him steadily in the face. The latter winced, slowly and deliberately.

"Umph — umph! Well, I don't know, Mr. Jarl, what your aims is in a-comin' to see me. I sposed you've got some, somehows or somehows else, because nobody, except-in' of a mighty few, ever comes here 'ithont they've got 'em,

of one sort or another. Sometimes, that is, I used to could sometimes tell what people was arfter; but I can't now like I used to could; and as for you, you entirely oversizes my information. Tell me, now, squar, right up and down, what your aims is. Because you see my fix. You see for yourself that I'm old and feeble—a old person, a 'flicted person, and a po' person—and for tharfore *and* wharfore I natchelly ain't a person that can 'fend myself off'n people that has the consate and has the desires t' impose on me."

"I assure you, Mr. Lines," answered Barney, cordially, "that I am perfectly sincere in my wish to serve all my neighbors, especially those who are not very strong. Having been brought up on a farm, I have learned to do reasonably well work upon farm buildings and working tools, and for such I have never charged payment from those of my neighbors who are straitened in health or other circumstances."

It was but a brief period before he was out at the gate (which was ready to fall from its hinges) and calling for a hammer and some nails. When they were brought he went to work and speedily adjusted it. The host neither thanked him nor invited him to come again, but at parting looked at him imploringly, as if he hoped the young man would not have the conscience to bear too hardly upon one in the condition he saw him to be. But Barney repeated his visits at decent intervals, partly from suggestions of his own mind, and partly from those of a friend he had made, whose counsels he found to be prudent and valuable. In a few weeks Mr. Lines seemed to like him, at least as well as such a person could be expected to like any outside of himself and his family. If he suspected any motive of the visitations ulterior to those Barney had first avowed, he never again so intimated. He let Barney do for him such trifling jobs as were found to be needed, and meekly acquiesced in

his persistent refusal to accept compensation beyond the lukewarm thanks that were expressed. They came to have talks together on various topics, such as the first settlement of the country, the perilous adventures consequent on residence in close proximity to the Indians, and others; and Jesse soon grew to like, rather than not, his new neighbor, or at least seemed disposed to do so.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE SCHOOL-MASTER CONTEMPLATES RETURNING TO HIS OLD PROFESSION.

LUCIUS WOODBRIDGE being, in some degree, a public man, seemed to feel it to be his duty to make at least occasional visits to those who might be called his constituents. A genuine man was he—brave and generous as sombre and retiring. He had succeeded more by being what he was than by doing what he did. A ripe scholar, he maintained the hold he first gained by showing that he was a gentleman besides. Before the advent of Barney he had visited Jesse Lines on a few occasions, partly from a sense of duty to him, and partly for the sake of his daughter, whom he much respected. Lately he had made several visits in rather quick succession. Jesse, who believed that men did nothing except from prospects or hopes of good to themselves, cogitated upon them, and, like old Polonius—who, whatever were the words of Hamlet, suspected him of “ever harping on my daughter”—was inclined to assign them to Doolana. Rumor had reached him, as we have seen, that the school-master was laying up carefully and snugly, and, on the failure of higher ambitions, he had been thinking what he might say if the young man should solicit of him the priv-

ilege of being his son-in-law—partially considering, that is. For he was a man not apt to under-estimate a piece of his own property, and whenever he sold demanded a full price. Not that he was one to stand out obstinately against all offers when none came up to his figures; but he had studied the capacities and possibilities of buyers, and he could coolly, confidently press one of these to the wall and get for any piece of property the last dollar. But he thought he knew when to press and when to hold on to what was valuable. The more eager a purchaser seemed, the more deliberate was he, though ever watchful of limits that might not be passed. From time to time Woodbridge had obtained a good deal of information as to the first conquests of the Indians, and the forests, and other matters incident to the splendid civilization that was now apparent on all sides.

“This Mr. Ammon Duke,” said Woodbridge, one day, “he must have been a remarkable man, Mr. Lines.”

“Oh, remockable—remockable. When this militia deestriet was first laid off nothin’ would suit the old man but for me to be a jestice o’ the peace. He had me ’pinted, and him and me, with old Jedge Dooly, we rigerlated things about here, Mr. Woodige—I can tell you that.”

“Justices of the peace were important officials in those days, so I’ve been told.”

“Yes, bless your soul! In them days, Mr. Woodige, a jestice were a jestice. Fact, a fellow might sassarar\* his proceedances, and car’ ’em up to the S’perior Cote. But it were a time when all cotes was friendly and more intimate than in these days, and people minded how they kicked agin’ ’em; and with sich jestices as me, who made it a pint to know the law, and to understand the law, mighty few

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\* The writ of *certiorari* was so pronounced by unlettered persons.

cases was sent back on me. And *as* for old Jedge Dooly, him and me was thick, you may say, as the sayin' is, as three niggers in a bed. Oh, the times—the times that him and me used to have, jes' the old jedge and me! But as for bein' of a jestic in these times, Mr. Woodige, I wouldn't give a flip o' my flap for the office."

Then he waved far from himself all thoughts of an office that had so far declined from its ancient powers and renown.

"It is, no doubt, very pleasant to you to recall the old times. I observe now that these magistrates seldom solemnize marriages. That is and was one of their functions, was it not?"

"You mean the marryin' o' couples, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

Jesse smiled blandly as he answered,

"Yes, or ruther I mout say no. You know, Mr. Woodige, the marryin' o' couples by a jestic o' the peace is a old Firginny piece o' business, and it were first fotch about because them old Firginny preachers usened to charge sich high figgers for the couplin' o' two people together when the law, as it stood then, 'lowed nobody but them to tend to that kind o' business. Well, now, Mr. Woodige, poor folks was in old Firginny jes' as they is here, and as they is everywhar else that I've ever knowed about, and it ain't every poor man that can roll up his hogshead o' tobarker to a preacher's door when he want to marry. And, besides all that, Mr. Woodige, people is sometimes in a hurry when they take it into their heads to git married, and they got no time for the publishin' o' banes, nor not even for hitchin' up a wagin to haul the weddin'-fee to the preacher. And so, you see, them old Firginny people they ups, they do, and they changes the law, and makes it so that other peo-



ple besides of preachers mout tie 'em together. So when them same people, or leastways a part of 'em, moved down to Georgy they fotch that law with 'em. But it ain't used like it used to be, that's a fact. For because, in the first offstart o' the case at bar, so to speak, jesticies not by a long shot they ain't what they was in me and old Jedge Dooly's time; and then the common run o' preachers, sich as we has now, is too poor theirselves to try, as it were, to come the gongin' out, so to speak, of a poor fellow's very eyes out wheneversomever he feel like of takin' to hisself a companion. The preachers, sich as we has now, leastways the common run of 'em, ain't like them old Firginny preachers that was 'pinted to their churches by the Legislatur, or some big somebody, and rich in the offstart, and didn't keer for poor folks no more'n so many frogs in Jook's millpond. But them—that is, the preachers I'm now a-talkin' about, now you mind—they know how it is theirselves, and they'll put up sich a job for whatsomever they can git—from a dollar to three dollars—with a good weddin' snupper flung in. And then, you know, Mr. Woodige, as a country git more settled young couples don't rnn away like they used to. They're genilly a longer in courtin', and parrents is more consulted, though my expeunce is, that when a young fellow and a young gal has made up their minds to jine poplars nuther parrents nor t'other people, genilly speakin', needn't put their mouths in agin it. Parrents knows that, and so, when they see they can't hender 'em, they jes' lets 'em rack, bakes their cake, sends for the preacher, pays him what they please, gives 'em a weddin' and a infar, and lets 'em go splurgin' along the best they can, root pig or die."

"I have heard that Mr. Duke once had a runaway match with Mr. Langston's daughter. Were they married by a justice or a minister of the Gospel?"

“Ah, Mr. Woodige,” answered Jesse, with a somewhat melancholy smile, “thar you too hard for me. When Mr. Jook runned off with the old man’s daughter—fine man, Mr. Langson: Mr. Jook ’ll tell you that hisself—fine, good man—but sharp was the word and quick the motion, as the sayin’ is. They went a-kitin’, and they went clean off. I don’t ’member, Mr. Woodige, as I ever heerd who it were that tied them two together.”

Then he looked into his visitor’s face humbly, as if it pained him to acknowledge that himself had not only no official connection with but not even preliminary knowledge of this early adventure of Dukesborough’s leading citizen.

“I have heard persons say, Mr. Lines, that the community were surprised at the event, especially as Mr. Duke had never asked Mr. Langston for his daughter, and that the old gentleman had not been aware of his wish to marry her.”

Jesse smiled the smile of a man who knew of things more interesting than occur in this generation.

“Curouser things than sich as that’s happened in my day, Mr. Woodige. As for the Jooks—now, the Jooks was always fine, good, smart people, but they was also and always a quick-movin’ people, and they wasn’t much usened, when they wanted anything that they knowed they had the right to git without askin’ if they could—they wasn’t much usened to be a-stoppin’ and studyin’ up what sort o’ words to put together to go about a-askin’ for it. It were so with the old man Hammon—oh! a rusher he were, but a monstous fine, smart man—and his son, our Mr. Jook, though he could never quite ekal his par in rushin’, yit *he’s* been a rapid man in his young days, and a peert one yit, as to that. But, you see, Mr. Woodige, Mr. Jook—our Mr. Jook, I’m

a now talkin' about, you mind—were then a-speckerlatin' on niggers, and he were here and he were thar, and he thought, I supposen, that Mr. Langson mout 'a' gin his consent, but then agin he moutent—not, I mean, at the 'first offstart, ontwell he could of over-persuaded him, and that he knowed would of took time; and so I jes' supposen—them's jes' allays been my 'spicious—he thought he wouldn't stop to be projeckin' and a mealimouthin' about it. Defernt men, you know, Mr. Woodige, does things defernt and in defernt ways. I've been of a-noticin' of that endurin' of all my life, and I've knowed warous people in my time."

"It was a great affliction to Mr. Langston, I have heard."

"Oh yes—oh yes," answered Jesse, after a prolonged wink. "But 'fictions comes on to everybody, or a'most everybody, one way and another—leastways, them that lives long enough. Look at me, for instant. Jes see the fix I'm in here. Flat o' my back. When t'other people's up and goin' about wharsomever they pleases I has to lay here and nuss my orphing leg and fight flies; and when they ain't none o' them about, to have to consate they're here, and so keep myself a-flippin' and a-flappin' jes the same as if they was. It's the lot o' some people, Mr. Woodige, seems to me—it's jes the natchel lot o' some people to be 'flicted."

"It does seem so indeed, Mr. Lines, and I do not doubt that afflictions are allowed by the good God for purposes of mercy to those who are afflicted. In your case, however, he has tempered it by suffering you to keep your wife and daughter. Mr. Langston has had to live alone for very many years. But he has accepted his affliction without complaint, and been compensated by being resigned to God's will. I do not think I ever knew a person as free from unhappiness of any kind as him."

The old man looked at his visitor with an expression doubtful between resentment and satisfaction. He was not fond, as he often expressed it, of being preached at, and possibly he suspected the young man's words to be intended to hint that he ought to take Mr. Langston's example as a lesson. If this was the fact he concealed his thoughts, and answered,

"I'm truly glad the old man Langson have done as well as he have. Fine, good man—none finer, to my opinion. And as for Doolana" (his face now brightened), "well, now, I jes' tell you, Mr. Woodige, they ain't no tellin' all what that child have been to me, and what—a reasonable speakin' and a dilicate speakin' I am now, Mr. Woodige, and I'm a-goin' on to say they ain't no tellin' at some futnr' day what that child mout be to some other people when and arfter my head git cold."

He almost closed his eyes as he furtively looked at the young man.

"Indeed, Mr. Lines, everybody must heartily endorse any praise you might utter of Miss Doolana."

"Nobody know that child, Mr. Woodige, exceptin' o' me. I know her, as by good rights, a-bein' of her father, I ought to. Them that gits Doolana—it's Doolana Lines I'm a-talkin' about now—them that gits her 'll git more'n they think, in more ways 'n one; and she'll be a person that'll be monstous hard to git, to my opinion, and her father's consents 'll be the main powosoe in that contrack—people may 'pend on that, Mr. Woodige."

Judge Dooly could not have laid down a judgment of the Court with more solemn emphasis.

"That would be exactly as it should, Mr. Lines. Miss Doolana will doubtless feel so, if ever she thinks of entertaining a proposition of the kind. Such a proposition, to

be entertained, ought to come from none except whom, not only herself but her father will recognize, if not worthy of her, as one who of all her acquaintance comes nearest to being so."

Jesse accepted this compliment to his daughter with a prolonged, gratified, trembling sniff. He was not quite ready with his trap—he might be soon—but he would now merely cast the bait around and near where it was to be set.

"Our new neighbor, Mr. Jarrell, seems a clever man, Mr. Lines," said Woodbridge, after a pause in the conversation.

"Umph—umph!" answered Jesse, his mind evidently still lingering on Doolana. "Is he a marryin' man?"

"Oh, not that I know of. At least, I should hardly suppose that one thus recently come would so soon have his thoughts directed toward matrimony—that is, in this neighborhood. I merely spoke of him as your closest neighbor, and as one who had impressed me very favorably."

"Ef he's a marryin' man, I should say that any exceptin' of the poorest kind o' chance of a girl would do a slim business to take up along of a man with jes one nigger, and got a child of his own, or leastways adopted, to s'port besides hisself. He seem a good, easy, good-hearted fellow, though, and monstous conversanal. I heerd him and you was a good deal together. Make much out of him?"

"As I remarked, Mr. Lines, he has impressed me favorably."

"Doolana say his daughter 's a oncommon fine child."

"She is, indeed, a child of much promise."

When the visitor rose to depart he remarked, carelessly,

"The marriage of Mr. Duke was not, then, published in the newspapers, eh, Mr. Lines?"

"Not as I 'members of," answered Jesse, extending

his hand resignedly. "Farwell, Mr. Woodige. My ricollection ain't like it used to be. I'm a-gittin' of old, and I'm a-gittin' of feebler and feebler. Wish you mighty well, Mr. Woodige."

Withdrawing his hand, he turned his face away, and Woodbridge departed.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### MR. DUKE VISITS THE SICK.

ONE Sunday afternoon, not long after Rebecca Woodbridge's visit to Colonel Porter's had ended, Jesse Lines, longer, lankier, dissmaller-looking than ever, from lapse of time and other causes, was lying on a cot in the piazza. The bed-clothes and his own, though home-made and plain, were scrupulously clean, showing that deft and careful were the hands that ministered to him. Near his head stood a small table, evidently a companion piece of furniture with that whereon, whether bed or cot, he was accustomed to lie. A long, brown leather pocket-book lay on his breast, and he was reading some ancient-looking manuscript papers, which he held in both hands before him. Hearing the sound of a horse's feet, he glanced up the road leading to the village; then, folding up the papers, replaced them in the pocket-book and drawer, closed and locked the latter, placed the key under his pillow, drew the table closer, laid one hand feebly by his side, and with the other lifted a singular-looking instrument. It was a slender stick of hickory, about thirty inches in length, holding, in a split at one end, a thick piece of leather the width of a man's hand. This he waved slowly and continuously, turn-

ing his eyes in one and another direction to points immediately around him, as if intending to defend himself as well as he could with his only weapon against intrusion and attack. He had been speculating in his mind more than usual of late. The school-master's recent frequent visits had somewhat intermitted; his daughter, Doolana, though relaxing nothing in devotion to himself, had appeared to him to be a little more thoughtful, even sadder, than had been her wont; and, upon the whole, Jesse felt himself to be discontented in his mind.

He looked at the visitor, who had hitched his horse to a horse-shoe nailed to one of the oaks before his gate, and was walking toward the house, and his countenance, instinctively, as it were, assumed that piteous, mildly complaining expression which we have often seen depicted in the face of the sick on the approach of the physician, when they have suspected either that his diagnosis, from want of becoming carefulness and sympathy, has not been entirely accurate, or his prescriptions not as efficacious as promised.

"Well, Jes," said Mr. Duke, beginning, as always, with cordiality, "how you, my friend, and the orphan? Lively, I hope. Warm weather come on us sooner 'n common this season."

"Jes toler'ble, Mr. Jook—jes only toler'ble. The flies, seems to me, they've come sooner this season, and thar's more of 'em, and they're more troublesomer than I've never knowed of 'em a-bein'. And, somehow, I hain't got my hand in yit in the flappin' of the dog-goned things, and which what they was made for Godamighty know; least-ways a body I sposen got to sposen he do by good rights. *He* ought to know—I don't. I used to could in gener'l lay 'em out toler'ble handy; but my head nor nuther is my hand studdy like it used to be. Time, or somethin' else, is a-be-

ginnin' to tell on me, Mr. Jook, let alone of sickness and 'fictions. *You* looks monstous well, Mr. Jook — I mout say monstous, powerful well. And how is all your family like?"

"Well as common, Jes. As for me, I'm jest moderate, like we say sometimes, 'twixt ham and shoulder, middlin'. Time tellin' on me too, Jes, old friend."

"*You*, Mr. Jook! Why, you're nothin' but a boy, or at leastways a young man, comparrd to me. I 'members when jes a boy you usened to come to my cote along o' your father every second Saddy in the mont. Oh, them times! them times! Then, Mr. Jook, you bain't had no *bodily* health, like me—*bodily* health: them's the things that fetches people down. *You've* never had them, nor you've never had your limbs waounded a-tryin' to get a s'port for your fambly, as I have. Because you've *allers* been rich—borned, as the sayin' is, with a gold spoon already in your mouth—not even a-wait-in' and a-wantin' for nobody to pnt her thar along 'ith its con-tents; while as for me I've been allers po', and am yit. It seem to me only jes yisterday when you was a right young man, jes' married, and married twicet—prop'ty both times handrunnin'. And I've heerd it said that Am are to marry Reuben Quillian's daughter; and, from what he'll git thar, and what you can give him, jes' only to start with, he'll start rich in the very offstart. Dog-gone you!" he ejaculated to a fly that had strayed within reach of his flap, "I got you, certin. *You* won't pessicute me no more, anyhow. Some o' the rest may try it, a-knowin' how old and feeble I am; but some o' them I'll git too, if they don't mind, and ain't monstous particklar."

The visitor made no reply to these remarks, but cast his eye toward the interior of the house.

"My wife," said Jesse, "she's in the back-yard, a-readin'



to old Vilet; and Doolana, she went up for a while to Jarl's. I wonder you didn't see her as you rid by. Maybe you did, and forgot it."

"Yes—yes. Saw her in piazza, her and Jarrell, and daughter. Look monstous well, Miss Doolana."

"I supposedened you mout o' saw her as you rid by. Poor thing! she restless here lately, appearantly—restless'er 'n common—with nobody but jes two old, 'flicted people for company, and a few niggers, and some o' them, leastways one of 'em, 'flicted herself, and not worth, not nigh, of her vittels and clothes. It 'pears like I jes natchelly feels sorry for Doolana, although I has 'casion, 'pear like, to feel sorry enough for myself, 'ithout stoppin' to be sorry for t'other people; and I jest couldn't afford it, exceptin' o' their bein' o' my own blessed and onlest child."

He made a feeble stroke at a fly that had alighted on his knee; but, sufficiently forewarned, it easily escaped. He followed it with his eyes, and said, with meek, despondent resentment,

"You little villions, you 'pose on me because I'm po' and feeble, and then you flies off and laughs at me, does you? Well, I'm gittin of usened to that, and I can't blame you not so mighty powerful much. For *you* has to make your livin' somehows or somehows else, and you hain't no better sense nor no better feelin' than to 'pose on po' old, 'flicted people, not you hain't."

"Jes," said Mr. Duke, in a low tone, "what you mean by such talk? Who's imposed on you? You don't mean—you don't mean *me*, Jes?"

Jesse raised his flap and looked around vaguely. Then he answered, humbly and deprecatingly,

"I never said that nobody in particklar had been a-'posin' on me, Mr. Jook. At leastways, I never named nobody's

name — that is, not that I 'members of. It were mosely them dog-goned flies I were a-talkin' to, or leastways a-try-in' to warn off'n me."

Then he feebly waved his withered hand—the more feeble as if, apparently, the sudden reflection upon the moral irresponsibility of his insect enemies, and their adroitness in making their escape, had rendered angry and active resistance both unbecoming and unnecessary.

"Jes Lines," said Mr. Duke, after laying upon the table a small bag he had drawn from his coat-pocket, "been best friend you ever had. Always liked you, because thought you liked me, and were friend to me."

Jesse fixed his eye upon a fly that had settled upon one of his feet too far to be reached by his weapon or frightened off by its waving. The insect remained still, and seemed to be intent only on enjoying a rest.

"Oh, you've got enough outen me, has you? And you jes comes back thar, and you keeps your distance, and you jes stands and looks at me, to see how I stands the racket. You see I ain't dead yit—not quite, I ain't—and you mout as well be keerful."

The little insect, disregarding these admonitions, rose, and, flying, lighted upon the "orphan's" knee. The guardian, carefully poisoning his flap, made a sudden stroke that laid him low.

"Ah ha! Oh ho! I told you so, 'member; but yit you ris, you did, from whar you was and you jes come and lit, you did, jes in good retch o' me."

Then turning to Mr. Duke, as if during this interlude he had forgotten his presence, he said, languidly,

"Hain't been to see a po' feller not so often lately, seems to me, Mr. Jook."

"Why, Jes! I've been oftener."

“Has you, in fack? Don't seem like to me. I know I'm old and forgitful; but as a man git old, and 'specially if he's 'flicted into the bargain, he natchelly feel that his desires is for people to come to see him, 'specially them that he sposens mont not, and by good rights oughtent to, want to fling him off jes because he's old and feeble and good for nothin', and while they theirselves was alive and kickin', and a-gittin every day of abler and abler to kick down all o' Godamighty's creation, so to speak. Though as for me, it 'pears like that I know enough, and by good rights ought to know enough, about kickin' already to not be keepin' on a constant of bein' kicked, because now I'm old and 'flicted, and can't git out o' the way.”

He closed his eyes momentarily, as if to submit himself unresistingly to the heels of whatever animal, beast or human, might incline to lift them against him.

“Been your friend always, Jes. Am yet. What can I do for you now?”

Mr. Lines turned himself slightly upon his side, adjusted his head so as to see Mr. Duke's face distinctly, and said,

“You're yit certain in your mind, Mr. Jook—positive, I mean—that the gal died?”

With the look and tone of one wearied of having again to answer a question that often and often had been asked and answered, Mr. Duke said,

“Of course she died, Jes. Not a doubt about it.”

“You didn't see it yourself, you know, Mr. Jook; leastways, not with your own eyes, so you told me, and both tharfore and wharfore it have always been—maybe jes my consate—I've been allers jubous about it, and I've been a-thinkin', and specially here lately, of how, powidin' she didn't die, what a likely gang they mout a' been by now. For she were the likelest and the smartest o' the whole

gang, as far as I could see, and I took a monstous notion to own her. And then, though bein' of a nigger, and sich evidences not allowed, *yit* she knowed, I sposened, some things which, ef the evidence could be 'lowed, would be too walible to keep a'most anybody from usin' of it, ef they knowed how, and when and whar."

"You know, Jes, that I were sued for damages about her dyin', and had to compromise."

"Yes, yes, Mr. Jook, I know. Staples he fotch the suit agin you for them speckerlaters; and I knowed, when *he* fotch the suit, you could git a compermise, and shore enough you did. And you did 'low for her to *me*. But I'd a heap rether had her than the money, because she were jes so likely, and then because ef she'd a-been my own blessed nigger, as the sayin' is, I'd a never felt no oneasiness about her keepin' of her mouth shet. Well, well, Mr. Jook, it look like a pity, to be shore. I has often, and 'specially I has often jes here lately, a-layin' on my bed, or on my cot, a flat o' my back a by myself, I has jes laid here and thought o' them childern. I've jes laid here and been a-ponderin' *and* a-ponderin'. I've frequent ast myself how Godamighty could a-cut 'em off so young in the very spring o' the year, as it were. And, and"—he went on, with mild remonstrance and resignation—"but it weren't my lookout. I ain't responchible, and it ain't none o' my business, *yit* somehow the older I git, and the more 'ficted, seem like, it 'pears to me, my mind runs on them childern."

He looked with all the eagerness his bleared eyes could evince into the face of his visitor, and derived that sort of comfort which is possible for such a man to get from the sight of anxiety greater than his own that he knows his words have produced. Jesse Lincs was now preparing for a trade the most important and delicate, requiring more

caution and more audacity than any he had ever before engaged in.

Mr. Duke sat and, alternately turning pale and red, looked upon his host, upon the floor, upon the world outside—far, far outside—but answered not a word.

“You’ve saw a good deal o’ that feller Jarl, Mr. Jook. I don’t know when I’ve seen as conversanal a feller. Everybody like him, they tell me.”

“Yes; put up snoise-house for me. Talky fellow,” answered Mr. Duke, cheerfully, as if gratified to change the subject of conversation.

“’Pears like he want to git all the information he can pick up about the neighborhood, but he ain’t a powerful hand to talk about hisself, I noticed. He’s a ’commodat’in’ sort o’ chap, and have patched up right smart o’ one thing and another for me, and not charged for it. That sort o’ doin’ I ain’t used to, and it make me keep my eyes skinned. But he’s a polite feller, and my wife and Doolana says everybody speak well of all of ’em. He know how to git information by askin’, or leastways by inwitin’ people to talk, and to keep on talkin’ when they git farly sot in. One way and another he have got about all I know about the Injans, and the first settlement here, and the Quillians, and the Porters, and the old man Langson, and I don’t know who all. But somehow he never ast much about you, Mr. Jook. I sposen that a-livin’ in one o’ your houses, and a-workin’ for you, maybe he mout have a dilicacy about askin’ about you, ’specially when in course he ’bleeged to heerd people talk a-plenty anyhow about the top man o’ the neighborhood. He ast me if I knowed anything about any Coxes. I told him I didn’t. He said that reason he inquired were, once when he were in old Firginny he heerd about some people that had a good many year ago married

down somewhars in Georgie somebody that was other a Cox or kin to the Coxes."

"Glad he let my name alone. May be good enough fellow, but too much tongue for me. Got no use for him. Rises too fast. Know too many people. Wants to know too many more."

"You don't supposen he were a-inquirin' about of the old lady Toliver's husband, does you, Mr. Jook?"

"S'pose not, of course," answered Mr. Duke, quickly, with a twitch of uneasiness in his countenance.

Jesse smiled. "They ain't no tellin'," he said. "Some things is like fire. You may kiver up, and kiver up, and you b'lieve it's all out and dead, and go away and leave it, and bimeby you see a smoke, and you go thar, and its kindled up agin from somethin', nobody know what, and it have to be stomped out agin, and you ain't shore it's out even then. But I never let on that I ever heerd o' *that* Cox."

There was another pause.

"The school-marster's made monstous headway among us, Mr. Jook. Some people 's been a-talkin' about his thinkin' about gittin' above school-keepin' and goin' to the practisin' o' law. It seem he were a lawyer before he come here."

"Know nothing of his ideas. Know one thing: gettin' above hissself. Going to quit my house, I s'pose, after all the advice and help I've give him, which he never could a' got along without, not to save his life. Quillians and Porter spilet him and sister to boot."

"His sister! She's one o' them heathens that worshes up of idles, ain't she?"

"Something like that; don't know exactly what she is. No business bringin' her here. Thought so at start; but thought I'd let 'em have their way about it."

"Goin' to quit boardin' long o' you, is he?"

"Seem like it. That ain't all. Talk about Am and Har't Quillian, Jes: Woodige put in thar hisself."

Jesse turned to the speaker and exclaimed, "Hah! that so?" with a smile which, while it indicated profound satisfaction, was meant to be regarded as indicative of indignation. Not a shrewd man was Mr. Duke in such reading, but he comprehended, and he writhed with pain. Jesse Lines also felt all the resentment that a man like him feels when he finds that he has made a decided mistake regarding the sentiments of another on which he has been speculating, with a view to a possible profit to himself. "Why, what do sich percedances—what does people mean by sich percedances? They seems to me like old Jedge Dooly used to say, '*Quod hoc, nung pro tung dehorse the recorde*' o' the case at bar. A desateful son of a— What does them percedances mean? and what does they pint to, Mr. Jook?"

"Don't know, except—" Mr. Duke was never so voluble of speech as when in the utterance of oaths and imprecations.

"Jesso — jesso. Well, now, Mr. Jook, that man have been a-usin' round here, and 'special sence that feller Jarl come here. They're sorter thick, they tells me. But he—that is, the school-marster I'm now a-talkin' about—have always been a kind of a wisitin' corspondent among us, so to speak. And do you know, Mr. Jook, here lately I've been a-consatin' in my mind that he were hankerin' arfter Doolana? Not, you mind, Mr. Jook, that my opinions about Doolana ain't that her idees, and mine too, is above sich as *him*; and if he was to come out here a-barkin' he'd mighty quick find he were 'a-barkin' up the wrong tree."

Low, grovelling in his mind as Jesse Lines was, his paternal heart could not but feel some delicacy, or at least

some shame, while thinking of his daughter in the midst of the scheme that just now had taken full possession of his mind, endeavors to the execution of which he had at last determined to commence. His daughter was the only being he had ever loved. If it were left with himself entirely he would have bargained for her settlement as he would have traded a jade of a horse or an insolvent's promissory note. But he knew her simple, native modesty and integrity; and, without being able to account for them satisfactorily, loved her the more because of them. Yet, because of them he had ever felt that she was the more in need of his politic hand in shaping her destiny. The influence he was conscious of exercising over Mr. Duke—greater now than ever, because of the position that, to Jesse's mind, had grown to be the very highest in the county, from which he felt sure an immense sacrifice could be gotten, rather than he would be degraded; the sight of Mr. Duke's anxiety about Jesse's own real or pretended qualms regarding transactions in which each, but apparently Mr. Duke as principal, had had a part; and of the sense of humiliation evident in the latter at the preference by Harriet Quillian of Lucius Woodbridge over his son Ammon—these made Jesse determine to strike one audacious blow for his beloved. More than once he was on the point of telling Mr. Duke in plain words what were his desires and his demands; but her image rose before him, and he was silent before the look it gave. Finally, however, he waved it away impatiently, as one dismisses an unreasonably complaining child, and thus abruptly broke out:

“Looky here, Kinch Jook: that little bag o' silver you've sot thar on the table, you may take it back. It don't begin to pay. Them chips and whetstones, I calls 'em, they've sorter kep' down the intrust, but the principal 's there yit;



and—and—well, now, Kinch Jook—I ain't now a-talkin' about prop'ty, but, Kinch Jook, man for man, fambly for fambly, me and my fambly 's as good as you and yourn, and—well, now, the fact o' the business is, I'm a-gettin' of a ole man now, and money, jes money 'dry so, it ain't the object with me it used to be. Ef I can see—" his face could not but flush through its pallor as he waved again that image that had come again, and, red with blushes, and sad with shame and humiliation, silently pleaded to him to spare both it and himself. "Yes, sir," he continued, speaking through his closed teeth, "ef I can see Doolana settled before I die—well, the settlement o' Doolana in a way to satisfy both me and her is what I wadies now more'n money—yea, *and niggers.*"

"Name o' God, Jes! what you mean?"

Jesse Lines raised his flap, brought it down with unerring precision, first upon a fly on his left, then one on his right; then, poising carefully for a stroke at one upon his leg, he paused, smiled, and, shifting the instrument to his left hand, stole the other down rapidly, silently as the gliding of a snake, and caught the intruder. Holding it up by a leg, he spoke to it thus:

"Now, dog-gone you! you see I could o' killed you, and I *kin* kill you. Now, of a notwithstanding and of a never o' the less, you've been a powokin' o' me and a pessecutin' o' me, I'm agoin' to let you off, jes to see ef you got the sense to take a gentle hint to stop your powokins and your pessecutions, and your makin' your livin' off'n t'other people 'ithout a other payin' for it or a askin' for it."

Having said these words he released it. Other conversation they had, with occasional interlocutory remarks of Mr. Lines to the few insects that ventured near, the purport of which will appear in time.

## CHAPTER XII.

## DOOLANA LINES.

AFTER his visitor had left Mr. Lines lay upon his bed and indulged his mind in reflections and anticipations. It had been a struggle between them. But, bad as he knew his own case to be, he felt that he had had the advantage, both in the merits and the presentation of his side of the bargain. For the first time he recognized that his daughter's destiny could be brought within fulfilment of his loftiest ambition, provided its control were submitted to his guidance. So there he lay, waving his flap, not angrily, but, as it were, in mechanical accordance with long usage, and mused how he would talk with his daughter, whose return from her visit to the Jarrells he was momentarily expecting. This daughter was the only being whom he had ever loved, and he loved her with the intensity of those who love but a single object. He had never noticed in her the slightest resemblance to himself. On the contrary, she had ever been meek, piously inclined, like her mother. Perhaps the contrast had endeared her the nearer to his heart, as he noticed conduct and sentiments that any man, however reprobate in himself, may be proud to see in his children. The reflection of such things is sometimes grateful, and seems to resist effectually many an assault of remorse. Jesse had given her as good an education as the neighborhood could impart. Industrious from childhood, for the last eight or ten years, on account of the declining health of both parents, she had

had the chief conduct of domestic affairs. In that small family there was yet another invalid, old Aunt Vilet, mother of the family of negroes obtained from Mr. Duke many years before. The aged negress had been treated by Doolana with an assiduity, if not as affectionate, as careful and constant as that bestowed upon her mother.

The probability of Doolana's marriage had seldom been mentioned in the family, and whenever it had been she had disposed of it summarily by saying that, in existing conditions, such a subject should neither be talked nor thought about.

Somewhat above medium height, spare, yet of comely figure, her face was pale when at rest. Her dark hair was long and abundant, her dark eyes soft, loving, and religious, so that sometimes she looked almost beautiful.

As her father grew older the thoughts of a becoming settlement for her troubled his mind much. These thoughts within the last few months had become more anxious, because within this period he had imagined that she was rather more serious than had been her wont. With what little sly humor he possessed he had occasionally alluded to one and then another of the young men in the neighborhood, when she would reply in some such words as these :

"Oh, pa, please don't mention young men to me. Nobody knows better than you that not one, especially of those whom you name, is for me."

Occasionally he had believed that he saw tears in her eyes when on this subject. Coarse, avaricious, selfish, deceitful, yet his heart, ever yearning and ruminating, felt a sympathy for her that often amounted to anguish. As he lay on his couch, ever waving his flap, by day and by night, whenever not asleep or reading the newspaper or old manuscripts, he was planning for his daughter, or revolving in his mind

and weighing possible alliances. Not that he even admitted the possibility of her going away from him. That, he felt sure, would finish him straightway. His idea was to provide her with a husband—a young man of some property and great promise—bring him and his goods here, and himself manage for all as long as he should live. That was his policy, and he regarded it as eminently paternal and wise. From among the men whose fitness for this purpose he had been considering, at last, as well (so he regarded) by another fortuitous conjuncture of circumstances such as had often befallen his speculations hitherto, as by an extraordinary exertion of intellect, vigor, and courage, he had made his selection.

There he lay that Sunday afternoon, in the soft, mellow spring-time, awaiting with confidence that was calm if not entirely cheerful, yet quite this side of being entirely satisfactory, the coming of Doolana. In a little while she came, walking with the brisk step of one who, seldom leaving the objects of solicitude for the purpose of relaxation or outside employment, is wont to hasten the period of return. Almost running up the steps, she approached, smoothed his pillow and the bed-clothes, took a chair at the foot of the bed, looked affectionately toward him, and said,

“Been lonesome, pa, while I was gone? Not very, I suppose, as you’ve had company.”

“Meet him, did you, Dooly?”

“Mr. Duke? Yes.”

“Say anything to you?”

“Only ‘Good-evening,’ and that he thought you looked better, at least stronger and more active, than common.”

“Them’s what he said, was they, Dooly? Shore in your mind he said the word ‘active?’”

“Yes, pa, quite sure.”

"Umph—humph!" said Jesse, with calmest, thoughtful-est ejaculations, slowly, lowly, almost interrogatively. After a short pause he continued:

"Yes, I were ruther lonesome. Your mother been mostly a-readin' to old Vilet, and, ef she hadn't, she no company for me. As for the company o' Kinch Jook, that don't never, or at least it don't sildom, take the lonesome out o' me, a-powidin' it's thar when he come, as it were, this evenin' like."

It was a part of his policy to speak disparagingly of Mr. Duke, in order to hinder Doolana's suspicion of his subserviency, and excite within her mind a sense of equality with the Duke family which himself did not feel.

"I've been a-layin' here this evenin' like, flat o' my back, and a-thinkin'—jes a-thinkin' *and* a-thinkin', and a-wishin' I weren't so old and cripplety, and good for nothin' like."

"Why, pa, you are not so old! Uncle Mark Langston, for instance, he's nearly ten years older than you are. But for your leg, and your not being able to get up and go about—why, I've heard you tell persons yourself that, but for these, you feel nearly as young as you did twenty years ago."

"Mark Langson? See the old man lately, Dooly? I hain't saw him in I don't know when."

"Saw him this very afternoon. He's been spending last night and to-day at Mrs. Toliver's, and he stopped for an hour at Mr. Jarrell's on his way home. His sister wanted to send him home in her carriage, but he would not consent. 'What,' he said, 'do I want with a carriage for three mile over a stumpy road? Rather foot it, anyhow.' He asked vry kindly after you, pa."

"Did, did he?" Then he struck violently upon the bed with his flap.

"Why, there was no fly there, pa!" said Doolana, laughing.

"Weren't they? My eyesight's a-failin' monstous powerful fast."

She rose, went to his chamber, brought a comb and hair-brush, and proceeded to use them tenderly on his head; then, sprinkling Cologne-water upon his handkerchief, and applying it to her parent's face, sat down, saying cheerily,

"There, now; you look bright as a man of fifty. Feel better—I know you do."

He looked at her with grateful fondness. Never had he felt for her greater love, and never so great hope.

"Move your cheer further up here, Dooly. Further yit. Thar."

Turning his head on the pillow so that he could well study her face, he said,

"I want to talk to you, Dooly. Is your ma out o' the house yit?"

"Yes, I saw her from the window of your room. She is reading to Aunt Vilet. What secret can you have for me, pa, that ma must not hear?"

"Not yit, Dooly—not quite yit. Bimeby. Women ain't not—I mean, as a generl thing they ain't—not but what you're a woman yourself, Dooly, and all that, and have good judgements—that is, so to speak—'bout matters and things in generl, but, and which women in generl—not as a generl thing they ain't. No, not yit—not quite yit, Dooly. Bimeby."

Doolana looked with surprise at his evident embarrassment—the first in all her life that she had seen him exhibit. Heretofore always voluble of speech, he was now silent for several moments, meditating what words to begin withal. Then, with impatience, he thus broke forth :

“Dooly, it’s no use a-talkin’ and a-mealimouthin’ about it. The fact is—and they ain’t no denyin’ of it—I’m a-gittin’ to of bein’ of a old man, and a monstous powerful feeble one at that; and so’s your ma also and likewise old and feeble, and she have already hung on fur t’other side o’ what anybody mout ‘a’ expected a many a year ago.”

He paused a moment, apparently revolving his disappointment at the unlooked-for prolongation of the life of his conjugal companion.

“Well, pa, everybody has to die, you know, when the time comes. We are all but of the dust, and the good Lord—”

“Lordamighty, Doolana! you supposin’ I don’t know that? Now, don’t—please don’t—don’t begin on me with the cotin’ o’ Scriptor, like I were a heathen and never heerd o’ Scriptor, and didn’t know, Scriptor or no Scriptor, that people ‘s all got to die, some time or ‘nother.”

He moved his head back, and fanned himself with his flap. She sat silent until he turned toward her again. His mind, fluctuating amid conflicting emotions, not all of which he well understood, he began again:

“Doolana, you’re my child, and the onlest I’ve got. I want to talk ‘long with you, ‘ithout your lecterin’ and a-cotin’ o’ Scriptor on me. I know I ain’t no Christan person; but that needn’t to keep me, hy good rights, I hope, from ‘spressin’ o’ my opinions on subjects I’ve studied and know all about; and Scriptor ain’t—not at the present it ain’t—what it’s my desires to talk to you about. Time enough for that, I hope, for, ef not a wery long, at least-ways a good smart o’ stretch o’ time yit; and, ‘ithout a man’s jes a-gittin of ready to let loose all the holt he have got, and drap right in *too* the grave, it don’t look right to try to make a man feel older than he natchelly do, and

plough up his feclins, and— No, it's not me, and it's not your ma, that it's my desires to talk about this evenin' like, but it's you, Doolana, jes by your lone self, and which I desires, and natchelly would desires, to make some perwision for you, and see some perwision made for you, and you a-settled in the same perwision before and when your ma and me—both her head and mine—gits cold."

He delivered these words in his fondest, pitifullest tones, bestowing the while upon Doolana looks compounded of artfulness and boundless affection.

"Well, pa, you can make your will, though I believe you generally keep one in your drawer; and, after leaving ma the property for her lifetime—"

"What!" cried Jesse, his eyes staring with astonishment and disgust. "That I hain't, and sha'n't. Do you supposen, Doolana, your ma, 'flicted as she is, and been 'flicted long as she have, goin' to outlast me, because—jes because one o' my legs is so I can't use it to no 'vantage, and your ma older 'n me to boot? *The Lordamighty!*"

Doolana regarded him with loving, painful compassion, but answered not a word.

"No, indeed, Doolana," he went on, after a pause of some duration—"no, indeed, my child, not by a good ways, I'm a-hopin'. But it's not as to who'll git what little prop'ty I got when my head do git cold, but it's as to who it'll be that'll help her to take keer of it, and a-keep on to addin' to it. Them's what's on top o' my mind. Thar's prop'ty enough here for you to start with, Dooly. I've worked, and projecked, and 'conomized, and turned over until I've piled up right smart more 'n people knows of. What my desires is now, for to ease my mind, it's to see my only and onlest child settled along with—ahem!—*aheme!*—in course my meanins is, so to speak, of a person



o' the sect and sections of a man who can help my said daughter, *as aforesaid*, to take keer o' what she'll git, and not, be the powisor be understood, but what I should desires and expect that the said person o' them sects *and* sections, *as aforesaid*, would take up right here, in this very house, along 'ith us all, as it were, and which would be not only 'fectionate but covenant; and we'd all be, as it were, united and jinded together, and be pintedly 'fectionate and happy, all natchelly together, ontell your ma's head first, and then my head, got cold, and then jes you and the said person o' the very same sect *and* sections a-havin' the whole kit and bilin of what you'll have and what he'll fetch, jes natchelly by yourselves and one another, together in pardnership and cahoot. That 'd be my desires, natchelly and in cose, matter not whomsomever that person of them sect and sections mout be, *in cose* a reasonable speakin', even, as I one time thought, maybe mout—it mout of been Mr. Woodige, as I see him a-usin and a-hangin' and a-hankerin' round here right smart; or, *ef* not him, then some smart, good-lookin'—I'm for looks, too, Dooly; your old pa ain't so old and cripplety that he don't yit run none on looks—yes, some smart, good-lookin' young man that have prop'ty in hand now, and more in the basket, so to speak. But which"—the old man now put into his look and into his tones a confidingness intended to be understood as claiming to be listened to with eagerness and held to with scrupulous caution—"but which now my idees is underwent a change—and my idees has went fur and beyant sich a man as the school-marster. And I don't say but what it can't be managed, a-perwidin that people is keerful—a-keepin' o' their eyes on the hind sight, as the sayin' is—and a-mindin' o' what they does and what they says, and a-keepin' o' themselves not too nigh *ner* too fur, and a-leavin' o' people o'

expeunce and obseruation to manage the ropes—loosen 'em and draw 'em, draw 'em and loosen 'em, as the case mout be, in the warous conditions o'—o' the plantuff and the 'fendant in the case at bare, as it were in old Jedge Dooly's time, who I named you arfter, and who, of all the sassararers that was ever car'd up to him from my cote, my ricollection is he never went back on me but twicet, and oh!—and oh!"

Thus he drawled along apparently in senile garrnlity, but really with studied carefulness, though in the midst of embarrassment. During the greater part of this speech and at its close he had withdrawn his eyes from her, except an occasionally quick glance. Doolana, grown still paler, sat immovably silent, awaiting the climax. Turning to her, her sad eyes looked into his so beseechingly that he turned away again, then, raising his flap and pointing to the ceiling above, said, with the solemnity and confidence of the boldest conspirator,

"Yes, it's away up thar; it's the only and the onlest son o' the richest and the powerfulest man in the county."

Lowering his arm, laying down his weapon, as if, having conquered the world, there was no farther need to wage warfare, he awaited his daughter's judgment of this last great conquest.

She leaned both elbows on the cot, but when she comprehended whither he was intending to lead covered her face with her hands. When she saw that he was expecting her answer she lifted her tearless eyes and calmly said,

"Pa, if ever I should marry it will not be with either of the men you allude to. Mr. Woodbridge, if he desires to marry, is not looking, and is not likely to look, for that purpose to this house. As for Mr. Ammon Duke, whom I cannot doubt you intend by your last allusion"—then she rose—"he would no sooner marry me than—"

“Doolana, my daughter” — eagerly, with exquisite slyness in his low, almost whispering tone—“my daughter, *you don't know*. I don't adzactly say *I know*; but I know more'n you do. Kinsey Jook 's a rich man, and a high man, and a strong man, and a proud man, and I'm nothin' but jes sich a po' creeter as people sees me. But listen to me, Doolana: Kinsey Jook know hissself, and he know Jesse Lines, and, what's more, he know that Jesse Lines know him; and, what's more yit, he know that thar's a settlement that's got to be had betwixt him and me, ef I say so, and which it won't do to put it off until it'll be too late to do you any good, and which it look like— Oh, my Lord! it do look like a man's only and onlest child ought to listen to him and let him rigerlate sich perwisions for her, when she 'bleeged to know she haven't the expeunce *ner* the obserwation to rigerlate 'em for herself.”

He had raised himself and was reclining upon his elbow, but emotion caused his arm to totter beneath its burden, and he again sank back upon the cot.

“Pa,” said Doolana, solemnly, her face now of the color of the snow-white sheets on which he lay, “you did not hear me through. I said, or intended to say, that Ammon Duke would not marry me in any circumstances.”

“And which,” he interjected, impatiently, “I know, or at leastways I think I know better.”

“And I was going to say that in no circumstances that are possible to occur during his -lifetime and mine would I consent to marry him.”

“My Godamighty, child! what *do* you mean?”

“Exactly what I say, pa.”

As she erected her slender form, her eyes dilated and the color returning to her cheek, nobody who had seen her but would have pronounced her beautiful.

"What, not ef he was to come right into the house here and cote you squar', pine-blank, out and out?"

"No, sir."

"The child's distracted!" said he, looking hopelessly out into the road as far as vision extended.

"Not at all, pa—nothing of the kind. I've thought litle of marrying, pa"—she paused a moment, blushed painfully, then continued—"but I've always known that I never should marry a man unless I should become attached to him for his own sake, and not for what people call *advantages*. As for Ammon Duke, if he were to offer himself to me—which he has and will have no more idea of doing than I have or will have of making an offer to him of myself—I should reject it, if he were the very last man upon earth and I the last woman."

"Yes," said Jesse, laying his arms down flatly, feebly by his side, "no doubt about it, not the slightest—distracted, ravin' distracted!"

She walked up and down the piazza two or three times; then, stopping, and looking upon him with a look in which both affection and shame were visible, she continued,

"Well, pa, if I am distracted, as you say, it is not more than I have been always. There has never been a time wherein I should not have felt upon that subject as I feel now. I have been to school with Ammon Duke, and I know him to be selfish, overbearing, often brutal in his disposition. Let that go. He has no idea of me, and I hope never to hear again his name mentioned in such connection. Oh, pa! I don't know what it is between you and Mr. Duke that has made you and him so intimate, when it is plain that neither of you likes the other cordially, as a friend likes a friend, which makes him more polite and obliging to you than he is to other men, and which leads you to

hint of having a control of him that is known only to you both. I don't know what all this means. I hope it is nothing wrong—that is, very wrong. I hope that neither owes the other what cannot be paid in a way that is honorable. If it is a matter that ought to be settled in your lifetime, don't leave the settlement to me—if I am to outlive you—without letting me know beforehand what its consideration is, so that it may be collected or paid in good, fair, honest money. And, father, if it is a debt that cannot be paid in money—if it be a matter that it is indispensable should be settled in other ways before the great day of account—I implore you not to postpone. Oh, my father! I fear and I feel that the time is not far off when— But I remember you don't wish me to give you a lecture, as you call my most loving remonstrance. Now I must go to ma, and see about supper.”

She left him, and he resumed his meditations.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### MR. RIDDLE'S EARLY MOTIVES AND OBSTACLES IN LEARNING HIS ART.

BETWEEN Baldwin Riddle and Lewis Sanders existed a hearty friendship. After his disappointment in love the former had tried, as if he believed it a duty to himself, to become misanthropic. Such result had been prevented by his natural health of body and simple uprightness of heart. He did become, during the first year, somewhat *blasé*, but to a tone that brought neither great unrest to himself nor trouble to others. Consolation came from several sources from which such as he might draw, but most especially from a discovery unexpectedly made at the time of his partial

relinquishment of work on his farm, that he had a talent for music. In those times, when the two religious denominations that were leading in that section combated with each other with sufficient acrimony concerning doctrine and rites, both agreed in denouncing, among other things considered sources or occasions of evil, the fiddle. In his youth Baldy, though not a church-member, would not have dreamed of attaching himself to this carnal instrument. Not a church-member, yet he was so steady in deportment, so habitual in attendance upon Sunday meetings, and even Saturday conferences, that hopes had been entertained that at no very distant day he would apply for membership. The frustration of his matrimonial hopes threw, as he was wont to express it, all that fat into the fire, and it was somewhat in defiance of the sentiments of the religious portion of the community that he bought himself a fiddle and began trying to learn an art which, the fact was, he recognized as thoroughly a worldly, and indeed a rather devilish, piece of business. His widowed mother, fond of him as devout to her pious obligations, sorely grieved for his disappointment and the downward way in which it seemed to be leading him. But she was consoled and well advised by her friend and spiritual brother, Mark Langston, who, though his own affliction was greater, submitted to it with becoming resignation. As for the fiddle, Mark argued, well, the fiddle was nothing, you may say, Sister Riddle, but some pieces of wood glued together and small strings, mostly of cat-gut, with some horse-tail hair for the bow, and a very little piece of rawsom. That was what the fiddle was, just by itself—dry so. It was not the fiddle, therefore, but it was the objectionable use made of the fiddle, that his church was mainly against. As for his part, Mark—he must confess it—had rather admired the sound of the fiddle : When fiddle-

playing and such things had been brought into the church—well, Sister Riddle, we, and specially with young people, *have*—we natchelly have—to be mild and lenient. For he had observed that when young people had been jes drove out o' the Church for such it had not seemed to work well, either for the driven or the drivers. Anyhow, fretting and scolding would do Baldy more harm than good.

Such counsel subdued much of the mother's anxiety, and never a word of complaint did Baldy get from her. When, after a considerable period, he had learned to play one tune she could not but be gratified at his exultation. During that incipient time how he did labor! Of his experience therein he used, in after-years, to speak with the calm fondness of eminent artists in general when they recur to their early struggles. He would say:

“To git to be a fiddler—a prevous shore-enough fiddler—for I ain't a-talkin' about gourd-scratchin'—it take work, and it take time, and it take genus. It were weeks *on* weeks before I got so I could chune her, and which some people—and there's a heap of people that don't know that that's one of the mainest things about fiddlin'—and then it were months *on* months before I could fetch out a chune—that is, a rale live chune—reg'lar and perpendicklar, so to speak. I could scratch a few notes at the offstart, and I could pick up a few 'long towards the windin'-up; but the balance of 'em would fly from me, spite of all I could do to retch 'em and ketch 'em. But I were jes natchelly determed to see if any *man* was in me, and which somehow I were very jubous whether there were or not. But I knewed this: I knewed that fiddle were my fiddle, because I'd bought her and paid for her. So I worked at her before breakfast and arfter breakfast, before dinner and arfter dinner, before supper and arfter supper, in the house and out o' the house, down

by the spring, up by the cuppin. For ma she taken it into ber head that she were begiinnin' to git deaf; and I 'lowed maybe my fiddle were too heavy for her; and I spent most o' my time, exceptin' of arfter supper, a-most out o' doors. And oh, boys!" he would blandly add, "you ought to 'a' saw the chickens, *and* the geese, *and* the peafowels, *and* the turkeys—specially them gobblers—and even the calves, when they all see me a-comin' in them prevous times! Why, the hounds, and even ma's little fice Dock; Dock that were no manner of account, exceptin' that he had been pa's squir'l-dog, and she wouldn't let nobody pester him—they all sot up a-cacklin', and a-blatin', and a-howlin' as if them too were agin the fiddle. I were unconcerned no more for them than t'others; and when at last I found I could fetch out a chune reg'lar and prevous I didn't keer—not *I* didn't—a Continental shin-plaster for their predigices nor their perlapsities, and I bid defiance to man *and* beast. That chune were 'Days of Absence.' It were a monstous powerful slow chune. But arfter tryin' of 'Jenny Wiggins' and sich, and not bein' able to ketch up with her and them, the kernel's old Jim—dead now old Jim is; but, for a fiddler, he were one of 'em in them days—he showed me, one note at a time, how to lay out that chune. He 'vised me, old Jim did, to jes keep at her on-tell I got her same as countin', and to play her faster and faster. I done it, I did, and it weren't so powerful long before I got so with old 'Days' that I made mighty nigh a dancin' chune outen her. Then farwell, world! I give the old fellow a twist o' tobarker, and I let *him* go. And, boys," he would conclude, with proper seriousness, "I tell you all now that the reason that fiddlers is so hard to come up with is, that, in the first place, they hain't the genus, and in the next place they hain't the industry. And as for the



'Walls o' Jericho'—” But this sentence his modesty would never permit him to conclude.

Having devoted some years mainly to the study of his art, and conquered the difficulties before its most consummate ends, Mr. Riddle's mind became in a measure calmed, and, to his mother's great comfort, he resumed his interest in practical affairs, and became one of the very best farmers in the neighborhood. To his fiddle—named, in an interval of special fondness, “Miss Nancy”—he paid through thirty years his faithful duty, and seemed to be satisfied with what this, his second love, had borne him from that first prolonged, difficult, painful parturition, the innocent “Days of Absence,” down to that Titanic birth, as one might call the “Walls o' Jericho.”

Mr. Riddle would frankly admit that he was gayer at fifty years old than he had been at eighteen. But what was the difference? He had never yet found the person of any sect, sections, or conditions, male or female, female or male, deacon, common church-member, exhorter, preacher, or worldling, that could answer that question. So he kept on growing slowly older, speculating anon with mild, painless sadness upon the general passing-awayness of sublunary affairs, and showing, almost only in his legs, that any considerable time had lapsed with him since the period of extreme youth. His music, it is due to him to say, he cultivated now less for his own entertainment than the gratification of his friends and acquaintances, especially the youthful. For their sakes he, without very much solicitation, would discourse “Billy in the Low Grounds,” and his likes; but no amount of coaxing or pleading would bring the “Walls o' Jericho,” unless there were present some elderly, thoughtful person who could comprehend and sympathize with its varied yet, for the most part, solemn intentions.

There were but two men in the neighborhood whom he did not like, to one of whom it had always been difficult to avoid showing his hostility openly and avowedly. Not, as he always protested, and most honestly, because he had been supplanted by him in the affections of Emily Langston, but for his subsequent treatment of her father, whom Baldy had always revered beyond the rest of mankind. He invariably contended that there was a mystery in the whole affair—the hasty marriage, the early death of the bride, and the undutiful conduct of the bridegroom toward her father. Not a church-member, and living, as it were, in defiance of Church authority, at least to the extent of playing on the fiddle, yet he was a firm believer in Providence, and he sometimes declared his opinion—seldom, however, to any except Lewis—that It would overtake Mr. Duke some day, in spite of his rapid course.

He had been wont to ride to the store two or three times in the week and sit in the piazza for an hour or so. These visits were generally in the afternoon. On the Monday morning following the visit of Miss Woodbridge to Colonel Porter he put in an appearance—an uncommon event. Whatever had been the suggestion, whether the encountering Mr. Duke at the mill on the Saturday before, or that the acquaintance with Miss Woodbridge had revived a sentimental interest in young womanhood, and carried him back to his youthful and more serious time, at all events, during a private chat, he spoke to Lewis of his early love, and with more feeling than ever before, as follows:

“I loved the child, Lewis, as for that matter, when she weren’t more’n nine or ten year old. For, exceptin’ o’ Lizy, she were the beautifulest child I ever see. When old Ab Semmes left her all that prop’ty, I knowed, in course, it wouldn’t be worth while with a fellow like me to run agiu

the list of 'em that I knowed that prop'ty would bring arfter her. And yit a fellow, you know, Lewis, when he do love a girl out and out, prop'ty or no prop'ty, and have been a-lovin' of her a prevous long time, he can't—makes no odds how little he think of hissself natchelly—he can't quite quit a-hopin' that his hopes is on reasonable grounds, ef not on risin' grounds. I knowed her pa would be willin' to it, though I never as much as peached the transactions to him. But I jes knowed that the perlapsity of his mind would be that way, and his folks and our folks like brothers, and the plantations a-jinin'. And, Lewis, in them days I were studdy. You wouldn't believe that, Lewis, arfter seein' o' me so wild, and seem like gallio-like, and a-playin' o' the fiddle, and sometimes, when I git mad, a-cussin', though I don't make a practice o' *that*. In them days, Lewis, I were studdy, and I knowed nothin' and I keerd nothin' about the fiddle, and I went to meetin' every meetin'-day—least-ways of a Sunday meetin'-day—and the fact of the business is, Lewis, I were a-thinkin' of jindin' o' the Church soon as I thought I were good enough, and could tell a expeunee which it mont be fittin' for people to listen to, in and about the operations and the transactions o' grace in my heart, whenever I could git to understand how a body had to go about a-gittin' and a-fetchin' in o' them operations and transaactions, and which—and—well, Lewis, when that child—for she weren't no more'n a child—when she got over-persuaded by Kinsey Duke, and runned away with him, it seem to me that them things jes flung me back on the natchel reg'lar grounds o' badness and devilment; and so I dropped my expeunee transactions, and I jes flung myself away. And, Lewis, seem like I *had* to take it out some ways, and so I took it out in fiddlin'. It seem like that I were obleeged to have somethin' to agger-

tate my mind, I were that lonesome thar, with nobody but me and ma, and Uncle Mark him a-comin' over sometimes a-consolin' o' her, and he, I knowed, a-needin' o' consolation more'n she did. People, Lewis Sanders, that ain't been along them roads may laugh at other people and make game of 'em, but they don't know whar the shoe pinches and the collar hurts the shoulder, and, strictly speakin', it ain't t'other people's business. Yit, whethersomever and howthersomever the case mout be as to *me*, that ain't what set me agin Kinch Duke; for I ain't a man that goes about a-makin' of mouths at people that's whipped him or flung him down farly, and which I hain't never yit denied were done by him. But, mind you, Lewis, in the first place, thar weren't no use in him a-runnin' away with the girl. Uncle Mark never liked the Duke family, yit he'd a-never been streenious in his opposin' of his daughter of a-marryin' of him, when he found it was her wishes; and *he* knowed it; and if he'd 'a' been a prevous gentleman he'd 'a' ast Uncle Mark for her, and not 'a' jest runned off with her, like a mean rogue that ruther steal what he want, matter not what it is, than for it to be give to him. But then, Lewis, to never fetch her back to see her parrents, nor them to see her, and to bury her away off yonder where she died, instead o' fetchin' of her back—to put her away thar out of anybody's ever knowin' whar to find her grave ef they'd a mind to go thar, ef they could some time, and see if it was paled in and had a rock apiece at the head and at the foot! Now, Lewis Sanders, the question with me have been, who Kinch Duke were a-runnin' away from when he runned away with that child, and what made him runned away; and another 'joltin' question to my mind is, when he got back as a widderer, why he didn't go to Uncle Mark and beg his pardon, and have to be ast everything about ef his onlest child

had died a easy or a hard death, and ef she sent him any partin' words, and who preached the funil; and not to fetch him some of her har, or some little somethin' she had on when she died."

He rose from his chair, took out his handkerchief, squeezed it in his hand, and walked several times up and down the piazza of the store.

"And, Lewis," he continued, resuming his chair, "the way him and his old father treated Uncle Mark about the prop'ty, by pouncin' upon it as soon as Kinch got back! As for that old daddy of his'n, he were the oaudaciousest old cuss *you* ever saw. Why, sir, the news weren't here more'n a week before he were gittin' ready to build his mills. He had his old mean heart sot on them in Albert Semmes's lifetime; but old Ab wouldn't let him have the sites for love nor money. People said that him it were that pushed Kinch after that child, for he—that is, Kinch—they said, had a ambition to marry among the Quillians; but he never had no more chance thar than a stump-tail bull in fly-time. And, sure enough, the mills weren't scace-ly up and sot agoin' before old Am Duke were called off the hunt. Let him go, the poor old fellow; I got nothin' to do with him, as he's dead and goned. But as for Kinch Duke, he mout have divided with Uncle Mark, at least-ways for Uncle Mark's lifetime, if the law *did* give him all the prop'ty. He offered Uncle Mark some sort o' perwis-ion—I don't know exactly what—but Uncle Mark, onsus-picious man as he is, he see through Kinch Duke, and he let him take it all, and would have nothin' exceptin' o' the house, which by good rights were his'n anyhow, as me and many another of the neighbors had often heard old Ab Semmes say that he had give it to him for his lifetime. Yit, ef he had of treated Uncle Mark right, and he'd 'a'

showed he were in yearnest in his offers, Uncle Mark would not of had to work for his livin' as he have always done and do yit. Now, I tell you, Lewis Sanders, that sich transactions ain't prevous, and they're what I call the transactions of a mean man; and my opinions always has been that nobody but Godamighty know all the meanness that Kinch Duke's done in all them transactions. Godamighty know; nobody's ever fooled *Him* yit. He's sometimes a long time in tellin' on people that's tried to run agin him. He don't keep almanics, like t'other people; but when he do git ready he tell, and he tell so out and out, so pine-blank and plain, up and down, that they ain't no use in disputin' of his evidence. It's been now thirty year, and it seem to me ef anything in them transactions is blacker 'n what showed itself it's about time to fetch it out. But it ain't none o' my business, and yit my opinion has been that if old Jes Lines were cotch up and squeezed like a grasshopper the molasses 'd come from his mouth that would 'stonish people and make Kinch Duke sick to see. That thar's a understandin' o' meanness betwixt them two I've never had no more doubt than that you and the kernel's pardners in this stow— But, confound Kinch Duke!" he said at last, breaking suddenly off. "Let him go till his time come. But ain't Miss Woodridge a star-gazer of a 'oman?"

"A fine woman indeed, I think, Baldy."

"Fine? she's superfine. By Juberter, ef she didn't strike me in the pathetics! Splendidest one of her sections I've saw. Talk with her much yisterday?"

"Some, Baldy—a good deal."

"I see she struck you, too, dodgy as you are and hard to hit. That music o' hern! them marches, and them 'Walls,' and them—what did she call 'em—roundabouts?"

"Rondeaus, Baldy, were their names, if I remember."

"Somethin' like that. I didn't know sich music could be fotch out o' that mahogany box. I liked them 'Battle-berry Walls' powerful; but, Lewis, I don't think they're quite up to the 'Walls o' Jericho'—at leastways not as solomcholy as them."

"Perhaps not, Baldy; but I think that, in other respects, they might be considered about next to them."

"That they mout. Then, my gracious! Lewis, what a talker! The 'oman ain't so powerful monstous pretty—not, I shouldn't say, as Harr't Quillian, nor 'specially what Lizy'll be when she git her growth. But them ways o' hern, and that mouth! When she talk and when she laugh, blame if them don't play supple as a wagin-whip."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### MRS. TOLIVER HAS A CHAT WITH REBECCA WOODBRIDGE ABOUT BOARDERS.

Mrs. Toliver, as was her wont with those about her whom she loved and trusted at all, came to love and trust Rebecca Woodbridge fully. She could not be induced to receive her brother, and on the night of her boarder's return from the Porters one of the reasons of her persistent refusal appeared. After supper, availing themselves of the warmth of the sweet spring evening, which sometimes comes so early in that genial clime, they were sitting in the piazza. The hostess had already been told the principal items of the visit, and, after a brief allusion by the young woman to her disappointment at not having her brother in the same house with herself, Mrs. Toliver said,

"The sections of men persons, Miss Arbecca—as for the

sections of men persons, they are, and they always has been, beyant me, and I ain't afraid ner ashamed to acknowledge it. I has never had in my house nobody o' them sections—nobody reg'lar, I mean, you understand—exceptin' o' my two husbands, and them, in course, not both of 'em together, but one of 'em at a time—that is, Miss Arbecca, not sence Mr. Jook he stoled Br'er Mark's daughter, as you heard tell about at Kernel Porter's. And I'll tell you for why. And I wants you to 'member I ain't a-talkin' now about my husbands, ner how a person o' my sect and sections, and them of women in gner'l, has to turn, and twist, and project to keep them from bein' dissatisfied, or makin' out like they're dissatisfied with all a body can scuffle about and do for 'em. But at the present I'm a-talkin' about another one o' them t'other sections, and his name it were Jared Fitzjarald, and which they in gener'l called him Fitz. He were as lovely a boy to look at, and he 'peared to be as nice and biddable a boy, as a body ought never to keer about meetin' up with. As for old Sister Catlin, she loved that boy the same as ef he'd 'a' been her own kin, instead of her husband's kin. His father—and who he lived away in the uppest part of Firginny—sent him down here one fall o' the year, because he were oneasy about a bad cough he had, and he boarded along with Mr. Catlin, who were his kind o' second consin; and he went to school at the place whar the 'cademy is now, but which they didn't call it then no 'cademy, and it were no sich buildin' as what it is now; and they wasn't no town here not ontell long arfter that. I lived then, you mind, Miss Arbecca, about a mile down on the A'gusty road, and the Catlins they lived a mile yit further down. Now, Emily Langston, Br'er Mark's daughter—and which she were one o' the prettest childern you ever see in your whole blessed life—she boarded along



'ith me and my first husband. Well, her and that boy Fitz was jes like br'er and sister, and they actilly called their-selves 'Buddy' and 'Sis.' That boy, 'peared like, he got to lovin' o' me like he do his Auntie Catlin, as he called her. He come by for Emily every mornin', and he toted her books and dinner-bucket to school and home agin, same as ef he'd 'a' been her brother—and samer 'n some brothers. For some o' them, I've often noticed, is politer and obleeginer to t'other girls that ain't no kin to 'em than their own blessed sisters; but which that ain't neither here nor thar, and I sposen it's owin' mostly to which way defernt people is raised. Howbeever, that's jes like them childern was. Now, as for Mr. Jook, he never not so much as noticed Emily Langston, not tell old Albert Semmes died and left her all that prop'ty. Then, lo and behold! him and his old father—and *he* was one of 'em, Miss Arbecca—they goes to mak-in' much of Emily and Br'er Mark, and before anybody knowed about it they was done gone. And now," she continued, re-settling herself in her chair, "what I were comin' to, and what I'll come to arfter a while, ef you'll set still and not interrup' me, is this here—right here. When the spring o' the year come for that boy to go back home, instead o' bein' of glad, it 'peared like, or at leastways he made out like, he were sorry, because he had got to love us all to that that he declared, he did, that jes as soon as he could git off from his pa he meant to come back and spend his days here along with us. For the boy have stayed nigh about as much at my house as he have with his auntie, sich were the thickness of the families; and which I never *could* tell how it were that I've allays thought so much of that woman, and she nobody but a Methodis, and I know I shouldn't exceptin' of her bein' natchelly one of the best women and the best neighbors in spite of it all; and which, Miss Arbec-

ca, that boy kissed and he hugged me the same as his aunty when he left us, and he cried fit to kill hisself; and he made me cry too, which I were never a person to make no monstrous great to-doo a-partin' with people when the time come and it can't be helped. Yit I cried because I see him a-cryin', and I jes natchelly loved the boy. Well, now, lo and behold! when he told us good-bye he went on to Br'er Mark's, because Emily she hadn't been well for more'n a month, and her ma had took her home, and that boy went by thar on the 'tense like of tellin' of her good-bye. And now, Lord bless my soul! when he have told her parrents good-bye, Emily she put on her bonnet, she do, and she and her little pet of a nigger gal she been keepin' with her to wait on her ever sence before old Albert Semmes died, and she say she'll walk out a little piece o' the way with that boy. Her ma see her a-cryin, and—for I tell you, 'oman, them two been like br'er and sister—and she didn't see no harm in her takin' a little short walk a piece o' the way. So they goes on, and, bless your soul, honey! them childern—nary one of 'em—was never saw agin here, nuther dead *ner* alive. Mr. Jook—they hadn't got hardly out o' sight before thar he were, with his carry-all and two horses, and they lights intoo it, and off they goes. They whips around ontell they got to the A'gusty road; they scoots on, and at A'gusty or somewhars thar, or somewhars else—nobody ever knowed whar—Mr. Jook and the poor girl gits married. The boy writ a letter from thar to me, and Emily writ to her father, a-askin' our pardons, and him a-sayin' that it wouldn't be so very long before all 'd git back, when all 'd be right. Old Am Jook he sent word to Br'er Mark that very night o' the runnin' away to keep Br'er Mark from bein' of too oneasy, and which, as for him, he never keerd about Br'er Mark *ner* nobody else bein' oneasy, but

jes made 'tense like, because he knowed how much everybody thought o' Br'er Mark. He sent word to Br'er Mark to 'member that they was all young and foolish, and so him and Br'er Mark had been young and foolish, and as for him, he knowed nothin' of it ontell they was done gone, and all sich. But he never sent word which road they tuck, and which he needn't, for Br'er Mark wouldn't of made hisself redickilous by a-runnin' about and fussin' about what he knowed he couldn't stop."

Then, sinking into a compassionate tone, she continued :

"Poor children! they knowed monstous little of what was a-comin'. The boy got drowneded before he got home; and it weren't so very long before Mr. Jook he writ that poor Emily she were dead. Me and Sister Catlin, both of us, has always hoped that they both had time to repent and be forgive for all their sins. As for Emily, in spite of all that, she were a Christon child. Poor thing! Runnin' off and marryin' in them days weren't so oncommon, and I s'pose she got over-persuaded by Mr. Jook, who didn't want to wait and stand the chances. As for that boy Fitz, Sister Catlin say he said his praars night *and* mornin' reg'lar as she did; but which he weren't nuther Babtis' ner Methodis', but a 'Piscapolian, as they calls 'em, and which, from what they tells me about them, they don't make not much more claims to bein' of Christons than them folks you belongs to. But he were a monstous pretty boy, and I never should of b'lieved he'd 'a' been so desateful, and which I shall allays b'lieve he never 'd 'a' been ef he'd been a Babtis'. It never pejuiced no fallin' out betwixt me and Sister Catlin, because it cut one bad as t'other. Mr. Jook said arfterwards that his drowndin' come mighty nigh of killin' of his father, and, sure enough, the old man did die before long. How the boy were so long time a-gittin' home as

he were we never knowed—for it were four or five months arfter he left when his father writ to Mr. Catlin a-tellin' of his drowndin' in the Rapidan River when he were tryin' to cross it in high water. He writ that Mr. Jook had been to see him sence, and had told him how the people here liked his son, which was some consolation, the poor old man said. Mr. Catlin he died too before so mighty long; but in course I don't mean for you to understand that that killed *him*, nor neither my first husband, Mr. Cox. But, as to that, I've lost two o' them, Miss Arbecca Woodige; and as to that furthersomeore, everybody got to die when their time come, young or old, female or male—makes no odds what their sections ner their conditions. Everybody know that from their own expeunce, by good rights a body 'bleeged to supposen."

"It was a very sad case, Mrs. Toliver," said Rebecca. "I heard at Colonel Porter's that Mr. Duke seemed much cast down when he returned, and could not bear to speak either of his young friend or his wife."

"Yes, yes, so Br'er Mark said; and as for Br'er Mark, he were not a man to harbor nothin' agin nobody. Yit Mr. Jook never felt so bad that he didn't, him and his old father together, they didn't take all the prop'ty, and they put up their fine mills; and scacely had they got 'em a-runnin' before the old man he died, he did, and had to leave 'em; and, besides, Mr. Jook mighty soon got so fur over his mournin' as to get another wife. Not that *I*'ve got the right to talk agin the second marryin' o' people, for I know that people can be sometimes over-persuaded to it when they not expectin' nor hain't been believin' they're wantin' to marry agin; but I've often consated, Miss Arbecca, that if I had of been in Br'er Mark's place— But that's a-supposin' what's onpossible, and I will stop it. I ain't no man

person, and, ef not thankful, I'm at leastways riconciled that my sections is what they are and has been always; for as for the sections of men persons, I jes tell you agin they're beyant me. From the day that boy fooled me so plump I made up my mind to not to take no more boarders of no sections; but somehow Br'er Quillian and Br'er Woodige they overpersuaded me about you, and I hain't had no 'casion to complain; and, ef the truth got to be told, you've been a heap o' company to me, and a heap o' help to me, and 'specially poor little Polly. As for Br'er Woodige, ef he and Mr. Jook can't make it out to stay together, my ricommends is for him to go to Hallier's. He'll be more indepent thar; and as for livin', Hallier's have the riputation above ary 'nother tavern in all this section o' country."

"That Mr. Sanders, whom I met at Colonel Porter's, is quite handsome and agreeable."

"Thar it is. I knowed you'd say that; and as for Lewis, Br'er Mark say he don't know his ekal for sense and business, and—ways in gener'l, by and large. As for looks—well, Miss Arbecca, somehow I keers less for looks than I used to. Both o' my husbands—one at a time, o' cose—was good, or leastways pleasant-lookin', men persons; but I've often consated that Lewis Sanders were a man person that young women mout say were handsome. He do have monstons pleasant ways, sich times as I seen him, but that's been sildom, for he ain't a man that circulate from home much, and 'specially in the sections o' females."

"Do you know his family?"

"Fambly? Child! *He's* got no fambly. He's a bachelor."

"I mean," said the young lady, laughing, "his parents or his other family connections."

"Oh, that, indeed! No, I don't, nor I don't know any-

body that do. I've never heerd o' his saying anything about 'em, and I *has* heerd it 'spicioned that it won't do to go too fur back a-inquirin' about *them*. But that's betwixt me and you. As for Lewis, he stand as high as any young man in this settlement, and he got it by standin', like ary 'nother tub, so to speak, on his own bottom. Kernel Porter think the world o' Lewis. And you meet up with Baldy Riddle, too, you say?"

"Yes, indeed."

"And ain't he a genus! That what I call him—a genus, with that old Miss Nancy, as he call his fiddle."

"You've never heard him play, Mrs. Toliver?"

"Not in twenty year. That playin' seem like too kearnal for me, not only the chunes but also the very names of 'em. Could you stand 'em?"

"Oh, yes. I was delighted with them and him. All out there like him very much, including your brother, I heard."

"Oh, yes. As to that, Br'er Mark feel to Baldy like he were his own child. You know, the poor fellow loved poor Emily, and her runnin' away a'most killed him. He were studdy before that, and arfter that he jes look as if he keerd for nothin', and went to fiddlin'. He ain't been about me for long time, because, I s'pose, he know I don't hold with sich, though I like the poor fellow, for sake of Br'er Mark and Emily. Last time I see him I told him he'd never quit any younger sich ways o' livin', and so he don't come 'bout me. But I told him the truth, and he know it."

"He plays one tune at least that he calls religious."

"What's that?"

"'The Walls of Jericho.' You ought to hear that, Mrs. Toliver—I declare you ought."

"Well, I never heerd of a fiddle a-havin' anything to do with religion."

"Oh, yes, indeed, my dear friend. Some of these days, if you don't object, I mean to invite him here, and to play for us."

"What *would* old Sister Catlin say to that?" and the old lady laughed heartily at the idea.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### LEWIS SANDERS.

FOR fifteen years Lewis Sanders had lived a life almost undisturbed by the uncertainties that surrounded his infancy, and which had never been explained. Under the benign influences which had been upon him during these years he had ceased to feel at least painful concern about a question which had been searched in vain by those who had brought him up. Coming to an early sense of necessity to rely for success solely upon his personal conduct and endeavor, he had become a first-rate man of business. Going little into society—wherein his uncommon fine parts would have shown to much advantage—he was content with the life he was leading. He made money, invested judiciously, in the intervals of work read books of various kinds, and was as intelligent as business-like. To live a contented bachelor, and, after a life reasonably spent thus, die, had been his only ambition.

The meeting with Rebecca Woodbridge wrought a swift change. Of all changes wrought upon a man those resulting from woman's influence are the quickest and most momentous. Not resistless as fate—they *are* fate. Scarce-

ly had she gone out of sight on that Sunday evening when Lewis felt a longing for her return. That night he brooded long over his mysterious origin, and, with a keener pang than he had ever felt before, blushed at the thought that it might not have been even honorable.

A month passed. During that period he had resisted a constant impulse to visit Miss Woodbridge—a duty, indeed, of which he needed no reminder from Colonel Porter that he ought not long to delay the payment. But he had determined sternly to repress the feeling whose indulgence would be disastrous. It had been arranged between Eliza and both her teachers that, on a Sunday evening, instead of her being sent back to school as usual, they would drive out in Mrs. Toliver's carriage and bring her along with them. For Eliza had heard the old lady more than once scolding because these two so seldom availed themselves of her oft-repeated desire that they should use her carriage and horses as if they belonged to them, and the child had employed this superior influence in compassing her project. As they were seen coming up through the grove Eliza said to Lewis,

“Although you wouldn't call upon her, and so disgraced yourself, I just know you are dying to see her.”

The afternoon was spent much as the former—beneath the trees—and somehow it was that Lewis and Rebecca found themselves, not long after the arrival, together on the same seat they had occupied a month before.

“I am glad to see you here again, Miss Woodbridge. The colonel, you know, had your promise to repeat your visit.”

“Yes, and you see how promptly I have kept it. Brother wished to pay his respects to the colonel, and acknowledge in this way his hospitality to us both; and he, Mrs. Toliver, and Eliza all said I must come with him. What



an interesting man the colonel is! I have not known his superior anywhere. And what a sweet place this is! I've thought of it often since I was here before."

She looked around through the thick shade toward the mansion, the orchards, and the public road, beyond which the forest far extended.

"The colonel," answered Lewis, "has a fine estate here. This grove is considered the fairest in the county. Mrs. Porter used to have the growth and the grounds well attended to, and he still pursues her *régime*."

"Her death must have been a sore loss."

"Most grievous. Brave man that he is, his memory of her is as sacred and as fond as on the day of her death. I miss her sorely. She was one of the very best of earth, and was as a mother to me."

"You have long been intimate with the family, Mr. Sanders, have you not? Mrs. Toliver so told me."

"Yes, indeed; but there is no family connection."

He looked upon the ground, and she was embarrassed that her words had led to the disavowal.

"No, Miss Woodbridge," he said, lifting his eyes, after a few moments, "I am not a relation. I became acquainted with the colonel fifteen years ago, when I was a boy and a clerk in Augusta. Happening to want one himself, he engaged with me, and I have been here ever since."

"Yet you seem as one of the family."

"I have ever been so treated. It is the only home I have, and the only—at least, the best I've ever had."

"Your parents, then, are not living?"

In spite of her consciousness that these words nor their tone were perfectly sincere, they yet seemed to be the only words suited to the occasion.

"I suppose not, and, so far as I know, never were."

He smiled sadly, and Rebecca blushed with regret. He was touched by her embarrassment, which hastened a purpose that had been forming in his mind since her previous visit.

“Miss Woodbridge,” he said, his face indicating earnest desire, and with it a doubt of the propriety of what he had said and would farther say, “mine is a brief history, interesting to none but myself; yet, if you will suffer it, I will tell you what little I know of it.”

“Would you rather, or not, Mr. Sanders?”

“Rather. The colonel, Mr. Langston, and Baldy know as much as I, and so did Mrs. Porter. I don’t know why it should have been so, but so it was, that I had a greater comfort in the thoughts of her acquaintance with it than the rest. If you will not take it amiss I will say that, since her death, you are the only woman I have met to whom I felt a disposition to speak of my origin. I know you will say candidly whatever you feel.”

The tinge upon his cheek, the sadness implied in his words, the tremor that evinced his perception of the embarrassing delicacy of the case, made him appear, as indeed he was, one of the handsomest and manfullest of men. She answered immediately,

“By all means, Mr. Sanders. You could not have paid me a more grateful compliment than by thus associating me with the memory of such a woman.”

“Thank you, Miss Woodbridge—from my heart, thank you. If a man in my situation, in the midst of the existence I lead at this delightful place, cannot be said to stand in need of consolation, yet it will be an added gratification to feel that a woman of sense and delicacy knows what may sometimes induce a melancholy with which he believes she sympathizes. My history, as I said, is a brief one, and

I shall make a brief narrative. Once upon a time—to begin in proper and authorized form”—he proceeded, archly, to subdue the constraint of both, “there lived in the town of Norfolk, Virginia, a man named John Sanders, a retired seaman, who kept a small notions-shop. He had several children, of whom, until I was eleven years old, I had believed myself to be one. He and his wife had ever behaved toward me as if I had been, especially in the matters of kindness and even affection. This man, from having been remarkably strong and healthy, sank into a rapid decline. A few days before his death he had me called to his bedside, and nothing could have so astonished me as what he said. I was not his son. My name, as far as he knew, was Lewis. I had been consigned to him when an infant, apparently only a few days old, by a man styling himself John Lewis, of the town of Lynchburg, who claimed to be my father. This man had stated that his marriage with my mother had been clandestinely consummated, because of the fierce hostility to himself on the part of her family, who were rich and of aristocratic claims, and its fact had not yet been known to her parents, who were quite aged. Further concealment had rendered my temporary removal necessary. He seemed most solicitous about my security; and having met Mr. Sanders several times at that town only a few days before the ship to which he was then attached was to sail on a voyage of several months, the latter and his wife, after some hesitation, agreed to receive me. I was to be called for within a year. The man deposited with Mr. Sanders some hundreds of dollars, and directed with much urgency that he should write, or have written, frequent letters to him at such post-office as he should thereafter designate by letter. Himself was to write often, giving directions in my behalf, and to visit whenever it should be practicable and

safe. A person named Granger then resided in Portsmouth. He was a brother-in-law of Mr. Sanders, and was witness to the transaction in my behalf. From him, however, Mr. Sanders had not heard, at the time of his death, for more than a year, he having removed, not long after my arrival, to the town of Richmond. They had never corresponded theretofore, except at long intervals, being persons unlearned in letters. Never a word was heard from Mr. Lewis since his departure, not even by letter in answer to those addressed by his direction, and all inquiries regarding him were without result. This sounds," said Lewis, with assumed gayety, "as if I were something of a hero; not, certainly, like one in classic legend, but at least co-equal with some in modern romance."

"What you say, Mr. Sanders, interests me deeply."

"Again I thank you, Miss Woodbridge. Colonel Porter has often suggested that I should make other efforts besides what had been made in search of more of my antecedents; but I have been so contented here, and what previous action in that behalf made had been so without result, that I have forborne to inquire into matters which, for reasons of their own, those most interested in me, or at least most responsible for me, seemed to have desired to be forever unknown. I say, farther, in brief, that when I found that I was not of this family of the Sanders, after a season of poignant regret, and another of cordial grief for the death of one whose kindness to me was such as easily led me to suppose him to be my father, and of sympathy with his widow and children, I desired to get away. Mrs. Sanders, who was an Irishwoman and a Catholic, complied faithfully with her husband's dying request to assist me in the purpose which he seemed to foresee I would have. I would accept nothing but a small sum of money sufficient to de-

fray my expenses until I could find employment. When I left the good woman shed many tears, and then she gave me this, which she called an *agnus*, and said, 'Lewis, your parents, as far as we know, were not Catholics, nor was Mr. Sanders; but it won't hurt you to wear this, and I ask you to do it. When the covering and the string wear out you can get others.'

He took from his vest-pocket the *agnus*, encased in morocco leather, with a loose covering of silk cloth, attached to a string of twisted silk. The young lady's eyes brightened, and she asked, in surprise,

"But you do not wear it in your vest-pocket?"

"No; I wear it as requested, though you are the first person to know that. I put it in my pocket this afternoon in expectation of your coming, intending, if I should find opportunity, of showing it to you, knowing you were a Catholic, and asking you to explain its meaning."

Holding the trinket in her hands, she asked,

"Do you never hear from your supposed mother?"

"Once I heard, and only once. She was a woman of little education. I received one letter—a brief one—which reached me in the town of Danville, whither I found myself a few weeks after leaving Norfolk, and from whence I had written to her. In that she spoke of her intention of returning to her native country, without mention of what special location. In a few weeks I wrote again, directing to the old address. Again I wrote from Raleigh; but I have never heard from her again; and after a third failure, made long afterward in Augusta, I wrote no more. In remembering those times I often wonder how free from dependency I was. I felt confident of my ability to get a respectable living. I worked my way, always with unfaltering hope, through the lower counties of Virginia, through

North and South Carolina. In the latter State I remained two years. Then I went to Augusta, in this State, where I was engaged with a merchant named Campbell, when Colonel Porter, who happened to be there and wanted a clerk, saw me and engaged me. Here have I been ever since, and here I have had an existence singularly free from pain or anxiety. But pray, Miss Woodbridge, what is an *agnus*?"

"The *agnus*, Mr. Sanders, is a small part of wax taken from an image of a lamb that has been blessed by the Pope. It is worn by almost all Roman Catholics, as a preventive against accidental harm, especially physical."

"And is such a thing supposed to be efficacious in that behalf?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"At least, Mr. Sanders, Catholics believe that wearing it serves to remind the wearer, oftener than might be otherwise, of the faith they should have that God will avert such harm as to him it seems best not to occur."

"Yet does not the good God do that for all?"

"God is indeed immeasurably and ineffably good to all his creatures—to those who know him as those who know him not, or imperfectly. Yet I trust you will continue to remember what the good woman said to you, that this will do you no harm."

Then she passed it back to him.

"I was sure of that. At all events, I should have worn it for her sake, ignorant as I have been until now of its intentions. I am a sort of heathen, you must know, Miss Woodbridge, especially since the death of Mrs. Porter. She was a deeply religious woman, but of an acutely sensitive spirit. During several years an invalid, she seemed not to gather comfort from her religion, but became despondent to a degree that distressed the colonel sorely. However, she rallied

considerably at the last, and her end was very peaceful. She was ever concerned about my spiritual welfare, and upon her death-bed exacted of me a promise to say a prayer of some sort every day."

"And you've kept your promise?"

"I have."

"She did well to exact it. God will reward her for it, if he has not done so already."

"Oh, I am sure that if there is a heaven her spirit entered there instantly after its release from her body."

"*If* there is a heaven, Mr. Sanders!" she repeated.

"You, then, have no doubt of that?"

"I might have doubt," she answered, looking around, "of all this fair scene, and the persons who enjoy it, but never of heaven, nor of God's invitations, implied and expressly and repeatedly made known to mankind, to go thither."

They looked into each other's eyes. She saw that he was gratified by the interest with which she had listened to his narrative, and that his own in what she had said was cordial and sincere.

"And so you kept the name of Sanders?"

"Yes. Small as was my title, it was kindly bestowed, and it is the only one I have ever known. I have had to follow the precedents of the foundlings of fable and accept with gratitude adoption from the good shepherds who saved me from wild beasts and the flood."

"Right!" she exclaimed, in hearty accord, as she rose from the seat—"right! A man should be not only fond but proud of such a name; and, unless it be replaced during his lifetime by the true, give instructions, when he comes to die, that it be inscribed in bold relief upon his tomb."

They rejoined the rest, and soon afterward the visitors, with Eliza, departed.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A CONVERSATION AT DUKE'S MILL.

A GOOD shot and a fair angler was Barney Jarrell ; and occasionally, with his rifle and fishing-rod, either with others or alone, he resorted to the woods around the Ogeechee and Duke's Creek. One morning, when he had found himself at the head of Duke's mill-pond—opposite which, on the high ground, Mark Langston dwelt—he bethought himself to pay a visit in acknowledgment of the old gentleman's call. Whenever a visitor came, Mark, who was usually found in his workshop, suspended his work, invited him into the dwelling, or, when such invitation was declined for briefness of the tarry, offered a bench-seat, took one for himself, and talked as long as the visit continued. He accepted with proper thanks and remonstrance part of the game that Barney offered. He was an interesting talker, and as they sat there in the shop Barney listened with pleased attention to his answers to questions concerning the early settlement of the country. Said he, while speaking of the Dukes,

“ Ammon Duke, father of our present Mr. Duke, it was always said, came from North Carolina. But he was too busy a worker to talk much about where he came from, or anything else excepting of what he had on hand at the time. A rusher he was, to work and make money. Working, active man as Mr. Duke is—Mr. Kinsey Duke, I mean—he ain't equal to what his father was, not nigh.”

“ I've been told that Mr. Duke's first wife was your daughter, Mr. Langston.”



“Yes—Mr. Kinsey Duke, you mean?—yes. She were very young at the time—too young, I thought—and she didn't live long after that. They went off straight to Virginy, and it wasn't more 'n four or five months before news come that she was dead. Mr. Duke, when he come back, not long arfter, said she hadn't never been well sence she married, and, indeed, she had been ruther complaining in health before.”

“Were they married in Dukesborough, sir?”

“Oh, no. They married unbeknown to me. Mr. Duke, I suppose, thought maybe I or the child's mother might have been against him, or a-wanted to put it off; and he had business in Virginy, and so he run off with her. He looked like he felt much cast down when he got back, a-concluding, of course, that our feelings had been hurt, and 'specially by his never writing to us endring the whole time, and the child never writing herself but once, from Augusta, where, or somewheres nigh there, I suppose, they got married. I couldn't help from being sorry for him, he looked so cast down. He never said much about her. He was never a man but of few words, not even when he was a boy; and people used to say that he never had no peace of his mind in his father's lifetime, and that the old man was monstous hard with him, as he was with all his family, white and black. No—no; they never got married in Dukesborough. The old man Ammon told me they were married by some jestic o' the peace or another somewheres down there near Augusty. I suppose they both felt sort o' ashamed to go to a minister of the Gospel, and she a-running so young from her parrents.”

“I doubt not that the whole affair was a sore affliction to the family.”

“Yes, Mr. Jarrell, it hurt me, and it hurt the child's

mother yet more, it seemed like. Such things, I suppose, bears harder on mothers, and, if they do, they bears very heavy. She took the child's death so hard that, as I've always believed, the good Lord took her out of her trouble. The child had been raised to be Christian, and I can but have a good hope in my mind that she died prepar'd. Mr. Duke told me she did."

He paused awhile, and continued:

"As for me, I've stood it somehow these thirty years, both her and her mother's dying, and leaving me, you may say, alone by myself. What a man can't hender, Mr. Jarrell, and can't help, he *has* to bear; and the Scripter tells us that them that bears trouble for Christ's sake won't be let lose in the long run. There's hundreds and thousands—of a heap, a long ways better men than what I am—has had to bear heavier things than what I've had, and, being more submissive, have got more good out of 'em, though I've tried not to complain, and I'm thankful that things has been better with me always than I've ever deserved of their being. What a nice, well-behaved child your little girl is, Mr. Jarrell, to be sure! She seem as affectionate and good-mannered a child as little Lizy Porter. I don't wonder they run together so much. Both her parrents dead, they told me."

"Yes, sir. Her mother died shortly after giving her birth, her father five years ago."

"Well, Mr. Jarrell, people, young as well as old, are obleeged to die whenever God appints their time. The thing is to try to get ready for it."

After some farther conversation on unimportant topics Barney took his leave, gratified by the invitation to repeat his visit whenever he felt like it. Descending the margin of the pond, pausing occasionally to angle in a hole that

seemed to tempt him, a cloud arose, and grew rapidly so threatening that he made for the saw-mill for shelter from the coming rain. Mr. Duke had just ridden up in a gallop, and, removing the saddle and saddle-blanket from his horse, hitched the latter to the limb of a tree near by, and the two met just as the rain began to descend.

"Do, Mr. Jarrell? Both come near getting a wetting. Been hunting, fishing—both, I see. Don't seem to had much luck."

"I've not done very much, Mr. Duke, but somewhat better than appears. I carried a few squirrels and fish to Mr. Langston. Since then I've been loitering along the pond, and not looking out much for game."

"Been to see Mr. Langson? Didn't know you was 'quainted with the old man. Found him well, I hope? Good man—none better of my knowledge."

"He seems an excellent man, and, for his age, in good state."

"Talk much with him?"

"Not a great deal. I made a short visit in answer to his call upon me."

"Wish let me do more for him. Poorer than good man like him ought to be. Found him at work, did you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tried often to help him. Won't let me, except staying in one of my houses."

"Ay? Is *your* land he resides on, Mr. Duke?"

"Cert'nly. Part of this tract I got from—first wife, Mr. Langson's daughter."

"It seems to me that I had heard that your first wife was his daughter. Did she leave any child, Mr. Duke?"

Mr. Duke regarded Barney with the look of a man who was partly surprised, partly indignant, that he should be

ignorant, however lately come into the neighborhood, of the facts in the family history of its most leading citizen.

"I, Mr. Jarrell, have but one child. Everybody *but* you, seems, knows he's son of my present wife."

"Please excuse me, sir, for not having taken pains to be informed more accurately upon such important points."

Barney's coolness, as such does always, brought Mr. Duke to a halt in his passion.

"My first wife, Mr. Jarrell, didn't live but a few months after her marriage."

"Ay?" Barney had on his face the imperturbed expression of one who believed it was neither strange nor dangerous to have been in ignorance of the fact.

"Mr. Langson say anything about his daughter?" asked Mr. Duke, after a moment's pause.

"He did allude to her, sir."

"Say anything about me?"

"I should not consider that quite a fair question, Mr. Duke, in ordinary circumstances," answered Barney, with a smile, though reddening somewhat. "But such a man as Mr. Langston, I doubt not, would be willing for all persons to know whatever he says about them. I answer, therefore, that he did make mention of your name, as he must have done in connection with that of his daughter's, and he spoke of you in terms of respect."

"Didn't ask *him* if his daughter left child?"

"I did not, sir. Perhaps if I had, and been answered satisfactorily in the negative, I should not have repeated the question to yourself."

Barney smiled broadly as he spoke thus, while Mr. Duke looked hardly upon him.

"Mr. Langson know anything about your man Perkins?"

"He was not *my* man, Mr. Duke, or, if living, is not. He was a man who seemed to have regarded himself as belonging exclusively to himself, without responsibility to others. I did not ask Mr. Langston about him to-day, but I may do so some time hereafter."

"Never catch up with him, Mr. Jarrell, I'm thinking."

"Perhaps not, Mr. Duke ; but I do not despair."

"Seems to me a man better give such as that up as a lost ball, and go to work to make a decent living for himself and adopted child."

Barney laughed heartily.

"Why, Mr. Duke, this Mr. Perkins, if ever found, might prove to be a rich, powerful man. In such case, might it not be easier to fasten ourselves upon him than work and drudgery in a warm climate like yours here, where a man can scarcely get thoroughly chilled once before the thaw of your spring begins? What is he to expect in summer, the main season for work?"

"Why, Mr. Jarrell," said Mr. Duke, as if feeling in himself all the disgust of his class for the vain ambitions of the lower, "you don't suppose that if you was to find such a man—and I tell you now, my opinion is, it's too late to start out looking for him—you don't suppose he'd acknowledge himself; and take in them he knows nothing about and cares nothing about?"

"But then," persisted Barney, "might he not be touched by the sight of Amanda, bright as she is innocent, and needful of opportunities to be developed into a fine woman? Don't you suppose he might be led at least into a compromise? Say acknowledge her as his offspring, and—keep the bulk of his property for himself and those he loves best? That is just what my brother would have proposed, and what I would be satisfied with."

Mr. Duke looked incredulous.

"Why, you 'pear to be a man of monstous little prop'ty, and a-prowling and projecking about a-hunting and a-fishing ain't going, seem to me, to make it much bigger fast. That's the way your case strike me. Now, if you'd move further on, 'cross the Oconce or the Ocmulgee, where lands is cheaper and speckerlatin 's better, you might do something. Seem to me that's what *I* should do."

"I may do that after a while. But mine and Amanda's wants are not many. She is very young, and *I* am not what one could call old. Then I like this neighborhood, and especially the school. You did a good thing, Mr. Duke, when you founded that."

"Think so myself. Folks say so. People ought try do some good, Mr. Jarrell, in the world."

"True, Mr. Duke. I am inclined to believe that was the main reason of our being placed in it."

The heavens having now cleared, Barney took his gun and fishing-rod, and, bidding Mr. Duke good-day, set off toward home. Mr. Duke lingered awhile. He watched Barney's retreating form. Then he turned and looked toward the knoll whereon, surrounded by oaks, was the mansion of Mark Langston. He sighed. Was he saddened by the sight of the vigor and the heartiness of the youth who had just gone, or by the serenity of the aged man who, dwelling alone in a house not his own, calmly awaited whatever it might please God to award?

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A CASE FOR THE RETURNING LAWYER.

DELIBERATE, easy-going, even indolent, sometimes, as Barney Jarrell seemed, yet he was resolute in furtherance of any serious purpose, vigilant, cautious, brave. He had come to Dukesborough with the hope of reaching the termination of a search which had long interested his family, and until lately had been fruitless. His new hopes had had, since his coming, a diversion that made yet more profound the sadness he had felt before their inception. Many years before, his mother, who had had some sorrows of her own, having gone with her two children, both boys, on a visit to Surry, one of the counties in the south-eastern portion of Virginia, saw a young female child who had been adopted by the family of an innkeeper with whom she had tarried for a night. The child, the man said, had been brought there an infant five years previous by a man who, claiming to be her father, represented that his wife had just died at his camp, three miles from the village, leaving this infant, only a day old. He begged that it might be taken care of for two or three days until he could repair to his sister, who resided in the next county above, who would return with him and take the child to her home. He had left immediately after obtaining assent to his request, and had never returned nor been heard of since. Attracted by her comeliness and apparent promise, Barney's mother easily prevailed upon the innkeeper and his wife to let her have her.

The latter, when grown up, was married to her elder son. On his death-bed he, who had sought far and near for the discovery of his wife's parentage, commended the search to Barney. Within the last twelve months circumstances had taken place which led Barney to believe that the solution of the mystery was to be obtained, if anywhere, in Georgia. Leaving his mother, therefore, as soon as he could get away, and taking Amanda and one servant, the woman Aggy, he set out for Dukesborough. He had been there but a short time when what facts he had ascertained about the marriage of Mr. Duke and Emily Langston threw his mind into great confusion and induced most painful apprehensions. It was a case, he saw, that required the exercise of much patience, caution, courage, and the counsel of a lawyer.

A friendly intimacy, as we have seen, soon grew up between him and Lucius Woodbridge. Finding that the latter had once been a practising lawyer, and was contemplating a return to his profession, he communicated to him his case and asked his assistance. At first Woodbridge considered Barney's apprehensions regarding the difficulties well-founded. At all events, he felt, and so said to Barney, that he could undertake no active part in his behalf while he remained a boarder in Mr. Duke's family. It was not long, however, before he concluded that there might be more merits in the case than then appeared, and that, whatever his counsel might be worth, he owed it, especially to the orphaned Amanda, to bestow it. He had resolved already, at all events, to leave Mr. Duke's house as soon as a sufficient opportunity should be presented. He had come to believe with Barney that Amanda's mother was the daughter of Emily Langston, and he was shocked with what appeared to have been the abandonment by Mr. Duke of his offspring, however born, and his suffering her issue and Mark Lang-



ston to be deprived of all usufruct of the handsome estate that his wife had possessed.

What was best to do sorely perplexed the young men. Barney had grown to partake of the reverence and affection that were universally paid to the old man, and he pondered how in the solitude of his age he would feel if the discovery that Amanda was his descendant should be joined with that of her having not only forsaken her parents but dishonored them. Yet Barney was a man who loved the truth for its own sake, and he had a counsellor who loved it not less. This counsellor assured him that, so far as Mark Langston was concerned, he would receive this gift, if Amanda was of his blood, as thankfully as if there were no stain upon her own or her mother's birth. Amanda was the only one to consider in that view of the case. To this Barney answered that it had been his brother's wish that every search should be pushed to all possible ascertainment.

"And you accepted the trust," said Woodbridge, "and feel that you ought to execute his testament?"

"I do," answered Barney, "and, with the help of God, I'll do what I can."

"Such a purpose, so undertaken, Mr. Jarrell, will have His blessing bestowed in somewise. Of that I feel sure."

Amanda knew only the purpose of their coming to Georgia, but not the many thoughts and projects in her father's mind. She was expected to be discreet in her speech and all her conduct, and, feeling secure in his guidance, she never inquired as to his purposes.

One Saturday the two young men rode together in a gig to Gateston, the county-seat. Some unimportant business there Barney had, and while attending to it Lucius Woodbridge repaired to the office of the clerk of the Superior

Court. He had made the acquaintance of that officer before. Stating that he had been thinking of returning to the Bar, he asked permission to look into some of the records, with the view of seeing how judicial proceedings here were conducted as compared with those of his native State. The clerk was very accommodating, and promised any assistance that might be needed. The lawyer thanked him, and commenced looking over the dockets of the various years. He talked all along with the clerk, first upon one topic, then another, the various judges and leading lawyers that had served in this court. Reaching the docket for the year 1798, he saw, at the April term, this case: "Lawrence Palmer *vs.* Kinsey Duke."

The only entry was the following, by the presiding judge, made at the same time—the "Appearance Term:" "Settled at defendant's costs." The name of no counsel was marked for the defendant, that of George Staples appearing for the plaintiff. He turned away, and, after chatting for a while with the clerk on other matters—looking the while at a large case with pigeon-holes, over which labels with the various years had been pasted—carelessly went to that for the same year, took down the bundle contained therein, and, having found the original writ in the case before mentioned, read it. It was an action for damages, claiming three hundred dollars of Mr. Duke, on the ground that, on a certain date theretofore, the defendant had sold to plaintiff a negro girl—Betsy by name—with usual warranties of title and soundness; and it alleged that, in a few weeks thereafter, the said negress had died, and of an incurable disease which she had had at the time of her sale. There was no plea. Acknowledgment of service and waiver of process had been put by the defendant on the back of the writ. Just before leaving Woodbridge remarked,

"This Mr. Staples you speak of, I noticed his name frequently on the dockets some years back."

"Oh yes, indeed. He had a big practice, Staples did. Not such a big man before juries as some; but he was a wiry fellow, I tell you. He knew how to hunt up and fix up."

"Many of the prominent citizens of the county employ him?"

"Not as a general thing, I believe, from what I've heard. leastways in big cases, excepting along with them big fellows to pick juries, hunt up and fix up evidence, and such. Yes, indeed—I forgot—there was the old man Duke—old Am Duke—your Mr. Duke's father—he was much of a Staples man. No matter what other lawyers he might have when he got scared, and thought Staples not quite equal to the case, yet Staples must be among 'em, to do the still hunting and the picking."

Thanking for the courtesy, Woodbridge left the office, and shortly afterward he and Barney were on their return.

"The case savors of fraud on its face. This Staples, I find, was the confidential lawyer of the Dukes. As sure as that is the sun we see yonder in the west you have come to the right place, Mr. Jarrell. Wait until I withdraw from the Dukes' house. I *must* do that very soon. Then we will take counsel together as to how to move."

Barney respected the delicacy of his friend, and the most of their conversation during the journey home was upon indifferent subjects.

On arriving at home that same evening an incident was related to Lucins Woodbridge that led him to determine to withdraw from Mr. Duke's at once. Mrs. Duke, a stout, dark woman, from Broad River originally, who, as we have intimated, was of aristocratical claims, had long sought to

give tone to society, in spite of knowing that, before her day, the Dukes had not ranked with some others, mainly the Quillians. Observing a certain amount of coldness toward persons poor and of acknowledged inferiority in social position, she had sought to impress even the Quillians with a sense of her right to lead. But the Quillians, with as good blood as had ever come out of Virginia or stayed there, quietly ignored such leadership, though exhibiting no disposition to assert it for themselves, and made no distinctions in society except such as seemed to be required by considerations of prudence and morality. In time Mrs. Duke had to give up her exclusiveness, and became, or tried to become, in general intercourse with the villagers, as gracious as the Quillians. When she gave a little party she— Well, as to that I will let Griffin, the shoemaker, speak in his own language of one that his daughter Julian attended on the Friday night previous :

“Talk about of a-prowidin’ for people at parties ! I tell you that Misses Jook is the prowidin’est in this whole blessed town. Why, Julian, when she come from thar last night— well, the next mornin’ the child’s eyes was jes a-swelled out along o’ fatness, and she fotch home in her hankercher and a bastel, besides of turkey and cake, ammons and reesins, and Am Jook had to come home along with the child, and help fetch the bastel, he did.”

Julian had told of these things to Harriet Quillian.

“Yes,” said she, a well-grown child of twelve, “and, Harriet, he said I was pretty, Mr. Am Jook did, and he ast me wouldn’t I kiss him ; and I told him that par said he didn’t want me to kiss gentlemen, and he said ‘All right.’ But he were sorry, and he hoped to have the pleasure of comin’ home with me from another party some time. And oh ! he is such a gentlemany young man !”

"Julan," said Harriet, "I am glad you did not kiss Mr. Am Duke. If he asks you again, take my advice and slap him in the face; or tell your father of it, and ask him to knock him on the head with his shoe-hammer."

"Oh, Harriet!" said Julan, piteously. "That would be too bad."

"Then tell him, Julan, that that was the advice I gave you."

Julan hesitated.

"At least, my dear child, let him know that you told me of his offer to kiss you."

"I'll do that, Harriet. But I wouldn't like to hurt Mr. Am Jook's feelin's. He didn't mean any harm; and, if he did, I don't know what it was."

This conversation came from Harriet, through Rebecca Woodbridge, to her brother. On Monday following the latter, while being measured for a pair of shoes by Griffin, said to him,

"I noticed Julan at Mrs. Duke's party Friday night. Did she get home all safely, Griffin?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Woodidge. I were goin' for her about nine o'clock; but Mrs. Jooks sent words to my wife that I needn't bother about of comin' for Julan, and she'd see to Julan bein' fotch home, and, shore enough, Am Jooks fotch her home hisself."

"Who brought the word from Mrs. Duke, Griffin?"

"Her waitin'-boy, Sam. Mighty polite nigger Sam is."

"Yes. But it is quite probable that he either told or brought you a lie."

"Oh, Mr. Woodidge, I supposen not. They wasn't no 'casion for lies as I could see."

"At all events, Griffin, had she been my daughter, I should have preferred to go for her myself. Julan is both

too young and too old to be escorted home by young men at night, after their parents have gone to bed."

"But, you see, Mr. Woodidge, Am he come to fetch the bastet, and it were jes natchelly full and a-runnin' over with cake and things."

"Did Julan tell you anything that Ammon Duke said to her?"

"Not as I 'member she didn't, Mr. Woodidge; only she said he were monstous polite, and seem to her as gentlemanly like as ef her father 'd been a rich man; and which he know, Am Jook, that *I'm* the poorest man in all this town. Why, what make you ast such questions so close, Mr. Woodidge?"

"Because, Griffin, I do not consider Mr. Ammon Duke a very proper person to conduct from parties at night girls, except such as are much older or considerably younger than Julan."

"Oh, bless my soul! then it sha'n't be did no more."

"That's right. Make these shoes a little more loose than the last pair. I am getting too old to wear tight shoes."

"Old! Too old! Bless my heart! Why, Mr. Woodidge, you ain't nothin' but a—I were *jes* about to say boy; but I knowed that wouldn't do, and you bein' of a school-marster. But you're young enough, Mr. Woodidge, you is, for any of 'em, even some o' them that's in your school; and Julan say they ain't nary one of 'em, not even exceptin' of Harriet Quillian, that don't love you."

"It was as improper for Julan to say that as it was for her to be brought home Friday night by Mr. Ammon Duke, and more absurd for you to believe it, than that Mrs. Duke had sent you word not to trouble yourself about her getting home. Now let me tell you, Griffin, about Julan. She is

very pretty, and tolerably smart; but do you be very careful and very watchful about her conduct and her talk."

"Oh, Mr. Woodidge, the child didn't mean nothin'."

"At all events, remember what I say."

At the breakfast-table next morning Lucius Woodbridge made a remark which he postponed from the supper of Monday, because all the family were not present, Ammon Duke having come in late from one of the plantations:

"Mrs. Duke, I stepped into Griffin's yesterday afternoon. They were much gratified by your sending the basket of things and relieving them of the trouble of sending for their daughter Julian Friday night."

Ammon Duke, who was tall, stout like his father, but dark, handsome like his mother, did not wince, but seemed slightly annoyed.

"Why, what upon earth can the people mean?" said Mrs. Duke, laughing in astonishment. "Well, well, I—why, I don't know how the poor child got home, but— Jane, call Sam here."

"Oh, it's nothing, ma," said Ammon. "I saw the child was enjoying herself; and when she told me that her father was coming for her at nine o'clock—and I knew she didn't want to go so soon—I told Sam to step down and tell them that he needn't trouble himself about her, and that we would see that she got home."

"And you did not send the basket with good things?" persisted Woodbridge, looking at the lady, and not noticing the interruption of Ammon.

"I made Sam put a few things in the basket, mother," said Ammon. "I wonder Mr. Woodbridge could remember what such people had to say about so trifling a matter."

Woodbridge flushed slightly. "Considering the very brief time that has elapsed, Ammon, I don't see how it can

appear very strange that I did not forget. Perhaps the words were impressed upon my mind more sensibly for observing how grateful these poor persons were for such unexpected condescension. Then, you know, Julian is one of the pupils in my school."

The flush gave way to a calm smile as, after looking steadily at Ammon for a moment, he resumed his knife and fork. Mr. Duke stared first at one then another of the party, and not another word was spoken during the rest of the meal. After it was over Woodbridge politely informed Mr. Duke of his intention, for some time previously entertained, of removing his quarters to Hallier's.

"All right, sir. Do as please, sir. Right away, if you say so."

"Perhaps, Mr. Duke, on some accounts that would be well. I will remove to-day."

Mr. Duke evidently felt this coolness of the young man a rebuke to his own sudden cholera. After a moment's pause he spoke with mildness, and there was a touch of sadness in the words with which he expressed his belief that Mr. Woodbridge had had no cause to complain of the treatment he had received while in his house.

"On the contrary, Mr. Duke," answered Woodbridge, cordially, "I regard the service I have received here worth far above the price I have paid. There are some reasons why I feel it would be best to go to the hotel, one of which, sufficient in itself, is that there I will be near my sister."

"Hope you won't mind what Am said."

"That is of less importance than what he did, Mr. Duke. However, so far as I am concerned, it is all over."

"Young men will be young men, you know."

Whether the inspiration came from her husband or not,



Lucius Woodbridge could not have said, but at dinner—the last meal he was to take there—Mrs. Duke was studiously reserved, and he therefore repressed much of what he would have said. As he rose from the table he thanked her, in such terms as a gentleman must employ, for her uniform kindness. Her silence and constrained smile indicated her pain and her resentment. She took the hand he extended with a faint grasp, and, immediately releasing it, turned away.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. RIDDLE AND BARNEY JARRELL MEET AT THE STORE OF PORTER & SANDERS.

ONE need not be told that Lewis Sanders began to ride into town much oftener than had been his wont. The fact of his horse having been frequently seen tied before Mrs. Toliver's gate began to be talked about in town and country. These visits, occurring mostly on Saturdays, operated at first some disappointment upon Mr. Baldwin Riddle, whose habit for many years had been to ride over to the store on those days, with occasional intermediate visits besides. It was not long before he declared that he should have to take some other days until Lewis could get over what he called the sickness of his friend.

"It's like the measles or the mumps," Mr. Riddle would say: "a fellow 's bound to have 'em some time, Lewis. Pity you couldn't 'a' took 'em when you was younger and liable to let 'em break out on you, or swell up your jaws, and be done with 'em. The older a fellow get when they strike him the worse they give him a siege. His meat 's harder, and his skin 's tougher; and sometimes 'ruptions and swellin's instid of strikin' out they'll strike in, and it

go hard, and sometimes it's danjous in the bargain. Yit, if a fellow 'll be keerful in the offstart ner neither be too skeerd ner too pushin', he may manage 'em wheneversomer ever they takes him. But I tell you, Lewis, a fellow got to be keerful."

Thus, half sportively, half seriously, he would talk with one whom he loved most warmly. He did not inquire at any time into the state of that friend's feelings; for, in his own fashion, his respect was as delicate as his friendship was constant. He was never known, at least upon his regular days, to leave the store without taking along with him some object of purchase. To have done otherwise would have seemed to him inconsistent with the fidelity of a friend.

One day, in the midst of the talk of the two friends, Barney Jarrell, coming down by Colonel Porter's mansion, advanced to the store. Lewis was called within by a customer at the moment of his arrival, but he was back and forth during the chat of Baldy and Barney.

"The bighth of this prevous fine mornin' to you, Mr. Jarrell," said Baldy. "Been up to the kernel's? I didn't see you in the peazer as me and Charles Henry 'amberlated by. That's him yonder, hitched to the rack," smiling, pleased at Barney's momentary glance around for the companion alluded to—"that's Charles Henry; and we in gener'ly travels together, onlest I'm a-travellin' a monstous short vyage, when I takes it afoot. Been to the kernel's?"

"No, Mr. Riddle, I've been over to Mr. Langston's. Fine old gentleman, is he not?"

"None finer, sir. The kernel 'll tell you the same. Uncle Mark glad to see you, wasn't he? He told me you been to see him before, and that he were gratified in his mind by it."

"I went to-day especially to assist my woman Aggy in finding the way there. Mrs. Toliver had her to make a suit of clothes for her brother, and she went to see what alterations, if any, must be made."

"Ah ha! She monstous fond o' Uncle Mark, and good to him to boot, Misses Toliver is. Prevous fine woman in the pints of fact. Your 'oman went back from thar, I supposen?"

"She will do so. Finding that the clothes needed some changes, she remained, in order to make them, and will return when she is through. Never having seen the country between here and there, I thought I'd travel over it. What an excellent body of land these two plantations—Mr. Duke's and Colonel Porter's!"

"Magnanimous, sir. I've been present in person, sir, at frekwent times when Uncle Mark Langston—and it's in gener'l supposed in this community that, if he ain't a man of his word, they ain't none nowhars ner nowhars else—I've heard him frekwent make the obserwation, that when he first come here, and the surweyors was a-surweyin' right thar on the hill, whar the kernel's house is a-standin' in its present location, they had to part the reeds before 'em as they went along; and as for the surweyor hisself, he had to cut ont his way 'mong the reeds with a hatchet. And Uncle Mark say it was called the Reedy Surwey, and which they ain't no sich prevous evidence o' good upland as reeds, and which everybody know that."

"These gentlemen," said Barney, "have been in possession of these lands for many years?"

"Yes. Kernel Porter's father settled this place as early as '85."

"And Mr. Duke?"

"Oh! Mr. Duke. He married into his'n—leastways what you see to-day."

"I've understood that his first wife was daughter to Mr. Langston. The old gentleman, it seems, was formerly wealthy."

"No, he never were wealthy, and, as to that, he were never a man that would wish to be. The prop'ty—that land you've walked over to-day—and two famblies of niggers was left by bachelor Albert Semmes to Uncle Mark's daughter."

"It seems to me that I've heard, Mr. Riddle, that her marriage with Mr. Duke was not with the consent of the father."

"Not even ast for it, sir. The Dukes too grand folks for that. You been here so long and not know that anybody o' the Duke name never asts for anything they can git 'ithout askin' any prevous questions about it? Old Am Duke, he were a riproariser fellow and a rambunctiouser fellow than even his son Kinsey, and *he's* hard to beat. The man that beat Kinsey Duke have to git up monstous soon of a mornin' like. He—old Am I'm a-talkin' about now—got the creek and the town both named arfter him, and he never ast nobody even for them. He jes named 'em both hisself, and nobody keerd enough about 'em to alter 'em."

"Yet this Mr. Duke—the present Mr. Duke, I mean—seems to be well respected in the community."

"Oh, yes, he stands on toler'ble high shoes."

"You knew this Miss Langston, did you, Mr. Riddle?"

"I did, sir; but that ain't nobody else's transactions but mine!"

"I beg pardon," said Barney. "I did not mean to be offensively inquisitive, but—"

"Oh, all right," answered Baldy, after a look from Lewis, who had rejoined them. "I sildom talks about that child, exceptin' it is to Lewis here, and not so powerful

mighty much to him, and not as much as I do with the kernel's little gal, Lizy. I sposed you might have saw her, as she seem to be ruther thick with your little girl."

"Yes, indeed—a child apparently of great promise. hear you are a violinist, Mr. Riddle."

"A what?"

"A violinist. Miss Woodbridge was at my house lately, and told Amanda and me that she was much entertained by your music."

"Oh, fiddle you mean. I 'member Miss Woodidge called her *wi'lin*, or some sich name. *We* down here calls 'em fiddles."

"I wish I could hear you some time, and Amanda is very anxious for that pleasure."

"Has you heard Miss Woodidge on the peaner?"

"Oh yes, indeed."

"Well, sir, thar's music enough for you or ary 'nother one man."

"She does, indeed, play wonderfully well. Yet Amanda and I desire to hear you, when we can do so conveniently to yourself. I wish you could pay us a visit some time. I could borrow a viol—fiddle, I should say—for you."

Baldy looked inquiringly into the face of Lewis and read the answer his friend would have him give to this polite request.

"Oh, well, well, Mr. Jarrell, maybe me and Charles Henry and Miss Nancy will fetch up some time at your house. I sildom or never plays, exceptin' of on top o' her. I understands her, and she understand me, and my rawsom suit her bow. Miss Woodidge have sent me word to fetch Miss Nancy to Missis Toliver's. She have got round the old lady, I sposed, in her bein' agin the fiddle. When I do go thar I'll fetch up, possible, at your house some time of a

evenin' like, and that for the sake of your little gal, and which Lizy say she is a' jes a' far pink o' perfection, and I has yit to live to see them that anywhar nigh her age have the jedgment o' that child."

When Barney had gone Baldy said,

"That's a prevous-lookin' and conversonal fellow for one that don't seem to have no particklar wocations nor transactions. 'Pears like he want to know about the Dukes. I don't keer about conversin' much about Kinch Duke—him nor his'n. I got nothin' to do along 'ith him, exceptin' to say to you that my opiunion have been for thirty year that Godamighty's arfter him. But that's his transactions, and not mine, and I ruther people would not ast me about 'em."

"But you'll go to see Mr. Jarrell some day, you and Miss Nancy? Uncle Mark and Mr. Woodbridge seem to think he is a very excellent young man."

"Oh, yes, we'll try and fetch up thar some time, of a evenin' like."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE VISIT OF AGGY TO MARK LANGSTON.

"JES like Nancy," said Mark Langston, when Barney and Aggy had arrived and announced the purpose of their visit. "She's always a-wanting to do something for her old brother; and, as to that, other people too. Sister Nancy is a woman, Mr. Jarrell, that natchelly loves to be giving to somebody, 'specially them she thinks in need of it. If I'd let her she'd be always a-giving or sending me something. It's jest her nature, and she can't help it. Yes, yes, she always remembers my birthday. I got so I forgits

it. I don't keep the days nohow like she do. It were mighty kind in you to fetch the suit o' clothes, and I'm a thousand times obleeged to your 'oman for the making of 'em."

He was well satisfied with the fit; but Aggy, seeing that a trifle of taking up here and taking off there would help to improve it, said, with his permission, she would remain and do the needful. In the midst of his protestations against the trouble this would entail she took from her work-basket scissors and began to rip, leaning the while against the door-sill of the workshop where they had found him.

"Oh," said Mark, "if you *will* do it, come into the peazer of the house and take a cheer."

After half an hour's tarry, Barney, saying that, having come mainly in order to show Aggy the way, he would take a stroll through the interlying country to the store on the public road, and that Aggy, when she was through with her work, might return alone, took his leave and went on. Mark, with the instinctive politeness that he regarded as due to women, of whatever condition, left his work, and, taking another chair, chatted with the negress while she worked. Intelligent, well-mannered, Aggy answered his questions as to her own history and that of her master's family with a discretion that well pleased him. She repaid his interest by modestly inquiring concerning himself and his. Her inquiries were so judiciously expressed that he was led to talk with considerable freedom. When he spoke of the daughter who had left him and died far away, observing the sympathy evinced by this poor slave, unwonted tears came into his eyes.

"It goes hard on parrents and children, my good woman, to be separated from one another, and it ain't right, if it can be helped, neither with white nor black. Thank the

Lord, it ain't common, at leastways with them I've known. There was one case among black people that I know'd of, and it were right hard. That's been a long time ago; and the child, so Mr. Duke said, didn't live long."

"Were her parrents living, marster?"

"Oh yes. Her mother living yet, and living close by you. Have you ever saw the old woman Vilet that belongs to Mr. Lines?"

"Yes, sir," said Aggy, laying down her work for a moment, then immediately resuming it.

"It were her daughter, a monstous smart little girl, not more'n eight or nine year old. She were a pet of my daughter, and she took her off with her. When Mr. Duke got back he brought the news that he had sold her arfter her mistress died, and she died not long arfter. If her mistress hadn't of died I don't suppose Mr. Duke would of sold her away from the family; but he were a specker-lator in them days, and I suppose he didn't feel like being bothered with having to carry about with him such a young one, and nobody to take particklar keer of her. There was some talk among the neighbors of its being mighty hard, and the child's mother took on as much as I ever see a white person. It seemed like she got some better when they told her little Betsy were dead. As for Mr. Duke, poor man, when he got back look like he felt so bad I couldn't but feel sorry for him."

Aggy listened attentively to the old man. He soon turned from the subject to other matters. When she was through and said she must return he rose, got from the cupboard cold biscuit and chicken, and, taking a stone pitcher, said he would go to the spring and fetch therefrom some milk. Declaring that she would not allow him to wait upon her to that extent, she took her victuals and went



along with him. Two vast white-oaks grew by the spring within a few feet of each other. Their trunks leaned apart. Their outer branches filled spaces of wondrous extent, while the inner intermingled with one another so thoroughly that in the impervious shade one could not have said to which the greater number belonged. Noticing the interest with which the woman regarded them, Mark said,

"Fine trees, ain't they? They're mighty old. I can't see but what they were as big as they are now when I moved here, a'most forty year ago."

When she had eaten her lunch she returned to the house, and, after mutual thanks on both sides, replaced her things in the basket and took her leave. Repairing again to the spring, on the return she lingered for a few moments, looking at the oaks. An hour afterward, as she was walking leisurely along, having just emerged from the road which led by the mill into the public road, she heard the sound of a horse's feet behind her, and was startled by the question, put in a loud, threatening tone,

"Hello, you, there! Whose nigger you?"

She turned, stopped, and saw Mr. Duke. With his usual abruptness to inferiors, especially of her race, he questioned her closely whither she had been and on what account. She answered timidly, and parried, with the instinct of her race, his questions concerning her master's family. Mr. Duke informed her that it was not a remarkably healthy occupation for negroes to be travelling about, especially near his mill.

"Sickly place for niggers, my mill is," he said, and rode on.

That night Barney had a long talk with Aggy.

"Marse Barney," she said, "I were not ezactly satisfied at first that it were the same place, though I were certain in my mind he were my old marster; but I weren't satis-

fied about the place until he and me went to the spring, and then it all come to me. Them big white-oaks that me and the children used to play under was jes the same. You hain't see such trees, Marse Barney, nowheres."

"All right, Aggy," said Barney, cheerfully. "It begins to look as though the old woman Vilet—"

"My marster!" said Aggy, bursting into tears, "she's my mother, as sure as God is in heaven!"

Barney sat down in the kitchen and thought and thought. At length he said,

"Aggy, I'm thankful you've found her, *if* you have found her. We'll have to be particular, or the discovery will do no good, but harm, to us both. You know, Aggy, that we'll have to get other testimony to prove anything, as the law will not admit yours."

"Lord bless your heart! marster, I know that, and I'm going to do whatever you say."

"Better not tell Amanda, even."

"All right, marster."

"And especially not Vilet, and, perhaps—at least not yet—Miss Doolana."

"I do jes what you say, Marse Barney. Oh, my marster! when I heard that man's voice! I see it plain as ef it were there painted on the wall. It come a-nigh skeerin' the life out o' me, and I liked to drop in my tracks. I know I jes as well be in my grave as for him to find me out."

Barney looked upon her as, in her humble gratitude at the discovery of her parent, she trembled with fright of the powerful man whose tenants they were. With a feeling of some remorse he reflected how strangely her wrongs had been paralleled in his own, and felt shame that those had been inflicted by one of his own race.

"Aggy," said he, "this is the hand of God! I recog-

nize it. I bow my head before Him. He was as wise as He was good in leading you first to what you desired to know. For you had suffered longest, and for least cause. Now, I know you wish to go to your poor aged mother and let her know who you are, and help her. If I live—God hears me—you shall have full access to her before long, as far as I can give it. As it is, I want you to go to her whenever you wish, and do whatever is practicable; only keep what you know to yourself a little while longer. When I go for mother I will leave you in charge of Mr. Woodbridge, who is a good man and is afraid of nobody. You will find a friend too, I hope, in Miss Doolana. She strikes me as being a very fine young woman.”

“Who, Marse Barney?—Miss Doolana? She’s the superest young woman I see here, accordin’ to my opinions—not even of exceptin’ o’ Miss Woodbridge.”

“You think so? Then I or Amanda may ask her to do me the favor of seeing to what you may need. Mr. Duke will not molest you in my absence, I suspect. I will see him on that point before I go, however. He’s not a good man, Aggy, although they put him at the head of the school-board. If he should undertake to harm you in anywise I want you to call at once on Mr. Woodbridge. One thing I do promise, Aggy: if he hurts you, I will hurt him as much. Do not be afraid of him; but be prudent, for your own sake and for that of us. I won’t make you wait long.”

“My marster, I can wait as long as you say. Miss Mandy’s matter’s worth more’n mine.”

“God!” said Barney, “how Thou canst bring shame to the strong by giving such strength to the weak!”

He entered the house, and, with Amanda, spent the rest of the evening as was their wont when study hours were over.

## CHAPTER XX.

## A SUNDAY EVENING LETTER.

“Dukesborough, Ga., June 5, 1827.

“MY DEAR AUNT,—My letters, I know, have been unsatisfactory, at least in some points. My sojourn here has not been long enough to enable me to judge how I am to like this *temporary* home, for I cannot yet *quite* contemplate a state of things that may induce me to ‘settle myself,’ as they say down here, except in dear old Vermont. Not that I don’t like things, people, and places better—much better—than I anticipated. As for Lucius, he is as good to me as a brother could be to a sister, and I am just delighted with the hold he has obtained upon the respect, the confidence, and, I may say, the affections, of the people, not only in this neighborhood, but throughout this whole section. As to my religion, I am not less free of molestation in its exercise from him than from the rest here, who, with one exception, are, like him, all Baptists. He has taken me once to a Catholic church about twenty miles north-east of this place, where I found in Father Sullivane an admirable priest. This, they tell me, is the oldest Catholic church in Georgia, and was founded by a family named Thompson, from Maryland. Their descendants, some still bearing that name, and some that of Creighton and Lockett, yet reside in the neighborhood of Locust Grove, as it is called; and we were delighted with them and the hospitality they dispensed. I expect to

go there again not long hence, and possibly in other company than brother's.

“And how do I like it now, you ask. Well, my dear aunt, if I had been born here I should have loved this region with *all* my heart. It is most lovely. Lucius did not exaggerate its beauty or its healthfulness. Of course a Vermonter would like to see bolder hills, *some* mountains, and at least one, if only a moderate-sized, lake. Yet there are undulations everywhere in this which they call the hill-country, among which flow streams of varying volume as limpid almost as Lake George. As for the forests—well, I can't write about them so as to lead you to conceive how aboundingly dense, odoriferous, and musical they are. There is an area of several counties, of which this is the most eastern, containing various large bodies of land of great productiveness. One of many thousands of acres this village is in the midst of, with oak, hickory, and I don't know what other kinds of growth, and just enough of pine (short-leaf they call it, to distinguish from the more resinous farther south) for building purposes and kindling-wood. I have been with Lucius and parties of young persons among these woods, not a fourth of which has been cut down (though their destruction is rapidly progressing), and, while amid them, the shades, the sounds, the smells—oh! aunty, didn't I *tell* you I couldn't describe them?

“These notably fertile lands attracted a number of settlers, among whom are some as pronounced in character as any you have at St. Alban's or elsewhere in Vermont. The leading citizens in this neighborhood, and, indeed, throughout Middle Georgia, are mainly Virginians. Some of them, Lucius says, were connected with the best society in the old State, and left it for the purpose of repairing in a fresher region the losses incurred in the wars of Independence

and 1812. The heads of those families who migrated here have most of them died, and their next generation, led by men of fifty and upward, are less educated and generally cultured than their predecessors. It is sometimes touching to observe the subdued pride with which they allude to the superiority of their fathers in the knowledge of books and the usages of refined society. These, it seems, deteriorated, necessarily, in frontier existence, wherein, even had there been sufficient schools, the youth, partly from having been so largely dispersed, but mainly from need of their help in subduing these towering forests, could not have attended them regularly. Yet with some of these is a gentility that I have seen surpassed nowhere. Cultivation of the marvellously rich lands, with economical living, has enriched many of the owners fast. Consciousness of their own relapse in intellectual culture stimulated a few families in this neighborhood, mainly the Quillians and Porters, to establish an academy in which their children might recover what themselves had lost. Of the young men of the State who have received liberal education not one, they say, has become a teacher, though many have made themselves eminent, especially as lawyers and politicians, among whom, Lucius says, there are those whose superiors are not in the whole Union. The country schools—*old field*, as they are called—have become sources from which are drawn the best anecdotes that are told among the cultured. Some of these, in point of fact of real occurrences, they say, are so funny that you would cry with laughter to hear them.

“I am *proud* to say, what Lucius did not tell us last summer, that his school ranks in reputation quite the highest in all this part of Georgia, which, perhaps with the exception of Liberty County, near the seaboard, is said to contain the best country society in the State. The Quillians

and Porters have had excellent connections—that is evident. Their forbears were originally Episcopalians; but that denomination has not extended jurisdiction thus far, there not being yet one of its bishops in the State, I am told. The first important religious movement made in this region was by one Mr. Mercer, a man, from all accounts, of very strong character, who, together with the Marshalls, have made Baptist the greater portion among this frontier people who constitute the most respectable class. Yet one not acquainted with the state of things would make quite a mistake to suppose that there was a considerable amount of intolerance or fanaticism. On the contrary, they are tolerant, charitable to the last degree; and *as* for hospitality—well, dear aunt, I have never known anything like it. They are not highly educated in books; but when one goes to their houses, hastily and clumsily constructed and scantily furnished though they often be, one is made to feel as if in a society as respectable as the best anywhere. Not very much, though more than might be expected, of plate is to be seen, but many a piece of china of exquisite workmanship, which the father or mother will quietly tell of having been in the family since the time of Governor Dinwiddie.

“It would do me good, dear aunt, to have you meet my own peculiar friend and my hostess, Mrs. Toliver, now in her second widowhood, the queerest and most delightful of old ladies. From the first, regarding me as a heathen, though a harmless one, she has been, notwithstanding, as good and as affectionate to me as if I were her own child. I never *talk* of my religious faith except with her; for, as you know, it was the understanding with Lucius and the trustees that I was neither to assert unnecessarily nor have to defend it. Mrs. Toliver made herself an exception to

this, and we laugh at each other on that line whenever we feel like it. She is a notable controversialist, and occasionally propounds arguments that I am quite confident never occurred to Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, or Beza, and that would have puzzled the Angelic Doctor, or Bellarmine, or St. Francis de Sales to answer. Yet, under an exterior rude, boisterous, sometimes apparently savage, she holds a great big heart, and it is brimful of charitableness and affection. The dear old lady has grown to be more fond of me than I deserve—first, from the necessity of her loving those near her, in the absence of husband and children, with her natural ardor; and then because she believes me to have been of some service to her in the care of her step-granddaughter, a little invalid who, next to her Baptist faith, and not far behind that, is the light of her life. The child, though her grandmother does not know it, is destined to an early death; and oh, aunty! the poor little innocent, though ten years old, has never been baptized!

“She, as indeed everybody here except the Dukes, is warmly attached to Lucius. The boys whom he has sent to the State University have maintained so good a rank that his reputation as a teacher has risen very high, and some of the trustees are apprehensive that he will be offered a professorship in the State University at the next Commencement. But Lucius, in my opinion, will be lost to them in another way—by resuming the practice of the law. He is already much interested in the affairs of a new-comer here, a man named Jarrell (though that is a secret). What these are, or their merits, I know nothing. He says it is a case that will probably make quite a sensation after a while. He has withdrawn from Mr. Duke’s house, and is at the tavern quite near me. He has never been at all congenial with Mr. Duke, who is a rude, rough man, though president



of the board of trustees. He is the wealthiest man in the county, and acts as if he considered that his lands and negroes ought to more than make up for his personal delinquencies in intelligence and breeding. Lucius in politics is in a very decided minority here; yet none but Mr. Duke seem to think it worth while to make any issue with him in that regard. I do not know precisely how it is, but, at all events, Lucius left his house lately sooner than I expected. He tells *me* that Mr. Duke, in his opinion, is a worse man than he had believed, and that he will expect his resentment for having left his house. He does not fear, however, for he says that he has in reserve forces far more numerous than he will need.

“Mrs. Duke is a fine woman, they say, of good family, yet of some needless aristocratic claims that such as the Quillians quietly smile at and ignore. Mr. Duke is coarse, disposed to be overbearing when he can be, with white people, and hard upon his negroes—the only case that I have heard of.

“We are in the midst of great preparations for the mid-summer examination and exhibition, by the latter of which terms they call the winding up at night of the two days' public exercises with plays, dialogues, and single speeches. An immense crowd is expected, for whose accommodation an arbor of green boughs is to be erected in the academy grove. We are both busy as bees, and you must take it as an added evidence of my love that I have devoted nearly all of this afternoon to writing to you.

“Bless your dear heart! Pray, as always, for your most loving niece,

REBECCA WOODBRIDGE.

“P.S.—The person who *may* take me next time to Locust Grove (our church) is a young man named Sanders, bright and *very* handsome. And let me tell you he wears

an *Agnus*; not that he is a Catholic, for he did not know even what the *Agnus* is. He resides at Colonel Porter's, where I have made two very agreeable visits. The colonel himself is a grand man. And oh, aunty! I met there such another character! a man of fifty, as odd as Mrs. Toliver, and as delightful. He is a fiddler, as he calls himself in mock derision, a sort of Chiron from the woods, but a man of gentleness of heart and high character. His music—well, that is, indeed, of its own kind. You could not be made to understand, without seeing him, what a unique person he is. But, I repeat, he is delightful.

“See, there! every possible place on these sheets covered with my chattings.”

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### MR. RIDDLE IN DUKESBOROUGH.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great respect Mr. Riddle entertained for Mrs. Toliver, both on her own account and as the sister of Mark Langston, he had not often visited her, and never in company with his violin. With what mildness she could employ she had sometimes urged him—since, as he was obliged to know, he was no longer a boy, at least in years—to give up his fondness for an amusement so worldly as fiddling, and try to assume a seriousness that, in the course of time, might lead to a healthier view of life in this vain world. Alluding to these beseechings, in conversation with Lewis Sanders, he one day said,

“I don't mind men folks a-preachin' at me, Lewis. For that seem to be the callin' o' some o' them that finds themselves fitten for no kind o' business, and they jest *has* to

take it out in that or doin' nothin'. But I can't stand women's a-cavortin' around me in a way which, to my opinion, that's beyond their sections, instid of makin' of shirts and breeches for their husbands and children, ef they've got 'em, and, ef not, for their niggers. I may be wrong; but sich as that don't seem to me—that is, not nigh as much as keepin' their mouths shet on the transactions of religion and church business in general—they don't seem to me to suit the perlapsities o' their sections."

Yet, having promised Miss Woodbridge to accept an invitation which he was assured had been extended with Mrs. Toliver's full concurrence, and a similar from Barney Jarrell, he concluded one Saturday to call upon both. Wrapping "Miss Nancy" and her bow in an indigo-dyed, home-made bag, he mounted his horse Charles Henry and rode without encountering impediment or accident into town.

A special seriousness was wont to evince itself in his countenance and gait whenever he came into a place that had lately "boomed" with such acknowledged rapidity in reputation if not populousness.

"My own brother's neighbor and very best friend!" exclaimed the old lady, in cordial greeting. "And to think, Miss Arbecca, that he ain't been to see me in over a year! Lay your fiddle there, on the peanar, agin the wall, as it mout fall off and git broke."

Such talk set him at ease. Yet when, after chatting half an hour, he was asked to play, he became (as he afterward confessed to Lewis) "awful nonplused." Even Miss Nancy, for some unaccountable reason, was unusually coy in permitting herself be put in tune. Whether it was the jolting on the horse in the warm June day ride, or the finding herself in the house of a strictly religious person, at all events, her pegs were loose and the bridge unwontedly

awry ; the bow was also less susceptible—so to speak—than usual of “rawsonic” influences ; and—well, the fact is that, had the musician been before an audience composed entirely of male and worldly persons, he would have used words. As it was, his feelings expressed themselves in grimaces and extraordinary perspiration.

Miss Woodbridge had provided herself with one of her very largest pocket-handkerchiefs, as if to match his huge bandana. As he stopped occasionally to mop his forehead she could not but remark that it was a warm morning, and then employ both handkerchief and fan for her own relief. Mrs. Toliver kept her eyes on Baldy while tuning his instrument with a look as of one contemplating the dying struggles of some innocent and not uninteresting animal (which, however, had brought its trouble on itself) with the compassion becoming to a person of humane feelings. When it was over it was evident that she partook to a mild degree of the relief enjoyed by the sufferer. Once, however, when matters seemed growing desperate, she rose, went to the back piazza, where Polly was lying on her couch, and, noticing that no harm had yet befallen, entreated her not to be scared, as there was no earthly danger, and then returned.

What Baldy would have done but for the stipulation with Miss Woodbridge to accompany him could only be imagined by regarding the spasmodic efforts of his bow even as it was. Her eyes upon him, she walked or ran, advanced or retreated, in submissive accord with his lead. Interesting as were the races all along, thrilling was the word for the home-stretches. Knowing from experience that it was a vain effort to compete for attainment of the goal, yet, for the honor of the piano and her sex, she thought she ought to strive at least to avoid being dis-

tanced; and when Baldy descended from the bridge the little finger of her right hand still lingered against the piano wall, panting and exhausted.

"Well!" said Mrs. Toliver, herself fatigued from eager watching the heats, "it seem like hoss and hoss, nip and tuck, betwixt you; but, Miss Arbecca, I think Baldy had a leetle the 'vantage of you in the eend."

"Oh," answered Rebecca, with candid resignation, "the musician does not live who can beat Mr. Riddle on his bridge note."

Finding her boarder so well entertained, and Polly neither frightened nor otherwise disturbed, but rather delighted, and remembering to have heard her brother say that it was not the fiddle, but rather the use to which it was sometimes put, that religious persons had occasion to complain of, Mrs. Toliver became so cordial that Baldy was soon at his ease. Having gone through the rest of his *répertoire*, Miss Woodbridge suggested as a *finale* "The Walls o' Jericho," which, in addition to its other excellences, might be deemed, if not a strictly religious piece, as at least intended to illustrate a highly interesting portion of Scripture history. Feeling the uselessness of attempting an accompaniment, she rose from the piano and took a chair in a corner of the room. Already Mrs. Toliver, who at first sat adjacent to the musicians, had gradually backed until she was near the door leading into the rear piazza, concluding, no doubt, that she could hear at that distance with sufficient distinctness and probably greater accuracy. As the piece proceeded, musical and recitative, Miss Woodbridge could not but mark its effect upon the aged auditress. The only interruption to the latter's absorbed attention was an occasional quick glance behind, as if to be assured of her proximity to the door, in the event of a hasty flight, and, possi-

bly, revolving in her mind if she might not from a position outside be able to witness the great assault, yet save harmless both herself and Polly from burial beneath those walls which she foresaw might possibly be levelled with the ground. But she retained her seat, frowned, screwed her face from time to time; and when the announcement of the "walls a-falling!" was made, and Mr. Riddle, bending far over, descended upon the lower strings as if he would saw his instrument in twain, she shuddered, dropped her arms, which had been resting in her lap, and seized with both hands the rounds of her chair. When all was over she turned to Miss Woodbridge—whose eyes and handkerchief were wet with tears—and said,

"No wonder it make you cry. It's the awfullest thing *I* ever heerd."

Apparently gratified that no one dear to herself had been hurt in the fearful siege, Rebecca rose, and, laughing heartily, ran to Mrs. Toliver and seized her hands.

"I *knew* you would be charmed, especially with that piece."

The old lady looked up at Rebecca, gave a glance to where Polly was lying, to the ceiling above, and around generally, then answered,

"Yes, for one time; but I ain't shore I could stand it another time. Them horns—I didn't have no consate how awful they was. No wonder they couldn't be stood."

When Baldy had gone her first remark was,

"Wonder what old Sister Catlin 'll think o' sich earrin's on in a Babtis' house? For she were 'bleeged to hear 'em, as everybody else, at both eends o' the town. Well, I'll have to tell her that it were Miss Arbecca Woodige's beau."

"Exactly so, my dear friend; and you might add that he played Scriptural as well as carnal tunes."

"I s'posen so; but law, Miss Arbecca, notwithstanding standin' and neverotheless, they sounded to me — well — devilish is the word, to come down flatfooted."

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Toliver! how you misunderstand them!"

"Maybe I do, and then agin maybe I don't. But you wanted to have him and his fiddle here, and Sister Quillian said they wasn't no harm in it, and so — But, 'pon my word, I was sort o' feared that fiddle 'd fling poor little Polly into fits. Them 'Walls' didn't come fur from doin' it to me, seem like. But Polly say she liked it all powerful, and that she feel a heap better, poor little thing."

"I knew it would not hurt the dear child. If I had not, I would not have thought of inviting him here."

"Oh yes, I know that. And you know anyhow better 'n me what to do for her."

"Not at all, my friend. But each in her own way can help her."

"Jesso, I sposen. Yit you're so much more tenderer with her than what I am. I tries to be tender, Miss Arbecca, but it jes natchelly ain't in some people to be that like t' others. It come, sich as that do, natchel to you and Sister Quillian, and a right smart, in fact, with old Sister Catlin. Well, well — Baldy's took his fiddle along with him to Mr. Jarrell's. I shouldn't think he could go through with all that agin this hot day. And, my conscience! but don't it make him sweat! I were jes natchelly sorry for him, he sweat so. But now, Miss Arbecca, you don't supposen — does you or does you not? — that them were the kind o' fuss them priests made with them horns?"

"Oh, of course, Mrs. Toliver, this was intended as a mere imaginary representation."

"Jes a appearin' like, as it were?"

“Just so.”

“Well, as sich it mout not be so very fur wrong. I never has heerd a ram’s horn blowed—that is, not as I know of, to the best of my ricollection. But ef they can cavort like Baldy Riddle’s fiddle—why, that’s a rhyme, if you take it in time!—I ain’t astonished but what a good many of ’em a jumblin’ all together at a time, and that, in course, with the good Lord to help, could a’ fotch down a’most anything they mout be blowed at. Yes, I’m glad I heerd ’em one time. But, Miss Arbecca, I feel like that one time ’ll satisfy me. And, as for me, I never ’spected to live to see the fiddle a-jindin’—or, at leastways, a-makin’ out like it had a idee of jindin’—o’ the Church.”

She laughed heartily at this view of the subject, then rose and went to look after the business of the household.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### MR. RIDDLE AT BARNEY JARRELL’S.

WHEN Mr. Riddle’s musical performances at Barney Jarrell’s were over—which, not being comparable with his *matinée*, I need not describe—he and his host had something of a chat.

“I have become quite interested in Mr. Langston, Mr. Riddle,” said Barney.

“Shouldn’t wonder if you did, sir,” said Baldy, as if it would be a joke to imagine that any one who once knew Mark Langston could be otherwise.

“A lonely life the old gentleman leads. Pity it is that his daughter, as they say here, left no child.”

“Oh no; but she died in a few months, Mr. Jarrell.”

“Was it ever known here precisely where, Mr. Riddle?”



On Baldy's face instantly came an expression of pain.

"No, sir!" he answered, almost fiercely; "Kinch Duke— But, Mr. Jarrell, I don't want to begin on him and the way he treated Uncle Mark in his warous transactions." His thin lips trembled as he said these words. Barney at once changed the subject, and asked Baldy if he had ever known any family by the name of Jones.

"Joneses!" answered Baldy, with somewhat of the look of one who feels indignant at being suspected ignorant of an axiomatic proposition or a universally admitted fact—"Joneses, sir? Why, sir, people o' the name o' Jones is strung along all over this country—and every tother one, I expect—from Dan to Basherby. There's warous kinds of 'em, from blacksmiths up to doctors, lawyers, and preachers. What kind o' Joneses was them your prevous desires is to 'quire about and know about?"

"A young man of that name once came to Virginia, from South Carolina, as he stated, married a very excellent woman, and, after remaining with her for a short time, suddenly left her and never returned. The family with whom he had intermarried some weeks after his departure noticed in a North Carolina newspaper an announcement of the death of a man of that name, William P. Jones, as of the town in South Carolina (Winnsborough), where he claimed to have resided theretofore. But all inquiries about him at Winnsborough and elsewhere failed of satisfactory or other intelligence."

"Didn't the feller leave no sort o' papers behind him?"

"None that were ever found."

"About what prevous time were that?"

"Oh, many years—twenty-five or thirty, I suppose."

"Well, my gracious alive, man! what's the use o' 'quirin' about sich a Jones as that this time o' day?"

“A very apt question, Mr. Riddle. Within the last year or two, however, a suspicion of foul play of some sort has arisen in this family as to how this Mr. Jones was disposed of. No man of that description was remembered by any person to whom inquiries were put at Winnsborough, and the publisher of the North Carolina paper announcing his death could give no farther account than that a man, stranger to him, called at his office, apparently in much distress, handed him the advertisement, paid for its insertion, and immediately left. He had supposed that the advertisement was of an undisputed fact, and so did not hesitate to admit it. Concluding that he must have been an impostor, his family ceased farther pursuit; but within a year or so past they have, as I learn, had some cause at least to apprehend that he was foully dealt with.”

“Did the feller car’ off with him any o’ his wife’s prop’ty?”

“Nothing considerable—a few hundreds of dollars, with which, as he said, to purchase—some object or other.”

“Thar were a prevous passel o’ rascality away back in them days, Mr. Jarrell, and, as to that, there’s a-plenty of it yit. I got no doubt thar’s many a rascal o’ the name o’ Jones; but which one it were that went off with that ’oman’s prop’ty I, in course, knows none o’ his transactions.”

“Oh, sir, it was never certain that he was an impostor. If he were, it was surprising that he did not consummate a much greater cheat, for which he had abundant opportunity.”

“Maybe not, Mr. Jarrell; but it look like it to me. When a feller come about a-calling of hisself Jones, and a-saying he were from a particular place, and he git married to a respectable ’oman that have prop’ty, and, arfter staying awhile, put out, a-takin’ along with him some o’ that

prop'ty—little or much, much or little—and don't never come back—him ner the said prop'ty—and nobody can't find no sort o' papers, ner no trunk, nor not even no saddle-bags, and nobody a-knowin' nothin' about him where he said he come from, dead ner alive, I can't speak for t'other people, Mr. Jarrell, but, as for me, *I* should a' smelt rascality in the very a'r. Didu't they find no Joneses about that place in South Carolina?"

"Oh yes, but none answering the description."

"Umph—humph! I thought strange none o' the name was thar, o' some conditions or wocations. Did you ever talk with Jes Lines about that Jones?"

"No, sir. I thought I might do so some time. The old gentleman, however, tells me that his memory has become much impaired of late."

"Become—what was your remarks, Mr. Jarrell?"

"Impaired—weakened by age and afflictions."

Baldy laughed aloud. "*He* a-weakenin' in his ricollections! If your Jones you talkin' about ever owed him anything, and didn't pay it, he ain't forgot him. Jes Lines's ricollections ain't weakenin' about anything it don't suit him to forgit, or if it suit Kinch Duke for him not to forgit it. He's always been a powerful ricollector, Jes Lines have, for hisself and Kinch Duke."

"But, Mr. Riddle, he does seem indeed to be very weak, both in body and spirit."

"His body? They ain't nothin' the marter with his body, exceptin' of its a-beginnin' to be a pretty toler'ble old kyarcass. It's his legs—or, leastways, one of 'em—that's afflicted. His body 's all right enough. It's his legs. One of 'em was kicked by a horse—well, twenty year ago, I reckon it's been—and which that stopped his fast travellin'. And if you want to know how he got his kick, I'll tell you.

He were tryin', in spite o' the dish face o' the horse he were a-tradin', to make believe that he were gentle as a dog, when the horse—look like jest to prove the lie on him—up'd with his hind-foot, he did, and sqnashed his shin. But he never minded that, at leastways in the keepin' or makin' o' money a-tradin' and speckerlatin' transactions o' one kind and another. He have made—Jes Lines have—more money out o' that sore leg than any other piece o' prop'ty he possessions. People used to 'spise him for his little nigh cuts; when he got laid up they got to pityin' him, and they let him cheat 'em more morackerlous than he done before. That leg o' his'n Jes Lines think more of than anything else, exceptin' of Miss Doolana."

"She seems to be a very fine young woman."

"None finer, sir. Miss Doolana Lines is a young 'oman I call superfine, and by that I mean prevous fine. Took arfter her mother, sir."

"I wonder she never married."

"Didn't want to, sir, I suposen. Been courted, sir, to my knowledge (not me, I don't mean), and more'n once, and some by what mout of been called good chances. Kicked 'em sky-high. She always said she couldn't preford to change her conditions with the family so 'flicted like. Her ma's always been weakly; and as for old Vilet, she's give out long ago, and would of been dead many a year but for her young mistess takin' sich keer of her. Miss Doolana knowed no man that keered anything for hissself could stand it to live in the same house 'long with Jes Lines, and none of 'em at home could stand it for her to leave 'em. So thar it is, you see."

"Vilet—that's the old woman Miss Doolana tells us about?"

"Nary doubt of her bein' of the same, sir. Got her

and her family many a year ago, her father did, from the Dukes."

"Her whole family, Mr. Riddle?"

"All, exceptin' of a little gal, six or seven year old, or sich a matter, that Mr. Duke took along with him when he runned off to git married. They say she died in Virginy, whar her mistess died. Anyhow, Mr. Duke never brung her back. *I*—ef you keer to have my opinion about it—I were never satisfied, not in *my* mind, I mean, that that little nigger did die. For arfter her mistess died she were 'bleeged to be a inconwvenience to him; and as for a-partin' her from her mother, Kinch Duke 'd thought no more o' that than of partin' a pig or a young calf from their mammy. They sued him for the damage; but who brung the case? George Staples, who were a lawyer that jest natchelly b'longed to old Am Duke, Kinch's father, and he said he settled it by Mr. Duke a-payin' half o' the damages, his fee, and cost of suit. Thar war a good deal o' talk among the neighbors about the hardness on the little gal's parrents, 'specially her mammy, and *I* always weren't clear in my mind but what they knocked up the case—old Am and Staples—special to make people keep their mouths shet. But that's *me*, Mr. Jarrell, nobody else; and if I'm right, Godamighty ain't a-goin' to let it drap for good."

"I have heard it said that—indeed, Mr. Duke told me so himself—that he had often wished to assist the old gentleman, and that the latter had declined his offers, except to remain in the house which, he says, yet belongs to him. The old man himself," added Barney, in some haste, "spoke of Mr. Duke to me in terms as if he pitied him, upon his return from Virginia after his wife's death, because he seemed in such sore distress."

"Mr. Jarrell," said Baldy, smiling, or rather grinning, with

the disgust he felt, "as I told you, I don't like to talk about the transactions of Mr. Kinsey Duke in gener'l, and 'special o' them with Uncle Mark. Not that I'm in special afeard o' Mr. Duke, because my opinion is he always know what I think of him. But a man never makes nothin', and, strickly speakin', it ain't never adzactly right, to be *talkin'* about a man 'ithout a feller can prove what he's a-insinooat-in' agin him. I've often wished that Uncle Mark had of let me go to Firginny and see if I couldn't strike the trail o' Kinch Duke, and foller him up from the time he married his daughter ontell—"

Here Baldy rose, drew out his handkerchief, blew his nose with a sonorous blast, sat down again, and resumed:

"Uncle Mark wouldn't hear to it, and he took Kinch Duke's words for everything. It weren't none o' my business, and I let 'em propound theirselves as they wanted to. Uncle Mark, he were for movin' from the house. But I had—Mr. Jarrell, with my own ears, and *not* nobody else's—I had heerd, over and over, I had—I heerd old Ab Semmes say that that house were Uncle Mark's enduring of his lifetime, and so did others of the neighbors hear him say so; and me and them heerd him say so on his death-bed; and now which you know, Mr. Jarrell, from expounce that a man, and 'special a man that ain't been no professor of religion, but have bet on horse-races and chicken-fightin'—sich a man as that he ain't apt—not, I mean, when he see Death a-comin' right straight at him with a sharp stick—he ain't apt to be studyin' about a-inwentin' o' lies, and 'special on sich people as Uncle Mark Langston. Indeed, I tell you, sir, that people used to say that one reason made him make his will, a-leavin' o' so much prop'ty to Uncle Mark's family, and a-prowidin' for Uncle Mark hisself, were because he wanted the benefit—you mind me,

Mr. Jarrell—when he died and got to knockin' out in the cold agin the gates o' Heaven; and they were a-doubtin' about the lettin' of him in arfter his Gallio-like case—a-bettin' on horse-racin' and chicken-fightin', and the actil raisin' o' race-colts and fightin'-chickens, and playin' keards, and sech—for he were a perfec' old gall-buster on keards; and as for seb'n-up, blamed ef it didn't 'pear like the Jack was afeard to go 'long with anybody else when *he* were settin' at the table, or at leastways he were his favorite, *and*—well, there weren't nothin' big to say in the funil sermon about him, a-bein' of jes sich a man as he were, and *a-never* goin' to meetin', not even of a Sunday, exceptin' to set out o' doors at the meetin'-house and talk and talk, for he were the conversenest man we had among us. And as for the helpin' o' poor people, well, sir, I tell you now, Mr. Jarrell, that even the kernel—Kernel Porter I'm now a-talkin' about—*he*—and he'll tell you so hisself—never beat old Ab Semmes at that; and which old Ab used to say that reason why he never went to meetin' were because the preachers had so much everlastin' talk about horse-racin', and chicken-fightin', and playin' keards ('special seb'n-up), and never much as scacely opened their mouths about bein' ontrue to their wives, workin' their niggers and mules to death, and helpin' of poor people in their sickness and 'fictions; and which some people said that the reason *he* talked so were because he come of a people that was Cath'lics, and which they keerd nothing about grace, nor the erlatin' of a good expunce; and if a feller, when onst he had grace, could fall from it or hang on to it like Death to a dead nigger, so to speak, as the sayin' is, and he were a kind o' heathen, like them that worshes up of idles, and plays thunder, and turns up Jack in gener'l, but which, to my opinion—I'm a-speakin' for myself *and* Uncle Mark, because I've freckwent

heard him say the same, and that old Ab Semmes were one o' the best men—I'm a-talkin' now, Mr. Jarrell, o' men *outside* o' the Church—he were one o' the best men that ever lived *er* died, and—well, blame my buttons! ef I hain't forgot whar I war in the tellin' o' his transactions—but which the old feller, when he got to be sorter out o' his head, he ast Uncle Mark to pray for him when he were dead, and which Uncle Mark knew it weren't worth his while to be prayin' for a tree arfter it were cut down, but which, my opinion is, Uncle Mark have been a-'memberin' of old Ab in his pra'rs ever sence, some way or 'nother, though *he*—that is, Uncle Mark I'm a-talkin' about now—ain't a man that in gener'l runs about and tells people what he's a-prayin' about, ner who fur, but which—”

Here Baldy paused and looked around, as if conscions that he ought at least to afford Barney time to gather up his thoughts. He then proceeded :

“ Well, as I were a-sayin', Uncle Mark knowed that there were his house endurin' o' his lifetime, and the Dukes didn't have the face to try to turn him out o' that. And thar, Mr. Jarrell, is the grandest man, and the prevousest man, not even a-exceptin' o' Kernel Porter hisself, and which he'll tell you the same, he's the grandest man that ever hopped over a bush—not, you understand, that I mean to say that Uncle Mark, as I ever knowed of, ever went about and made a practice o' goin' about of hoppin' over bushes jes for the fun o' the thing; and I'm now a-speakin' in a—ah, sentimental and transactionous pint o' view; but yit he's a man that wants nothin' and 'll *have* nothin' from nobody 'ithout it come 'cordin' to the scale. He git his timber from the kernel's land, but the kernel have to let him do some o' the patchin' o' his wagon-wheels, and his keart-wheels, and plough-stocks, or else he know Uncle



Mark 'd git dissatisfied. *Ef*, Mr. Jarrell—*ef* Mr. Duke had of come at Uncle Mark right, and a-showed Uncle Mark plain up and down he wanted to help him, Uncle Mark 'd a-never stood back—that is, I means, from a modert help. But Uncle Mark have cut his eye-teeth before Kinch Duke were born, and he knowed what's what and who's who. He knowed Mr. Duke and his old father jes natchel wanted the prop'ty, and he wanted no bother or no particklar bother along with 'em, and he let 'em have it; and when he told you he were sorry for Kinch Duke he told the truth, for Kinch Duke have more 'casion for Uncle Mark bein' of sorry for him than Uncle Mark have for Kinch Duke of bein' of sorry for him, only it don't look right for people to set themselves up for doin' what they don't and of bein' what they ain't, and anybody welcome for tellin' Kinch Duke I said so. As for your man Jones," continued Barney, rising to depart, "people o' that name is scattered along, like I told you, everywhars, from Dan to Basherby, and I hain't no doubt thar's ben a many a white-livered scoundel among 'em, jes like they is among other people. For it take a heap a kind o' people to make up a world, Mr. Jarrell. I found out that long ago."

Having time for a five-mile ride and a chat with Lewis Sanders, Baldy, after leaving the Jarrells, instead of going directly home, rode to the store and alighted.

"How did you get through, Baldy?" inquired Lewis.

"Magnificent. The old lady Toliver skeered me a little at first, but I think me and Miss Nancy got the best of her at last. You ought to saw her, Lewis, when I come down on them 'Walls o' Jericho;' for, a-knowin' of her predigices, I were determ'ed to show her that the fiddle were as much agin sich bad places as rams' horns was. The old lady backed, she did, agin the door, and one time I didn't

know but what she were goin' to 'treat to the back-yard. She 'lowed 'twas awful, them walls a-fallin' in that kind o' style, and it wouldn't be her desires, she said, to go through sich a skene not nary 'nother time. You see, Lewis, it's mighty few people—and 'specially old people—that can stand the—ah—heartrendin' pint of view, I may say—that me and Miss Nancy take o' them walls, nohow, and them a-fallin' to the fuss and rumpus o' rams' horns. She ast me to come agin, and play along with Miss Woodige, and she say she like that the best when we was a-jindin' together and a-seein' who could git through first. She's evident a-melting down about the fiddle since Miss Woodige come, and 'special because Miss Woodige is so good to Polly. 'The poor little thing wanted to see me and Miss Nancy; and, Lewis, it mighty nigh made me cry to see that child a-pickin' at the strings, and a-sayin' she were a heap better. But she—that's Miss Woodige—told me at the gate that Polly were monstous weak and a-gettin' of weaker; and she ast me if I had saw you lately."

"You miserable fellow! Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Because I hadn't got to that part o' my tale. She never ast me till I got to the gate, and even then she didn't 'pear like she keerd whether I'd saw you or not; but yit, a-knowin' we was sort o' acquaintances, she jes ast in a general way, like she'd a' ast about the weather—and which that were hot as blazes, and I don't 'member as I ever sweat as much, though 'pear like she were cool as a cowcumber."

"She didn't say anything about my taking her to Locust Grove?"

"No. What! You goin' thar with her?"

"Yes; I am to take her there next Saturday in the colonel's gig."

"Then farwell, world!"

"What do you mean? and what are you laughing at?"

"Struck, by Juberter! struck! I thought I see it previous; but it hadn't broke out farly on you. Well, I don't blame you, Lewis. She's a star-gazer. All I got to say to you is to mind your hind sights, and don't pull your trigger too soon, and till you've got 'em on a line with your fore 'uns, and can see cler how to draw your bead."

"That talk is beyond me, Baldy."

"Never mind. You'll ketch up with it, and is now a-gainin' on it rapid. Well, Lewis, sich as that 'pends most on luck. If you can't dodge it—and my opinion is it's too late for you to try to dodge it now—try to have good-luck at the offstart. Ef you can *start* with good-luck the chances is with you. I went to Jarrell's. What a conversanal feller he is, to be sure! Before I knowed what I were about I got to talkin' about Kinch Duke. Look like the feller want to know somethin' about him. I ruther fight Kinch Duke any day than have to talk about him. But Jarrell was a-sayin' of how sorry Kinch said he were because Uncle Mark wouldn't let him help him, and I had to let out on him, a desateful son of a gun! And I some ruther not hear his name mentioned, and 'specially 'long with Uncle Mark's. It's too late for him to be a-pretendin' that he want or ever did want to help him. Well, well, old boy"—rising to go—"I wish you mighty well. It'll sip'rate us if you make the trip. But that's all right." Then his eyes grew moist.

"Don't say that, Baldy," began Lewis. "You know me well enough—"

"Oh, the dickence! It's all right. You mind what I tell you, and try to have good-luck at the offstart."

He immediately went for his horse and rode away.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

WOODBIDGE AND BARNEY JARRELL AT THE FORMER'S  
NEW ROOMS.

THE external attitude of the Dukes toward Lucius Woodbridge had not materially changed since his removal to Hallier's. Yet he knew them too well to doubt of their resentment. But he was securely established in the good opinions of the citizens generally, and being, withal, a man of courage and integrity, he was without fear of harmful results from conduct that had been induced by considerations of what he owed to Mr. Duke as well as Barney and himself.

Kinsey Duke, indeed, did resent in his heart what such a man as he regards as an injury. It was his candid belief that Lucius Woodbridge was mainly indebted to him for his prosperity. Did not the town itself owe its foundation and its name to his family? Had he not donated the land for the academy, and contributed far above all others to its erection? Was he not and had he not always been president of the board of trustees by whom Woodbridge had been brought there? Had not the latter lived in his house during all these years, getting the benefit of his protection, influence, and counsels, paying the while only a nominal stipend for board? Such a man as Kinsey Duke feels that he need not seek far for additional reasons to entertain the deepest resentment against ingratitude.

He had yet another cause for hostility. The intimacy

between Woodbridge and Jarrell, though its extent was unknown to him and indeed to all others, had begun to disturb him somewhat; not that he was apprehensive of what either might attempt. A courageous man was Kinsey Duke, with much of artfulness and caution beneath a bluff exterior. Barney Jarrell somehow was an enemy to his peace, especially now that Barney had become interested in Mark Langston, and he resented the growing friendship of these two young men for each other. Brave as he was, yet was he a man who, if he saw the superior importance of secret over open warfare, never hesitated to employ it. Other thoughts had come into his mind lately touching Jesse Lines, and his and Jesse's common interests. Mr. Duke, never a cheerful man, was beginning to feel that he was growing to be a very unhappy one. But the sense of the necessity of combating enemies of every kind in all ways that were possible served to support a spirit that, if it should contemplate the possibility of yielding, would have become abjectly miserable. The very need he felt of holding Jesse Lines to his interests, and the conciliation indispensable thereto, whetted the spur of his hostility to all enemies, real or imaginary. He brooded in silence. Knowing the affection between Woodbridge and his sister, believing that but for her coming he might have retained an influence much of which now seemed lost, he resolved to begin with her, and get the town rid of her as soon as possible, and he believed that her removal would open the way naturally and easily to that of her brother.

Cosy times the young men began to have at Hallier's. At this hotel, famous for its good cheer, Barney, small as were his means, often dropped in to supper, after which the two would repair to the chamber of the school-master and chat behind their cigars. Barney—a true Virginian—loved

the weed, was a judge of it, and would have the best. The Vermonter was a new hand at this business, but he was coming on satisfactorily.

"He will hurt you if he can," said Barney. "I have not a doubt of that."

"I suppose so. But that is neither here nor there. You get no more intelligence for your case?"

"No, except that Mr. Riddle, who paid me a visit on Saturday, suspects fraud in the case of damages against Mr. Duke. If he knew anything he would be glad to tell it, for his repugnance to Mr. Duke is as intense as his affection for Mr. Langston."

"You let him know nothing of your affairs, eh?"

"Not at all."

"That is right. He is too impulsive to be trusted with a secret. A most excellent man, and the bravest of the brave, they tell me, but it will not do to attempt counselling with him. Mr. Lines is the man for you to conciliate, Mr. Jarrell."

Barney took from his mouth his cigar and laid it on the table, carefully placing the fire end beyond the edge, but made no answer. The other continued :

"As I have often said to you, that man knows more of the history of Mr. Duke than any one else. I am satisfied of that, from the fact that Mr. Duke is the only man that visits him frequently, and as if he felt bound to do so. And then I suspect it from his, to me, evident avoidance of talking about Mr. Duke with the same freedom which he employs when others' names are mentioned in his presence. There is a man for you to cultivate, as sure as we sit here together."

"Mr. Woodbridge," said Barney, resuming his cigar, and puffing at deliberate intervals, "that may be so. I have sometimes suspected that Mr. Lines knows of matters which

Mr. Duke might not like to be divulged. Yet I do not see how I can ever attempt to press Mr. Lines in my case. We are close neighbors, you know, and I have been visiting at his house upon terms of neighborhood before I entertained such a thought. Then his daughter has taken a most generous interest in Amanda. If Mr. Lines knows anything of Mr. Duke's affairs that would concern me he must have known it for a long time, and his motives for withholding it from the public so long may have come from regard to his own interests as well as those of Mr. Duke. His knowledge, if it exists, must be of a kind that, if at all, ought to have been divulged long ago."

Lucius Woodbridge now laid down his cigar, clasped his hands, and looked upon the floor in the manner of a man who, if he had anything special to say, was debating whether he would not postpone it.

Barney, after a pause, continued:

"Whatever Mr. Duke has done in the matters that I am anxious to see unravelled—that *Mr. Lines knows of*, that is—I suspect the latter to have been party to. Now, the state of my feelings toward his daughter is this: after the unrestrained and peculiarly kind visitations between her and my family, I cannot see how I am to get my consent even to try to obtain from her father information that, if generally known, might be hurtful to himself—at least, to make such effort without avowal of my purpose."

"I see—I see."

"The case, Mr. Woodbridge, is, to my mind, like that of yours was whilst you were an inmate of Mr. Duke's house."

"It seems so, indeed, Jarrell," said Woodbridge, cordially. "Give me your hand. I admire the delicacy that prompts your conduct. We shall have to 'hasten slowly,' and let

results develop themselves. I don't know how you are about such things, but I am one who believes

‘There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will,’

and that in your case the ends shaped are tending toward consummation.”

When Barney had gone Woodbridge reflected long. Other confidences were between him and Barney. But an able lawyer and prudent counsellor does not always communicate to his client all the thoughts touching his case that arise in his mind. As he rose to undress for bed he clasped the fingers of his right hand together, and, bringing his fist down upon the table, exclaimed,

“Impossible! The woman was right!”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### TALKS BETWEEN BROTHER AND SISTER ON A DELICATE SUBJECT.

LUCIUS WOODBRIDGE and his sister had always been affectionately fond of each other, he anxiously so, because of his apprehension that her religious tenets might hinder so favorable a marriage as she deserved from her most excellent worth otherwise. While he participated in the general esteem in which Lewis Sanders was held, whom he had grown to know rather well, yet of late he had felt some anxiety on account of the recent pronounced attentions bestowed by that young man upon Rebecca, and the pleasure they seemed to impart. The possibilities he felt in himself, now that after several years of residence in the State he had laid up a considerable sum, and become ac-



quainted with fitting fields for energetic endeavor, led him to know that, in spite of her faith, she could be introduced after a while to a much larger acquaintance with the leading social circles, in one of which he hoped she might make the connection he so affectionately and anxiously desired. On this subject, however, he had not spoken to her except in general and jocose terms. But when he grew to suspect that she was not entirely indifferent to Lewis he thought he ought to impart to her the hopes he had been indulging on her behalf. They often walked together into the woods that lay around the village, especially those particularly dense and lovely that extended for miles, with occasional cleared fields among, on the northern side of the road leading westward, belonging, with thousands of acres of others similar, to Mr. Duke. Both, especially the sister, delighted in these woods, whose sweet influences could be felt even before entering their shades. The varying times of blossoming among trees and shrubs of many kinds kept them sweet to look into and to smell from St. Valentine's till past midsummer. Among the greater growth the generous soil reared lesser innumerable—wild plum, haw, crab-apple, dogwood, red-bud, black-gum, sweet-gum, walnut, maple, honeysuckle, bubby-blossom. With the perfume of these and the great hickories, cucumbers, and poplars these woods would be so surcharged that the lightest zephyr on spring and summer nights would waft a portion even into the smallest bed-chamber in the village. Low on the ground grew the humble things that kept to themselves their little treasures, and waited to be sought for by their own especial lovers. There was the heart-leaf, that lay flat among the leaves, its delicate, livid urns (called sweet-bottles by country folk) more exquisite in shape than most exquisite of Grecian work, extending their

dainty mouths just above the ground to drink the air needed for the dark purple leaves that, when bruised (but only then), diffused an odor like that which comes from balmy unguents for the wounded. There were the angelica, and the sweet calamus, on the verge of the brooklet, whose thick-jointed roots, when meeting the air, sent out their pungent sweetness far and wide beyond the spot of exhumation from their moist beds. There was the horse-mint, with its bright crimson flowers. There bases of vast oaks and antique bowlders of granite and felspar shone in various sheen, clothed with lichens from palest green to brightest red. Hereamong the brother and sister often strolled and communed of the things that such love as they had for each other and such memories as were common to both suggested.

In one of these excursions this afternoon they had seated themselves beneath a willow-oak, on the bank of a small stream that meandered leisurely through the gently undulating ground on its way to the creek. They had been talking of the fairness of that region in fertility, landscape, climate, and a population rapidly advancing in numbers and culture. Then the brother said,

“I think we shall make our home in this State, Rebecca. My mind hesitates between this county and the one above it, or one among those farther west.”

“I,” said the sister, “think I should be satisfied with this, if I were to conclude to make any part of Georgia my home.”

“But you have seen only this, my sister. We should examine all before making our choice. I have made some five or six thousand dollars. That is quite enough to begin with in the practice of the law. To *you* I say that there I expect to succeed. As a member of the legal profession

I can introduce you to a much more extended circle of cultivated acquaintance than you have here."

She carried in her hand a twig plucked from a young hickory. She held the leaves to her face and breathed their aromatic smell in silence.

"Would you not like to meet, among others, some of the young men of the Bar? I have seen some that I am sure you would admire. They are handsome, bright, manly, and some of them apparently of great promise."

"There were and are such in our dear old Vermont, Lucius," she answered, in a tone as if implying that, if she must have the society of promising young men, there was no State where they could be found in greater plenty than their own.

"That is true, Rebecca, and one at least of the offers made you there I thought you would have accepted."

"I suppose I know to whom you allude, Lucius. The only difficulty was, that I did not love him."

The simplicity with which these words were said made him who was only a brother think what a treasure she would be to the man whom she could really love.

"Yes," he said, "I know; though he is handsome, of excellent habits and family, and getting a fine practice. They say he has lately declined the judgeship. However," he added, after a slight pause, "you were then, and indeed are still, scarcely old enough to decide upon making a matrimonial connection."

"If I had chosen to accept the man you were alluding to just now, Lucius, would you have considered my youth as a bar—at least to an engagement?" Then, raising the twig she held, she playfully swept the edges of its leaves across his face.

This was all that was then said upon the subject of her

interest in marriageable young men. The brother, in the fullness of confidence, respected her apparent wish to discontinue the conversation, and forthwith led to other topics.

Lewis Sanders became more constant in his attentions. Woodbridge treated him with politeness, but with a reserve that indicated plainly, at least to the suitor, hostility. This reserve was met correspondingly by Lewis. Recognizing the rights of others, he felt it to be his duty to guard his own. He could not but feel that the family of Miss Woodbridge must fear an alliance with one regarding whose origin there were uncertainties that made it doubtful, even if it had been honorable. Never as now had he been so anxious to have this mystery resolved. Already he had determined to reinstitute inquiries which during twenty years had been suspended, and he had thought to restrain both his feeling and its avowal until after such inquiries were made. But, first, he had almost no hope from their results; then, as it ever is with the first ardent love of a man, at whatever age, he found that he was not able to control either his heart or his words. Lewis reflected thus: "In such matters is it not at last the individual? Is it not I myself whom she is to consider? If I can make myself agreeable to her, what boots it to go searching for images of ancestors? In this country he makes the best and most honorable career who makes it by his own energies, and toils, and—yes, by his own sufferings. My father, for his own sake, thought fit to cast me away. For *my* own sake I would not go to him if I knew where he was to be found, unless I could know that what he did in my case was to avoid in another's a greater wrong than the abandonment of his own helpless offspring. Whatever I am worth in anybody's estimation, I am so without the aid or influence or recognition of my family. If I could win this girl's

affections by its becoming known that my family connections were good, or even honorable, I claim myself entitled to them as it is; and I mean to try for them upon that single claim. If I am rejected—as I expect, or, at least, fear—let it be so. It will be an honest endeavor, and an honest man need not be ashamed of failure in such a case.”

Such and similar were his reflections after the return from Locust Grove, whither he had escorted her. At his next call he made his avowal, without allusion of any kind to other than his individual respect and devotion. This avowal was tendered after he had risen to take his leave. There was a tremor in his voice when he requested that, unless her answer was ready, or she could foresee what it would be, she would take such time for considering as she might desire. She said nothing; so, shaking hands as usual, they parted.

A week afterward Lucius Woodbridge and his sister, after the dismissal of the school, walked together through the academy grove, and seated themselves on a bench near the church well.

“I want to have another talk with you, Lucius,” said Rebecca, “on the subject we chatted about somewhat the evening we were in Mr. Duke’s woods. I could not say then what I can now—that Mr. Sanders has made me a proposal of marriage.”

She spoke calmly, without embarrassment. Her brother did not instantly answer. He looked for a while sadly at the church in which he worshipped; then, casting his eyes toward the meadow which, beginning almost abruptly within a few rods of where they sat, extended far to the south-east, he sighed.

“I have not answered him yet,” she added.

"Then you are hesitating, Rebecca?" he answered, turning to her.

"I am considering, Lucius."

He took her hand.

"Rebecca, I cannot tell you all of what you are to me—how dear, how sustaining to all my endeavors, how closely joined in all my hopes. The very difference of our religious faiths, I believe, has made you dearer to me, because, for that reason—so it appears to me—more needful of a brother's love and counsels. Then I have doted upon your gifts—how they have been developed, with what ease, without art or effort, you make them known to all whom you meet. My hopes of you, indeed, my sister, have been very high, in spite of the difference in our religious convictions."

Again he looked longingly toward the church. She knew he was thinking of how fortunate a marriage she could make, if she would resign her faith and let it conform to that of a large majority of the leading families of this portion of the State. Neither in word nor in conduct had he ever intimated his wish that she might do so. She understood the sadness that was sympathizing with that he believed to be in her own heart from the sense of exclusion from the best opportunities of other young women, and, if possible, she loved him more for this added evidence of his affection.

"Rebecca!" he said, suddenly, with unwonted animation, "I believe, as it is, that you might marry into as good a family as this whole State can show, however you may regard a family as good, in wealth, political power, or social rank."

They were sitting hand-in-hand. Laying her disengaged hand upon his shoulder, she said,

“Lucius, whatever I have been and am to you, you have been and are more to me. Your love, your example, your encouraging words, since I was a little child, have made me strive to make myself worthy of them and you. As for marriage, you know that that has not been seriously in my thoughts. I gave up my intention to go into a religious order, partly because I believed I might be useful to you, but mainly because, after many consultations with my confessor at St. Alban's, he convinced me that the life of a *religieuse* was not my vocation. After this conviction I have been thinking it probable that I should marry; for in this country, so boastful of its freedom (I do not say without cause), outside of the Church or marriage there is little for women to pursue with animated hope. Especially is this the case, my dear brother, with one like me, whose religious faith, firmly set as it is as this vast oak under whose shade we now sit, differs so widely from that of those who are unquestionably the best of this Georgia society. I am as one living not in her native country, and debarred from naturalization to the most beneficent privileges of her adopted home. But I should feel myself bound to be content with those accorded me, and, but for one thing that I have discovered since I have been in this village, I do not know but that I would be.” She paused, and looked fondly into his eyes.

“What can that be, my child?” said her brother.

“It is this, Lucius—that you and Harriet Quillian love each other.”

His face, usually pale, became flushed; yet he said not a word.

“Yes,” she continued; “she knows not of your love, and until now you knew not of hers. This probably was best for both—for her certainly. Now, my dear brother, if you

and she should marry, what would become of me? Lovely as Harriet is, sweet, pious, worthy of your deepest, manliest love, she will be found more than sufficient for all your needs, and I—and I—” She smiled, but tears were in her eyes.

He rose, and walked up and down before her as she sat several times. Pausing in front of her, he said, in the low bass tones of one of the most impressive and musical of voices,

“Rebecca, I did not suppose that any but God knew the feeling that I have for Harriet Quillian. I must have been imprudent, while I have sought to be most circumspect. As for what you say of her feeling for me, I cannot but believe you are mistaken. Let that be as it may, why should the thought of it affect the consideration you have for yourself? Why should it impel you to a hasty conclusion regarding your own settlement?”

“My dear brother,” she answered, “I would not attribute any but happiest results to the loves of such as you and Harriet Quillian. For you I rejoice, as may those who love best that dear girl, in the prospect of the meeting, which to me seems as certain as that of two rapidly converging streams. How I may have felt but for this I cannot say, for nobody, especially no woman, foresees what her conduct will be in—in certain contingencies. If you and Harriet marry each other, as I believe you will, while I shall be sure of losing none of the affection you have for me now, yet I shall not seem so necessary to you. That will be as it ought. A man like you, Lucius, needs the higher inspiration that comes from a love stronger than a sister’s; and when that is imparted your sister will owe it to you, if not to herself, to seek, or at least to await, the offering of other ties.”

“Admit this to be true, Rebecca. My fondest hope



about you has been independently of myself—that you might make a happy marriage. And it is to this end that, less for my sake than yours, I had determined to remove where our intercourse with cultured society will be more extensive. I have been anticipating much for you, Rebecca, from this change.”

“Well, brother, God shapes the destinies of those who serve Him in fear and love. But, if I may prescribe of what sort must be the man whom I am to marry, he must be one whom for himself alone I can love more than all the world—more than you, than myself. Even in such a case I should require to have the fullest assurance that, as always heretofore, I should be hereafter unmolested in the exercise of my religious faith.”

“Such an understanding, Rebecca, could surely be had with any honorable man.”

“Perhaps. But the other condition must pre-exist. I know, dear Lucius, what have been your thoughts and ambitions regarding me. I know what you have believed I might do and become if, following our father's faith, I would enter yonder building and kneel and worship by your side. I know, also, what is your belief in possibilities in spite of my declining, as you have been sure I must do. But, Lucius, my heart—it is at last my own heart that must know its most needful wants. I would rather die than be married where my heart could not confidently expect to find the gratification of these wants. Sit down, Lucius—there. Until lately”—and now the white upon her cheek began to redden—“I have believed that I should never marry—that my best, most effectual, most pleasing work, after the discharge of my religious duties, would be to co-operate in your work, married or unmarried as you might be, and do what I could to advance your interest and happiness. But,

Lucius"—and now the red came rapidly and burned her whole face—"lately I have been feeling differently. I have been conscious of a feeling like that which led our mother to take our father to her heart—a feeling of which, perhaps, I ought to be and would be ashamed, but—" Then she bowed her head upon his breast.

"But that it is a feeling, my darling sister, which is as natural as the growth of the trees and the worship of God; ay, and as innocent. There, now, lift up your head and look at me. Well, my dear, every one knows better than another one's own heart—what it desires, what it needs. This feeling has grown far stronger in you than I suspected. Yet you say you are considering—only considering."

"Yes, brother; I am considering for you, for myself, and for Mr. Sanders."

"That is the order you put the three in, eh?" he asked, playfully.

"Indeed it is."

"I may expect its reversal ere long, I apprehend, or at least an exchange of position of Mr. Sanders and yourself; for you will probably insist upon keeping your old brother before yourself as long as possible."

"And if I did not—"

"That will do. Has Mr. Sanders said anything about his family?"

"Not one syllable," she answered, firmly. "I waited to see if he would, but he did not." Then her eyes dilated. "Lucius, I do not know what he suspected his silence on that subject might lead to, but I certainly admired him the more for observing it."

"Why so?"

"Because it convinced me that he felt as I do—that matters of that kind belong to individuals, and not to the acci-

dents that accompany and surround them. If he had shown that he believed the uncertainties regarding his origin modified the value of his offer, *that* might have done so. As it was, I at least respect him the more for his silence, and regard him, for its sake, as the truer, braver, better man. Don't *you*?"

"I do, Rebecca," he answered, after a moment's silence. "Nevertheless, I did hope— But there is time enough to consider. Let us pray to be assisted to consider well. I know you will. I also will try. Several things have weighed on my mind lately, which, I fear, have made me less punctual and recollected in my religious duties than I ought to have been. I have become much interested in our friends down yonder."

"I have noticed that Mr. Jarrell often comes to see you. Is there anything very special in the object of his visits?"

"Yes; but I cannot speak of them yet, even to you."

They rose and walked slowly up the street. It was long before allusion was again made to the subject of their conversation.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

A LETTER FROM LUCIUS WOODBRIDGE TO HIS COUSIN, JUDGE WELLBORNE, OF MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT.

"Dukesborough, Ga., July 20, 1827.

"DEAR JIM,—I've been too busy of late to write; but the examination and the 'exhibition' are over at last, and, after the toil and tumult, I am glad to be able to say that they went off with notable success. We had a very large crowd, gathered not only from this but several adjacent counties. Every house was open to visitors, and the tavern—

said, with justice, I believe, to be the best country inn of Middle Georgia—was filled from cellar to attic, including hall and piazza. Among the pupils are children of the most leading citizens of the State. The school has constantly grown in reputation, and I am assured that, if I should continue here, still larger accessions will be made next year.

“The interest that people of all degrees feel in these public exercises would gratify you to see. They are held on a platform in front of the school-house, and seats are placed under an arbor made of green boughs. Hundreds sit there during ten hours a day and listen with unflagging attention, from two-syllable spelling to Virgil and Cicero, Xenophon and Herodotus; from the multiplication table to Euclid. At night the ‘exhibition,’ consisting of plays, dialogues, and single speeches, drew attendance of more than a thousand.

“This section is alive to higher education, in which, I suspect, I might make something of a name. But, as I wrote you, my mind is about made up to quit at the end of this year and return to the Bar. I have heard of some talk of my being offered a professorship in the State University. That might be regarded as an opportunity. At Athens the seat of the University obtains the highest status of Georgia society, outside of Savannah and Augusta, into which a professor *ex officio* gets immediate introduction. Alonzo Church, whom you remember at Middlebury, is there, in the chair of mathematics, and, I am proud to hear, fully sustains Vermont in the demands of that *exigeant* society. But I scarcely think that even such an offer would make me hesitate, especially now that in all probability Rebecca would not favor a removal there. Of that matter more anon.

“Openings in this State at the law for men of education

and energy are good; not but that there are many such now here. This region, extending from Augusta to sixty or seventy miles westward hence, has several lawyers equal to the best to be found anywhere in the United States. One or two that I have heard at the county-seat court here are more eloquent than any I have ever heard. Yet there is room. This is a glorious region—running over, one might say, with abundant fertile soil, beauty of landscapes, healthfulness of climate, and all fair possibilities. There is no prejudice worth mentioning against men from the North. Our old State, indeed, seems to be rather a favorite, so many have migrated thence and done distinguished service, especially in the education of youth. I find here that the Bar, of both parties, regard as their ablest lawyer and law-giver one Abraham Baldwin, who was the founder of the University and the principal author of their 'Judiciary,' as it is headed in the Digests, which they regard—justly, in my opinion—as a masterpiece of its kind. He, however, I have heard, was from Connecticut.

“In this State, much more than in Vermont, the legal profession directs public opinion and policy, partly because of the greater difference between lawyers and other people in mental culture, but mainly of the extraordinary gifts that many of the former have. The aristocracy here—at least in country communities—what there is at all, is mainly of intellect, and that means the Bar. Lawyers wield a mighty influence. If sometimes exerted erroneously, yet at least in its ablest, most earnest endeavors it is seldom intentionally for other than the development of the State in all the elements of its being. Sometimes one hears of a member disbarred for unprofessional conduct, but those exceptions prove the rule. In Georgia politics *belong* to the lawyers. In the present attitude of parties I am, unfortu-

nately, in the minority. *Troup* and *Clark* are the names. They have been struggling with unflagging courage and endurance for several years. The *Troups* are now in the ascendancy. This county especially and the surrounding are largely *Troup*. In this particular neighborhood, with the exception of Mr. Colin Quillian, a leading citizen, I am about the only *Clark* man. Confinement at school work prevents my taking the part I *feel* like taking, and mean to take after a while. What discussions I have had have been mainly with the man I've been boarding with. He knows little of politics or anything else outside of planting, trading, and general money-getting, yet he is the more pushing because of his party being largely in the ascendant, and because, being head of the school trustees, he seems to consider it his right to fix the opinions of the teacher. I used to tease him by broadly exposing the fallacy of arguments which, getting them second-hand, he never understood. The great cry of the *Troups* is 'States' rights.' To what such a cry may lead when this country has grown more populous and more important is a very serious matter. Without ignoring any of these, I agree with the *Clarks* that the Federal Government has 'rights' also, sacred as those of the States, and subject to as definite ascertainment.

"This man Duke does not like me, especially now since I have left his house. His constraint of his tongue—not a very voluble one, any way—is owing to his assurance of the confidence the community has in me. Not even a nominal church-member, I have heard it hinted lately that he or his family (through his instigation) pretends some concern about Rebecca's religious faith. That matter, before she came, was discussed and definitively settled, and there is nowhere else that I have heard of a disposition to interfere or com-

plain on that score. Rebecca has deputed herself, as I knew she would, by maintaining entire independence in her opinions, studies, and devotions, without trying to obtrude them upon anybody. I do wish, indeed, heartily, that she could give these up. Yet I cannot but recognise her as a far better and more pious Christian than I am, and as capable of justifying her principles in argument. I never dispute with her, and the best people here (who are equal to the best in any other society) have as much respect for her as for any other person in the community. I wait with entire calmness what this man—whom (to you confidentially said) I *suspect* to be a very bad one—may essay to hurt me. He would do well, though, to take careful counsel with himself how he assails Rebecca. She is now considering an offer of marriage—in some respects favorable—though without omitting any work or other duty. My belief is that she will yield the fortress. It is worth besieging of the bravest. Sister mine though she be, she is a heroine in every good, honorable, and sweet particular. I have always felt concern about her one infirmity (*if* one may properly so style her religion), and the difficulties it might present to a suitable alliance. But her marriage with an honest man whom she can properly regard, and who will treat her well, would be better than immuring herself in a convent, as was once her thought. She is full of sense and judgment, as she is of virtue and piety. God knows what is best, and will graciously provide for her, I trust.

“Would you believe that I had already a client before hanging out my shingle? And the case, if we can make it out, is interesting, and will be startling to the community. Unfortunately, the only witness we at present have to what facts we know is a negro; but, strangely enough, the evidence of that class of witnesses is here denied admission

into the courts. It seems to me that the law regarding this must be changed in time, for the sake of the full elimination of truth in judicial trials; at least, as regards *competency*, letting the value of its *credibility* in comparison with that of the whites be fixed by legal enactment, which, indeed, considering the different *status* of the two races, should be done, if such admissions were to be allowed. As to the truth of the facts to which this negro would testify, if permitted, I have no doubt, and they would reveal a case of meanness so abject, and heartlessness so atrocious, that with my whole heart I sympathize with those upon whom they have been visited.

“Another misfortune—and perhaps a greater—is, or at least appears to be, that a full discovery would cast a shade of dishonor upon my client’s family that, until lately, he has never suspected to be possible. Interesting first case, your Honor, is it not? wherein the only evidence counsel can adduce is incompetent, and prosecution to successful result would disgrace the memory of an ancestress of his client! Yet both he and I feel like exhausting all possibilities.

“I have a month’s vacation. I am going to take Rebecca on an excursion. We go to Commencement at Athens, where we shall see leading men, with their wives and daughters, from all parts of the State. This is the great gala-time for the wealthy, cultivated classes, and Athens the rendezvous of the leaders of both political parties, where they plan the fall campaign. It is as if the Greek politicians, instead of Delos, met at Parnassos.

“Commend me to Cousin Martha. Salute the old lake and the hills, which I can never love the less from having made my home elsewhere. I did not dream that I was leaving them for all. Yet the field here is so large and



abundant— But the space of this paper is gone except for parting words. Fill up, dear Jim, all blanks. Think of us hereafter as Southerners identified with the people of our section, their interests and their opinions, though never failing to remember and be grateful for our original. Blessed the man who was born in Vermont! If you say you love her more than I you lie in your throat These last two square inches yet devoted to you and yours.

“ Affectionately,

“ LUCIUS WOODBRIDGE.”

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### MR. DUKE AND BARNEY JARRELL ON THE CREEK BANK.

THE embarrassment in which Barney Jarrell found himself involved was most painful. He had never suspected before coming to Dukesborough that the birth of Amanda's mother was not honorable. In the absence of known facts the traditions among those who had guarded her infancy excluded such a suspicion. He now feared that these traditions were erroneous. In this emergency he was sorely perplexed. It had been the wish of his brother that any discovered evidence should be prosecuted to its last results. But his brother had not believed that investigation could possibly lead to dishonor; and the child he had left was a female, on whom the discovery and publication of her mother's infirmity would bring evils of several kinds, without one item of good. His mother—who still lived, enduring as well as she could a yet more unhappy memory—must become only the more depressed, if the pursuit which had brought him to Georgia should be persisted in and lead

to revelations that now seemed probable. The more pity for Amanda and sympathy with his mother Barney felt, there was a corresponding resentment to Mr. Duke. That he should have abandoned his own offspring at the death of its mother seemed not only unnatural but diabolical. Not revengeful, yet his mind sometimes dwelt on the justice of a case wherein such inhumanity would be exposed. He was a man deliberate, cautious, and courageous; and after learning the facts concerning the married life of Kinsey Duke and Emily Langston he often revolved whether he would not have done better to remain in Virginia. It was in the midst of such cogitations that his intimacy with Lucius Woodbridge had begun—an intimacy quickened in its inception and growth by the exigent need he had of other counsel besides that of his own mind. Within these six months, also, he had grown to admire the region to which he had removed, and many of those who dwelt therein. The climate, fertile lands easy to be bought, state of society far superior to what he had believed, and other considerations, had their times of discussion with those that argued for his return. Of all these contending thoughts he had written without reserve to his mother. He could scarcely have explained to himself all his reflections when her answers came, urging the continuance of his pursuit. In her last letter were these words: "We owe to God, my son, to go on in a pursuit on which we have asked, for so many years, His blessing—when, as if by a miracle, He has pointed us where we may find what we have sought: to Amanda, who is innocent of all wrong-doing in this case; to myself; to you. God will take care of the consequences. As for Mr. Langston, being such a man as you describe, it would be an outrage similar, in some respects, to the first to let him die in ignorance of what we know. I am anx-

ious to hasten to him, and my wish is that you come for me as soon as possible."

Barney had felt indignation at the treatment Aggy had received from Mr. Duke on the day of her return from Mark Langston's, and had never thought of allowing it to pass without some notice. After advising with Lucius Woodbridge he concluded to make it the occasion of a movement toward a more active prosecution of his main purpose. He did this somewhat sooner because of the value of consulting with him regarding the interview he intended to have with Mr. Duke. For Woodbridge was preparing for a journey during his vacation.

Meeting with Ammon Duke late one afternoon, as the latter was riding in from one of the plantations, he accosted him thus:

"Good-evening, Mr. Duke. Rest a moment, if you please. My woman Aggy, while returning not long ago from Mr. Mark Langston's, whither I had sent her, was threatened by your father for going by his mill on the way. As the road leads thereby I don't see how she is to avoid his displeasure, if I should conclude to send her on another errand of that kind."

"Know nothing at all about it, sir," answered Ammon.

"That road is a public or, at least, a neighborhood highway, is it not, Mr. Duke?"

"Suppose so, provided people, 'specially niggers, behave theirselves."

"The woman is quite a harmless person, and I should regret very much if she were put unnecessarily in peril or fright. It is possible that there is some connection between Mr. Langston's family and my own, though he is not aware of it, that I know of. At all events, I should

like to feel that I and mine were not to be more obstructed in visiting than others in the neighborhood."

"Why don't you talk with pa about it, sir? I got nothing to do with it."

"I thought to do so when I should have an opportunity. Seeing you this evening, it occurred to me to mention the subject to you, supposing you might report to him my words."

"Got nothing 't all to do with it, sir, as I told you. Don't suppose pa cares anything about people's traveling along the road, if they don't bother with his prop'ty. If they do, specially if they're niggers, they better look out."

The meanness of these words offended Barney; but he restrained himself as well as he could, and said,

"My servant, I am confident, will put no injury upon any of your father's property, except by accident, for which I will, of course, hold myself responsible."

"In the habit of taking responsibilities, ain't you?" said Ammon, with a sneer, "and feel able to meet em?"

"Whatever have devolved upon me thus far, Mr. Duke, I have discharged as well as I could. I am not a man to undertake them recklessly or generally. But I certainly do propose to assume those that pertain to my own household, and, so far, not only as your father but yourself are concerned, I feel quite competent for the task."

"Needn't kick till you're spurred, sir," answered Ammon, and rode away.

After breakfast next morning Mr. Duke rode up to Barney's gate. Amanda answered his hail by saying that her father had gone to the mill to fish, and that he would return before or after dinner, according as he might or not pay a visit to Mr. Langston. The visitor pursued his way.

At the ford of the creek, a mile below the mill, he paused and meditated a few minutes; then he started to move along the bank upwards. He had ridden about one hundred yards, when he again checked his horse, and after another meditation suddenly wheeled, rode back to the highway, and followed it on to the grist-mill. Arrived there, hooking his horse, he dismounted, and, looking across the stream, saw Barney standing on one of the rocks below the dam, angling in one and another of the holes within reach of his rod. He appeared to be having good-luck, yet he was evidently not doing his best; for as he drew one and another red-bellied perch and, having unhooked, tossed it to the shore, he was slow in re-baiting, and now and then dawdled with his rod and line before dropping into the stream again. Mr. Duke watched him for some time. Once he called across to a negro man who was cutting with an axe upon a log on the hill beyond Barney and gave some order, in a very loud tone. Barney turned his head momentarily toward the call, angled a few minutes longer, then drew up his tackle, wound the line around the rod, stepped upon one and another of the rocks that lay between himself and the bank, and sat leisurely down beneath a water-oak that overhang. There he continued to sit for a quarter of an hour; at the end of which Mr. Duke, having descended a few rods to the bridge below, crossed it, and, giving another order to the negro, walked slowly to where Barney was seated.

"Morning, Mr. Jarrell. Believe you fond of fishing? Rode by your house. Much luck?"

"Fair, Mr. Duke, thank you. I haven't been exerting myself very actively. Warm day, sir. You went by my house, you say?"

"Yes. Ammon told me thought feelings hurt about

something nigger said I said. Don't know what she means by such talk. I just asked who she belonged to, and when found out she been by the mill told her to be careful about pestering anything as she went along by there."

"The woman is timid, Mr. Duke, and was probably frightened unnecessarily. As I might have occasion to send her out to Mr. Langston's again some time, and she seemed to consider such an errand not perfectly safe, I thought it proper to have an understanding, and so, meeting your son, I mentioned the matter to him."

"Rather you'd mentioned to me first. Am high-tempered fellow. My business, anyhow, if anybody's. Man never makes much listening to niggers' tales, nohow, Mr. Jarrell. They'll all tell lies—that is, all I've ever knowed—and 'specially when they scared, or make out like they scared."

"I've usually found this woman remarkably truthful. But I repeat that, being timid, she may naturally exaggerate what only appear to be dangerous situations."

There was a pause.

"Daughter said you might go to Mr. Langson's. Fine man. Don't know finer man anywhere."

"Yes," answered Barney. "He appears to be an uncommonly good man. I think of him often, so solitary in his old age."

Kinsey Duke winced slightly. He had never been one who could conceal emotion, however adroit in averting attention from its cause.

"Have to be very particular helping Mr. Langson. First-rate man, but indepen't and 'spicious. Tried to help in warous ways. Somehow won't let me. Indepen't, 'spicious man, but monstous good one."

"Somehow," said Barney, pausing to unbutton his vest

and loosen his cravat, "very warm this morning, Mr. Duke, eh? That log you'll find a comfortable seat, unless you prefer to stand."

Mr. Duke took the log.

"Somehow," Barney continued, "I've found the old gentleman disposed apparently to meet attentions that I pay him rather cordially. He does seem, as you say, independent in disposition; but I have never observed any evidence of suspiciousness. On the contrary, he strikes me, Mr. Duke, as being rather a credulous man."

Mr. Duke looked inquiringly into Barney's face, and Barney calmly returned the look.

"Am says you may be some kin to Mr. Langson."

"Not blood kin, Mr. Duke, only a connection."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I have been speculating," said Barney, unperturbed, to all appearance, as the tree against which he was leaning, "whether you cannot guess, sir."

The coolness with which this suggestion was uttered irritated Mr. Duke. A passionate man and a courageous, his face took on additional redness, and he answered, with increased brusqueness,

"Know nothing at all about your connection, sir, as you call it—nothing at all."

"I did not suppose you *knew* anything about it, Mr. Duke. I merely suggested whether or not you might make a guess. This speculation was founded upon what I remember to have said to you in several conversations that I have had the honor to hold with you concerning my niece Amanda's family."

"I got nothing at all to do with that, Mr. Jarrell," replied Mr. Duke, now in a rather deprecating tone.

"I did not say you had, Mr. Duke."

There was another pause. Barney rose, and, lifting his string of perch, stepped to the margin of the stream, and, dropping them softly into the water, fastened the upper end to the bank and said,

“I must not let you spoil, my fine fellows, but take you to Mr. Langston fresh for the griddle.”

Then he walked back, resumed his seat, and looked up to Mr. Duke.

“Talked to the old man about your connection?”

“Not yet. My expectation is to do so after a while.”

“Been a friend to you, Mr. Jarrell—at least, tried to be—ever since you been here. Reduced your rent because somehow liked you. Tried to advise you. If you take my advice you’ll be monstous certain in your own mind before going to work exciting and disturbing Mr. Langson, his time of life.”

Barney opened wide his eyes. “You think, then, that the old gentleman might not be pleased to know of any possible relationship to such a humble person as myself? I would do my best, Mr. Duke, not to disgrace it; and as for my niece, I cannot but hope that as fair, as innocent a child— Indeed, Mr. Duke, I incline to the opinion that, like others who know her, Mr. Langston might in time become rather fond of *her*—I do indeed, Mr. Duke.”

The sarcasm of these words was lost upon Mr. Duke, who was not used to witnessing the kind of resentment that dictated it, and he answered, candidly,

“I don’t mean that, Mr. Jarrell. I mean— You know what I mean.”

“I cannot say I do, sir. Is it that it would be wrong to suggest a possible relationship without satisfactory evidence to establish it, and so have his mind wrought with anxiety on matters about which it has long been resigned? Is *that* your meaning?”



"Something like that. Not that I got anything to do with it, Mr. Jarrell. Just talking and advising as a friend. Like Mr. Langston monstous well. Fine man—none finer, in my knowledge. But he's old and feeble, and reasonable speaking can't be expected; and it 'd be pity, in his old age, put him on—on—"

"A false scent, you would, as I have sometimes heard you say, Mr. Duke, eh?"

"To that effect. Yes, sir, to that effect."

Barney reflected, and he wished that Lucius Woodbridge could have been by his side unseen to whisper in his ear what to say. His profound resentment for these words was hard to be repressed. If his convictions had been more firm and his evidence more full and competent he would then have denounced this man and defied him to contest his claim. Reasons potent with such a man led him, instead, to make an appeal. He rose, and, standing before him, said,

"Mr. Duke, of that old man who has been dwelling in that house at the head of this mill-pond for so many years, without wife or child, alone and poor, you were once the son-in-law—at least, so people have told me. Aside from the fact of his being one of the very best of mankind, you owed him the reverence and affection due to such a relationship, even if his daughter, who was your wife, did die leaving issue—born, perhaps, too shortly after her marriage."

It was, perhaps, not the best thing to be said, but it was what, in his exigency, occurred to Barney's mind. The powerful man rose instantly to his feet, and his face was spotted. Barney's eyes dilated, and he felt the full tension of every muscle as he met the fiery gaze that was fastened upon him.

"Who says that, sir?"

"For one, I, sir."

"Who else, sir?"

"The answer to that question I choose for the present to reserve."

"Well, sir, whoever says that I had any children by Emily Langson—"

"Be careful, Mr. Duke," said Barney, almost in a whisper; "let us be careful about the epithets we employ with each other."

"Am careful, sir—am careful. Emily Langson left no child by me, sir."

"That is a better way of putting it. In answer I assert that Emily Langston left at least one child, of whom *somebody* was the father."

"Like to know your authority, sir, for such—for such talk."

"As I have just said, sir, I must reserve the disclosure of the evidence I have. If not sufficient for—some purposes—it is at least satisfactory to my own mind."

"Oh, for Woodbridge," thought Barney. Kinsey Duke, though not a lawyer, familiar from long observation and experience with judicial trials, detected at once the flaw in Barney's case from his hesitation and partial admission. He knew the value of browbeating, of contemptuous defiance, and, in the last resort, of compromise. He had already seen that the first was unavailable with this adversary, and he retreated in tolerable order to the second. With a bitter smile, he said,

"Things like that you are talking about, Mr. Jarrell, *when they come into the Court-house*, have to have something stronger to stand on than for a man to say *his* mind is satisfied about 'em. You're a young man. *I* have some

experience, and in my day seen many such a case flung out of court sky-high."

"That is true, no doubt, sir, and it is therefore that I thought first to appeal to your sense of justice, not only to the living, but the dead; for, Mr. Duke, debts to the dead are of such peculiarly binding obligation that God Almighty Himself demands and some day will see to their payment."

Mr. Duke looked at Barney a few moments as if he were far away. Whatever were the promptings of his mind, he knew at once the impossibility of their execution. He turned his eyes and gazed at the mill, the dam, and the grounds adjacent, and wished from his heart that he had never seen them. But he knew that now he was in a struggle for all that made life endurable, and his instincts urged him to fight it out. Yet he was convinced that he must withdraw both from the aggressive and the defiant, and, with a sadness in his tone, as if he also would make an appeal at least for the dead, he said, turning again to Barney,

"Mr. Jarrell, Emily Langson didn't live not six months after took her from father's house."

"Such I have been surprised and pained to hear before. But, whenever she died, it was not before becoming a mother. That I *know*, Mr. Duke."

"Do, do you?"

"I do, sir."

"Older man than took you for. That's been over thirty years ago what we're talkin' about, sir, and, may be mistaken, but, best ricollection, heard you say you was about that age yourself. Must begun noticin' young, sir—uncommon young—or forgot your age."

Barney could not but smile at this parry. He answered, calmly,

"No, my own age was truly reported, Mr. Duke; nor

do I claim to have had in infancy uncommon precocity. As a fact of personal witness I do not profess to know what I have asserted ; but I am as confident of it as that Mr. Kinsey Duke and Emily Langston were united together in matrimony."

"Well, sir, maybe you can tell—" He hesitated, and his face flushed still more. "Mr. Jarrell, Godamighty in heaven knows Emily Langson had no child by me." When he said these words he breathed quick and heavily. Barney regarded him closely, but calmly, as he stood there laboring with his emotions, and he pitied him.

"Oh, Mr. Duke, if that young girl, who Mr. Langston himself told me was a mere child, under fifteen years old—if she did leave a child—and I tell you that He to whom you have just now appealed knows, and *I* confidently believe that she did—if she left a child, of whom you knew yourself not to have been the father, was it right to abandon that innocent to strangers, allowing for her support nothing from the handsome estate her mother possessed? Was it right to keep Mr. Langston in ignorance of this descendant, who might have comforted him in his solitude and old age?"

"Young man," said Mr. Duke, by a desperate effort recovering the tone of a man who knew that he had and meant to hold to the advantage in the discussion, "case you put—your case, mind, sir, not mine—got nothing 't all do with it; but *I* should thought man marryin' girl, know positive child she had had no claim on him, would care mighty little about it when born, nor not much what come of it. And as for going back on father, 'specially man like Mr. Langson, tellin' daughter's conduct, feelin' worse to have grandchild that had no father than when daughter died—some men might do it. I never was one of that kind."

“So it appears, sir, and, as you put the case, it showed a lamentable ignorance of the character of the man neighboring to whom you have lived all your life, and whose only child died upon your hands.” Embarrassed as Barney was what to say farther, he continued: “You have said what you would not have done in the case supposed. Now, with your permission, I will say what *I* would have done. In such a case I should have regarded that marriage as from the beginning *void*. As soon as I had so regarded, I should have returned to the father his errant daughter, or, if distance or other circumstances had rendered that impracticable until her death, I would have marked the spot where I had decently buried her body, and then bore to her father her innocent child, or let him know where it could be found. God knows which of these courses would have been better for him who will have to give an account of his actions. As for that old man up yonder, *he*, in his heart of hearts, would have blessed you for doing what I have said I would have done.”

“People’s different, Mr. Jarrell,” answered Mr. Duke, sadly, even to tears. “Maybe that been best. But people’s different—and sometimes people’s situated where—circumstances is such they *can’t* do *all* might wish, and—at least money point view—might be willing—that is—” again taking up remonstrance—“stating case as put it—which got nothing ’t all to do with it—not me, you understand distinct, Mr. Jarrell.”

“You don’t admit, then, Mr. Duke—” Barney paused, reflected; then going to the bank and taking his string out of the water, said, “I think I won’t go to Mr. Langston’s to-day. Have you anything farther to say, sir, on the subject of our conversation?”

“Mr. Jarrell—take it in sperrit I give it—my advice is,

man ought be particular how talks and who with in delicate matters, 'specially when they're old and people's got used to 'em; and the raking 'em up again on suspicions, with no foundation that'll stand in court and nowheres else, does no good, but hurts feelings and tears up families. And *as* for Mr. Langson, should hate see him on the rack his time o' life not for—no, not for thousands."

"I shall be careful, Mr. Duke, as to both my words and my actions. I must leave Dukesborough for a short space on matters of some business. When I return perhaps I may see you again upon the subject."

"Going to any place in particular?"

"My business will require visits to several, Mr. Duke."

"Glad to do anything for your family while gone. Let daughter stay at my house? Wife more'n glad to have her."

"Thank you, Mr. Duke; but Mrs. Toliver has kindly consented to keep her during my absence. Good-day, sir."  
And thus they parted.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### BARNEY JARRELL'S EMBARRASSMENT.

WHEN Barney reported to Woodbridge the conversation at the mill the lawyer smiled and said,

"He rather beat you on the argument, Mr. Jarrell, because you let him see the weak points of your case. I wish *I* had had that talk with him."

"I wished for you time and time again. I had to talk as the spirit moved me, and I talked too much. I felt all the while that I was doing so."

“Perhaps it is as well as it is. My advice to you is to see him no more for the present, nor let him believe you so desire. Get off to your mother at once. I make much out of what Mr. Duke said for your side, and more of what he omitted to say.”

“To what do you allude in the matter of omission?”

“His not mentioning the name of the man who was the father of Emily Langston’s offspring.”

“He did exhibit much embarrassment, but not more than would be felt by any honorable man at finding that his dishonor as a husband was discovered, and I believe that he does sympathize to a considerable degree with Mr. Langston.”

“Embarrassment!” repeated Woodbridge, in that low bass tone so expressive of scorn. “His embarrassment shall turn into inextricable confusion before I am through with him. He does feel sympathy for Mr. Langston; but it is from the remorse that now, since himself is on the turn of life, haunts him for the thirty years of wrong that good man has suffered at his hands. Do you know, sir, that ever since I have been in this village Mr. Duke to me has seemed a man troubled by painful memories? I have often heard him sigh deeply when silent and not engaged in the conversation around him, and afterward his face would put on a look of supplication. He is a man to be pitied, for he has deeply suffered. I suspect him to have been irresistibly urged by his father to the worst things he has done in this case, whatever they are, and which, if I live, I am bound to find out. From what I have heard of that old man he was unprincipled and audacious to a degree marvellous. The tyranny he practised his son inherited, as is generally the case. In the disposition of Mr. Duke to control others and bring them in awe of him I always suspected, and now confidently believe, he has the habit of ap-

preheating that unless he continually exerted himself to keep uppermost he will some day meet with a fall. Another thing (recurring to your conversation) that I regard as not being without meaning, and that is what he said about preferring to lose several thousands rather than see Mr. Langston disturbed in his memory of his daughter."

"Ay, in the nature of a *bribe* that, you think?"

"I would not use the word 'bribe,' Mr. Jarrell; I would rather say 'compromise.' Mr. Duke is a man who believes that most men—that all men of not more means than he sees you in possession of—will sell what they have, even a dangerous secret, at high figures. I think it fortunate that he made the mistake, inevitable to a man like him, of supposing that your chief purpose was to obtain money. As sure as you live this was an offer, and it shows that he recognizes the case to be full of danger."

"If I had so understood his words—"

"I am glad you did not; and on reflection am glad you went to him instead of my going. On the whole you may report to your mother progress. For the present have not a word to say to Mr. Duke. Powerful, courageous man as he is, he has that item of cowardice which always follows wrong-doing. Developments of some sort will occur before the year is out. I expect he will soon make a movement toward farther conciliating Mr. Langston. Baldwin Riddle will be sure to see that if it occurs, and in his own way will take care of it. But for his impulsiveness we might confide in him. I have thought over that, and conclude it will not do."

"Perhaps you are right; but how about Mr. Sanders?"

Woodbridge reflected a moment, and said,

"Leave that to me. Oh that you could cultivate that man Lines!"



"Not after all that has passed, Mr. Woodbridge. I *cannot* do that."

"Very well, then. I am satisfied that he knows things about your case that would be important for you; but perhaps you could not get them except by resorting to means that you would not feel like employing. Did you not say that you received a letter from your mother this evening? What does she say?"

"She persists in the belief that Mr. Duke and Amanda's mother were never married to each other."

"Ha, ha! Listen to me, my friend: neither do *I*."

"But that would make," said Barney, sadly, "the case for poor Amanda more unfortunate still."

Woodbridge walked across the room several times in silence. Suddenly he stopped.

"Make all haste to get away from here, and all to return. I think I can see farther into this case than you do, Mr. Jarrell. The vista through these many years of outrage is dim; but it is clearing. You yet say that we shall pursue to any and all results possible?"

"I do, so help me God!"

"Then hasten forth and back."

On the next day but one Barney went away.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## COMMENCEMENT.

A PARTY had been made up for Commencement. A son of Reuben Quillian's was to graduate, and Colonel Porter, one of the trustees of the University, must attend their meeting. Rebecca Woodbridge had been invited to go along with Mr. Quillian and his daughter Harriet, and she had accepted, with the understanding that her brother should have her company part of the time in his gig, his lonesomeness destined to be relieved for the rest of the way alternately by the others. Colonel Porter, travelling in his own carriage, invited Lewis Sanders to accompany him; but Lewis had the tact to decline. Miss Woodbridge had given no answer to his proposition. It was a good move, therefore—or rather it was a good refusal to move—for it accelerated the return of one whose absence he most regretted, and, as such things always or nearly always will do, put him on higher ground. As the company, joined by Colonel Porter, passed by the store he bade to all cheerful adieus, wishing for all a good voyage.

Rebecca was the last to take his hand. Unheard by the rest she said,

“You do not go with us, eh?”

“Oh, no. The colonel and I cannot both leave home at the same time.”

“I did not know but that you might go. I— Some one said you might. You will not lose your *Agnus*?”

"That I will not."

"And do not forget that the good woman assured you it will do no harm."

On they journeyed. Occasionally the red soil gave place to the gray that had thrust its tongue from the South and brought the Spanish oak and the black-jack upon its levels. But the travel was mainly on the deep red land belonging to the region. Cotton had supplanted tobacco, and the fields were resplendent with the green bush and the white and red trumpet-blossoms. The wheat had been harvested, but shocks of oats still cumbered the ground. The towering corn, almost black, so deep was its green, rustled responsive to the slightest breeze. Warm as the season was, the vigorous growth in forest and field cooled the air and the ground.

The first night they tarried at Judge Strong's, on the uppermost borders of Greene. He was brother-in-law of Colonel Porter. His was a substantial old brick mansion, in the midst of a deep grove of red-oaks. Around it were thousands of acres of land bordering on streams leading to the Oconee. The old-fashioned china-ware, the time-worn tea-service, the softly-moving negro servants, the corn-bread (prepared in four or five different ways), the white beaten hot biscuit, all told of old Virginia, their native country.

In her chamber that night, when all were in bed, this young girl from Vermont, if she had not been kept awake for some time by other causes, must have lain and listened to the varying sounds issuing from the grove and the dense woods adjoining. Whoever has spent a night in that region, once so lovely—lovely still, in spite of the havoc of many kinds that has befallen it—could not fail, unless devoid of all sentiment, to be fondly lulled by this night-music of the South. The katydids quavered near by; the mocking-bird sang its night-songs (in notes more subdued than

those of the day) in the orchard; the bull-frogs below the spring intoned in varying bass; in the meadow the killdeer whistled its tune, slender and tripping, like itself; all around the whippoorwill, near and remote, poured its notes, but whether cheerily or sadly one could not well distinguish; and the owl sent its solemn complaint from the low depths of the forest. The girl lay and listened, and bethought her what a sweet clime it were to dwell in always.

The next day the way, gradually increasing in hilliness, yet not diminishing in forest growth, was pursued until the middle of the afternoon, when they reached Athens. It was Saturday. The town was already full of visitors, who had come in stage-coaches, private vehicles, and on horseback. Hotels and private houses were packed with guests. At the former men and women the best in the State readily accepted accommodations of the scantiest. At Brown's, a lumbering structure, on the brow of the red hill leading from the turbid Oconee, the Troups had gathered. Farther up were the Clarks. In the parlors, private chambers, streets, the college campus—everywhere, except in college chapel, the continuous theme was politics. On Commencement-day the throng swelled to many thousands; for in all the country round it was then, as now, a holiday for all, white and black. The streets were crowded with wagons and ox-carts laden with melons and other fruits.

The occasion was doubly interesting to Lucius Woodbridge for the good stand taken by several of his pupils (one of whom was the valedictorian of the graduating class), and the sight he had of the prominent men from all parts of the State. There was ex-Governor Clark, white-haired, stout, beaten, but neither vanquished nor discouraged, more calm than any of his followers. There was Governor Troup, artful, aristocratic-looking, in pumps and silk

stockings, turning his eyes around upon friends and foes with bland dignity becoming a man who, in spite of the remonstrances of the Federal Government, having expelled the Indians, had made every citizen of Georgia a freeholder in the richest inheritance of the South. There were Campbell and Clayton, the former father of the great lawyer still living; the first of the Cobbs, the two Lumpkins, always divergent in politics. There were Talbott and Upton, Dawson and Wilde, and other likes. The trustees at Monday's meeting had created a new professorship, and on Tuesday unanimously elected the young Vermonter to fill it. The offer was tempting. The romantic beauty of the town, its polite society, equal in every element of gentility to the best anywhere—all made a case that it could not be imagined he would decline. When he had found the opportunity he held a brief conversation with his sister. She was triumphant and eager to advise acceptance.

"And what about you, Rebecca?"

"Me? What about me?"

"Yes. Would you like to come here to live, provided you do not return to Vermont?"

"That depends," she said, hanging her head.

"Are you likely soon to make up your mind about the offer of Mr. Sanders?"

"It was almost made up before I left home, Lucius. Now it is, definitely."

"I need not guess how, probably."

"I suppose not."

He went to the office (in those times named the *bar*), called for writing materials, wrote a short note to the secretary of the trustees, and showed it to her.

"Oh, Lucius!" she exclaimed, "do not decline this offer. What a career its acceptance would open to you!"

He took her in his arms.

"It would not suit *you*, my dear, if you and Mr. Sanders are to marry. His interests would be altogether alien to this place, and I will not live far away from you."

"Brother, if you would otherwise accept, and such action on my part will determine you, I will write at once to Mr. Sanders and tell him he must think no more of me."

"Which—at least for that cause—you shall not do."

Releasing her from his arms, he continued :

"No, Rebecca. Tempting as this offer is, I should most probably decline it independently of consideration for you. I desire to return to the Bar. The opening there in this State is most fair. Another thing I am confident would lead to this declinature. I have seen, since I have been here, that this University is dominated by the political party that controls the State. That is now the Troup party, which I am opposed to. I should soon be involved in difficulties unless by ignoring or being silent in the maintenance of my principles, neither of which I should do. No, Rebecca, dispose of your beau as if this offer had not been made."

Surprised as all were, yet, when it was said that his intention was to come to the Bar, several leading lawyers, especially from the Northern Circuit, congratulated him in advance. One of them, after advising with him regarding such summary processes as a supposed case might make exigent, said, "I hoped you would accept the professorship. You Vermonters have done wonders for us down here in the matter of education. Our young men will not keep school. But I cannot blame them, nor blame you for quitting that business. As for me, I'd sooner maul rails."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## SUSPICIONS FOLLOWED BY ENHANCED CONFIDENCE.

REBECCA WOODBRIDGE returned with the Quillians while her brother and Colonel Porter lingered in the higher hill-country, especially at the Madison Springs, whither, after Commencement, the *élite* of the State were wont to resort for a season of recreation. Polly was delighted, and Mrs. Toliver showed some gladness, though in the midst of noticeable constraint in her greeting. Polly evidently was not as strong as when this dear friend had gone, yet she declared, as always, that she was better.

"Look like," Mrs. Toliver said, "the poor little thing jes natchelly longed and honed arfter you. I tried to do the best I could; but it ain't give to everybody to take the right keer o' young childern, 'specially them that's afflicted. It were not my lot to have them o' my own, or maybe I mout of been more tender and 'fectionate like. Now, Sister Catlin, she have had childern, though they died, and she know better what to do for Polly than me, and, bless her old soul! she's allays ready to do it. I can't understand, not to save my life, Miss Arbecca—I can't understand how that woman can be a Methodis'. She's a exception among 'em, sure's you're born. Yit the child jes natchelly honed arfter you, and I'm glad you got back. And then I've been of a-wantin' to ast you somethin' that's been a-troublin' o' my mind. But which you go 'long and take off that bonnet and loosen them clothes, and come and git your supper,

'thout you been livin' so high among grand folks you got no stomach for plain vittals; and then, and arfter Polly have saw enough o' you for to-night—then you and me'll have a little talky-talky."

"I'm so glad to get back, Mrs. Toliver! I shouldn't have liked it if you and Polly hadn't missed me."

"I missed you some; you know that, 'thout my tellin' you. But go 'long and loosen yourself. I can't see how young women can tighten theirselves, as they do these days, and live."

While the young woman was up-stairs disrobing herself of her travelling apparel her hostess soliloquized:

"I jes natchelly don't b'lieve it. To my notion it ain't in her natur' to try to fool people in that kind o' style; and I don't think that I'm a person that people 'ud go and choose to pick out to put sich tricks on, leastways at my time o' life and when what little I've done about 'em have been for instead of agin 'em. Not but what I've had expeunce that them that's least expectin' it is liable to be fooled by young women. But yit my opinions in all ewents is that the sect and sections of Arbecca Woodidge is the same as what mine is, which I not only am now, but allays has been, a female person, and have been married of twicet. And if it weren't so, her own brother, by good rights a reasonable speakin', would of knowed better by this time, and not of palmed her off on people—'special them that's helped to make *him* what he is, Babtises at that, and him one of 'em—and—well, my gracious goodness! the curosity and the insinooations that some people 's got, and the on-easiness they can fling people in that ain't been not even a dreamin' of sich!"

That was a good supper; for in Middle Georgia in those times a supper was a supper; not just your tea and bread-



and-butter, and perhaps a three-quarter tumbler of milk; but tea *and* coffee, sweet milk, butter-milk, clabber, fried chicken, hot biscuit, light bread, hoe-cake. It makes the mouths of old people that have become poor water, and their eyes too, sometimes, to think of those days.

After supper, and after lulling Polly to sleep with histories of her travels and a few songs, Rebecca repaired to her chamber, followed by Mrs. Toliver, who softly closed the door of Polly's little room, that lay between her own and that of her boarder. The latter unclasped the belt of the wrapper that she had exchanged for her travelling frock, took out her combs, and let fall her long, abundant hair; then placing one chair near the back window for Mrs. Toliver, taking another for herself close by, and fanning both, said,

“Now, my dear friend, what is your secret?”

For the first time within her own recollection Mrs. Toliver felt painfully embarrassed. The young woman's flowing hair, her smooth, white face, with the delicate sheen of maidenhood upon either cheek; her round, graceful arms that in the warm summer night protruded far out of the loose sleeves, her neck and the narrow strip of shoulder and breast that, in the unreserve of the occasion, were visible—all these she noticed. On the bed lay some night-clothes, and she looked at them. She needed not, she knew well, look into the closet or the bureau drawers or even the trunk, as not one of these had ever been kept locked since her boarder had been in her house. Time and time again had she been in that room when Miss Woodbridge was arranging and re-arranging her things. Yet, in spite of all these re-assuring circumstances, Mrs. Toliver was embarrassed, and in spite of the continued warmth of the evening, and the entire freedom from all outer observation, she kept on her cape, and even pinned it closer to her chin.

Rebecca was amused at first, as she had often been by peculiar conduct on the part of Mrs. Toliver; but when she noticed her evidently serious embarrassment she herself became momentarily concerned and even somewhat anxious.

"What upon earth is the matter, Mrs. Toliver?" she asked.

The old lady rose, tiptoed to the door of Polly's room, opened it softly, listened a moment, closed the door again, tiptoed back to the window, reached out her head, peered out in the moonlight over the shed, resumed her seat, and asked, abruptly,

"Miss Arbecca, you *ain't* a Jessewhit, is you?"

"A what, Mrs. Toliver?"

"A Jessewhit." Then she opened wide her eyes, as if to let it be made known that this was a time when it would be vain to attempt to delude them.

With an anxiety wholly inexplicable Rebecca answered,

"Mrs. Toliver, I have not the remotest idea of what you are talking about."

"Then I don't believe a word of it, and I didn't at the first offstart; and Sister Quillian, and Sister Catlin, too, both of 'em said it were nonsense, and I did, too; but I made up my mind—and which both of 'em said they wouldn't if they was in my place—but I made up my mind I'd ast you about it no sooner 'n you got back home."

"My dear Mrs. Toliver," answered Rebecca, looking around in dismay, "I have no more idea what you mean by the talk you've been having than—than that night-gown and cap."

"And which," said Mrs. Toliver, in bold confidence in the strength of her argument, "they their very selves goes to prove that the biggest part of the tales ain't so. For everybody know, or by good rights, reason'ble speakin',

ought to know, that night-gownds and nightcaps—and which I'm not a-denyin' that, as for night-gownds, I has heerd that them 'Piscapolian preachers does fling them over their coats and breeches when they git up to preach, or make out like they wantin' to try to preach—but which that ain't neither here nor there; for we are now a-speakin' of night-gownds in the sense o' them that puts 'em on when they goes to bed, and mont reason'ble be expected to try to forgit the vain and vanity of this troublesome world, and ast for the forgiveness o' their sins, and a-hopin' to try to do better; and which, in that pint o' view o' night-gownds, I has never knowed of but one sections o' people that used 'em; and I may say of myself that I'm sixty-seven year old, a-goin' on to my sixty-eight, and I've saw a good many people in my time, of many and both sections, and been married of twicet to two of them o' the sections o' male persons, and in a reason'ble pint o' view I mont be a person who mont be supposed to know what I'm talkin' about when I'm a-talkin' about the warous sections o' defferent people."

Mrs. Toliver had assumed the positive look which she was used to wear when she felt that those who would deny the truth of the propositions she had asserted were deficient—it made no odds which—either in common understanding or common honesty.

"Mrs. Toliver!" cried Rebecca, in a pleading voice, "you bewilder me by such talk. You scare me, I declare you do." Then, dropping her fan, she shrank in her chair, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Another good sign," said the old lady, with flat conviction.

Taking up the fan with one hand, and lifting Rebecca's hair with the other, she cooled her face and neck.

“ Bless its heart ! It mustn’t git skeerd and cry. Let me fan its face and tell it the foolish things I’ve heerd about it. I see that the child don’t even know what the things is, let alone the bein’ of one of ’em. Well, now, child, it seem like the Jooks in gener’l don’t like you a-boardin’ along ’ith me, and Br’er Woodidge him a-quittin’ them and goin’ to Hallier’s; but which, so far as *I’m* concerned, I wants no boarders, exceptin’ that sence you been here it seem like most you one of the fambly, both to me and special poor little Polly; and as for Br’er Woodidge, it’s natchell to supposen that he know his own business; but yit leastways which Sister Jook, it seem, have been a-readin’ o’ books powerful o’ late, and which a body mout of supposedened that old man Bunyan were enough for one Babtis’ to be satisfied of readin’ besides o’ the Scriptor, but which she have been a-pickin’ up here and a-pickin’ up there about the Cath’lics, and which your own brother never denied but what you was one of ’em; and which, as Sister Quillian say, then were the time for ’em to of made their objections, and not of waited tell you come and sot in and got into people’s hearts, as it were, and special me and poor little Polly, and which—”

Mrs. Toliver had to pause in her speech and fanning. Recovering, she continued:

“ I no business a-cryin’, at leastways ontell I got through with my tale, but yit which it is not *my* tale, but Sister Jook’s, and which she go on to relate that the books she been a-readin’ of tells of whar the Pope o’ Rome is a-occupied at the present time in a-sendin’ to this country, onbeknownst to people, millions *and* millions o’ Jessewhits o’ warous sect and sections. *Jessewhits*—them’s the words, and which I made her call ’em over ontell I got ’em by heart. And which the said Jessewhits is a kind o’ witches,

that gits the inturn of people 'ithout them a-knowin' what they're up to, and which they ain't nobody that can tell what their warous sections is, because sometimes they w'ars men's and sometimes women's clothes, and which she go on to relate that, ruther 'n one of 'em 'll git caught, they can hop from one sections to another, the same as a grub-worm and a caterpillar."

A laugh, a shout, pouring over with merriment, burst from Rebecca. Checking herself, she opened Polly's door and threw the candle-light upon the child, smiling in her sleep; then going back to her seat, she asked,

"And what does Mrs. Duke say these monsters do?"

"Why, bless your heart! Miss Arbecca—Miss Arbecca Woodidge—she go on to say that they insinooates their-selves everywheres into people onbeknownst to 'em, and, ef they can't do it when they're awake, they'll do it when they're asleep; and then, when they wakes up, what religion they've got, be it big or be it little, be it Babtis' or Metho-dis', or even Prysbyterian or 'Piscapolian, they done lost it, and what senses they got to boot, big or little—makes no odds what's the size of 'em—and the first thing you know they want to run off and kiss that Pope, and him right on his big toe! Now, *did* you ever hear sich talk?"

"Somewhat, but not quite to that extent. I see that Mrs. Duke has reference to the Jesuits."

"And what's them? I don't supposen you are one o' them, for goodness gracious sake!"

"Not I, Mrs. Toliver. A Jesuit is a man; I am a woman."

"So I allays supposed and thought I knowed. And anybody, seem to me, that ef you hadn't of been, your parents would natchelly have knowed better 'n to put frocks on you and let you go out and 'pose upon people. Nor

neither did I supposen that people could alter their sections 'ithout Godamighty's help, and which *I've* never yit heerd o' *Him* a-meddlin' in sich business. But, Miss Arbecca, do tell me what kind o' creeters is they, anyhow?"

"Jesuits, my friend, are an order of priests who, besides doing the work common to all the priesthood, devote themselves specially to missions and schools. They are generally very pious men, and sometimes I have almost wished that I had been a man, so that I might have been one of them."

"Bless my soul! A lively young woman like you, that laughs and runs on, and plays the peaner, kiarnal chunes and all, and has all the young men a-'sputin' how peert and smart she is, a-talkin' about of wantin' to be a preacher! Then I sposen the female sections ain't among 'em, and they don't make a habit o' warin' of women's clothes?"

"Not that I ever heard of; at least, from a source entitled to any more confidence than those which Mrs. Duke consults. Such talks may destroy what little influence I have in Lucius's school that is good, and make us both regret that I ever came here. The understanding with the trustees, Lucius, and myself was that, in the matter of my religious faith and practices, I was not to be interfered with nor made the subject of public offensive discussion. As it is, I see that I must leave the school, and go back to where I can have, if not my only brother's society, at least the liberty of my conscience."

Mrs. Toliver rose, and, lifting Rebecca out of her chair, said,

"Lookee here, child. Look at me, Arbecca Woodige. Is Sister Jook, even *if* she is Missis Jook, is she everybody? Ain't me nor the rest of us nobody? It's jes what Sister Quillian and Sister Catlin say, that sich talk mout drive you away. *But it ain't to be did.* Put them arms round me—

tighter. Thar! I didn't say I wanted you to squeeze the breath outen me! Arfter you've done and been and come here, and growed around my old age, and been to Polly what you have, do you supposen that I'm a-goin' to let you break off jes dry so, because some people can't be satisfied with a-rigerlatin' o' their own consarns, but wants to rigerlate tother people's? No; she may norate more of her 'pinions, ef she feel like it, even about you ridin' in the gig along of Lewis Sanders to your meetin'-house, or whatsoever you call the place him and you went to together."

"That too, eh?"

"Yes; and she said that a young 'oman that had good respects of herself and her sections oughtn't to go so fur with a young man and be goned two days, and him not a perfessor of no religion of no sort, though she know she daresn't say anything agin the charrecter o' Lewis Sanders, not in this community; and both Sister Catlin and Sister Quillian jes begged me not to tell you that; but, Lord bless my soul and body! you're jes like my own child, please God I had of had a child of my own, and besides of poor little Polly, and I were jes *determ'd* to tell you, and the fact is, ef I had a-ried I couldn't of help it."

"Bless your dear motherly heart!" said Rebecca. "You are the dearest, best of them all. I *love* you as my *mother*." Then she bowed her head upon the bosom of the old lady, who sobbed in sympathy. At length, freeing herself from Rebecca's arms, Mrs. Toliver continued:

"Thar, now; that'll do. Don't less me and you, jest us, be makin' of a skene and skenery, but drap it and go to bed and git some sleep. I'm tired, if you ain't."

"Not quite yet, you precioucest of old—will you let me call you antediluvian?"

She was standing now with her hands resting on the old

lady's shoulders and her moist eyes smiling up to her face.

"Yes, if it don't mean that I ever stole anything from nobody, nor told no lies on nobody."

"It means, as I use it, that you are as good and as motherly as you are old. And now, before you go to bed, I want to tell you something that I would rather you did not mention to any one, at least for a while."

"Don't make it too long," said Mrs. Toliver, as they resumed their chairs. "I ain't a powerful good hand at the keepin' o' secrets, 'specially if they're worth of tellin'."

"I'll trust you, anyhow. Mine may not be worth repeating; but I *must* have some woman to know it: I have no mother living. You are like one to me, however, and I am obliged to tell you."

She said these words with blushing and drooping her head.

"Lord have mercy upon us!" said Mrs. Toliver, appalled by fears of she knew not what.

"I told you, my dear friend, that once I had wished I had been a man, so that I might have been a priest."

"But you ain't, and, from what you tell me, they weren't no use in your a-wantin' to be them things—no more 'n for me to been a preacher or a jedge, and which all such consations of women strikes me as nothin' but foolishness."

"Doubtless; but now I am far from having such desire."

"A body mout of supposened that before now. People ought to be satisfied with their warous sections, or at least-ways riconciled to 'em; and if they ain't, they well be, because they can't alter 'em. What you drivin' at now?"

"I am in love, my dear friend. If I were a man and a priest, it would doubtless be with the Church and my work; but, being a woman, I am in love otherwise."



"What with?"

"A man."

"A man! That ain't no sich great shakes, nor so monstous oncommon—not so oncommon, in fact, as with *my* expeunce—it seem like it ought to be, a-reasonable speakin', 'specially considerin' how many triflin', good-for-nothin', ornary man-persons they is everywhere. But, as to that, *I've* been that twicet; but it were in a sensible way. I never made no fool o' myself about men, like so many women does these days, not even them I were married to."

"But I am very much in love."

"I don't doubt you feel like you think so. There's jes the de-ficulty with young women before they has the ex-peunce not to see that *thar* sweethearts no more'n tother people's a-goin' to 'stonish the world and set Tar River afire. But who is he? You goin' to set here and talk all night and not tell who the feller is, nor whar he live?"

"Lewis Sanders."

(Another embrace.)

"Now, if I was a Methodis', like old Sister Catlin, I mout shout—though she ain't one o' them shoutin', rattlin' kind, that gits so full sometimes o' somethin', goodness knows what, they has to take it out in buttin' their heads agin things and floppin' around genilly. Lewis Sanders! I knowed he were usin' around here right smart, and I wished him mighty well—though I never b'lieves it my business to help in the makin' o' matches nor the breakin' of 'em. Lewis! Why, Lewis Sanders—he's Br'er Mark's favorite, not even hardly exceptin' of Baldy Riddle. I didn't know that Lewis were a marryin' man. But that's jes the ways o' them bashful, say-nothin' kind o' man-persons. When they *does* pitch in, it's at the right time, somehow, and thar they stays. That were jes the way with

Mr. Toliver. Mr. Cox, now, he were one of these hurryin', quick-talkin' men. He had to work to git me, and I made him wait, because he were *allays* a-pitchin' in, and I took my time with him, because I were determ'd to let him know that I was somebody as well as him. Now, Mr. Toliver, he were defernt. He were a wery silent kind o' man—I mean in conversation, you mind—because in the pulpit seemed like he never got tired o' preachin', and when he sot down he look like he hated to quit a-noratin' and a-cotin' o' Scriptor, and he sot down because he had heerd said that some said they thought he in ginilly and sometimes hilt on too long; but which in conversation he were a silent kind o' man-person, though he were one that knowed how to *look* at people—he were *that*, I tell you that. And so, lo and behold! when he seed me one day a-cryin' about what he said how he loved his first wife, and what she were to him, and how he missed her, he cried too, he did, and before I knowed it I had used words, and immegiantly arter I used 'em I wanted to take 'em back; but, bless your soul, child! he grabbed holt of 'em, he did, and he hilt on to 'em like a duck a-holdin' on to a June-bug. It's jes the way with them o' that kind. Lewis ain't a perfessor, but he's allays been a respeceter, and studdy as a clock. He have no sort o' religion that I've ever heerd of; but you don't keer nothin' about that, I spose."

"Of course I do. But he and I will settle matters of that and all other kinds."

"Adzactly. Has you told Br'er Woodridge?"

"Certainly. He leaves the question for me to decide for myself."

"Showed his sense thar. You'd 'a' decided for yourself, anyhow. You're jes one o' them sort, with all your pleasant ways. I can't blame you. I were that way myself."

Well, I'm thankful you ain't a-goin' no fur ways from me and Polly. I don't know what the poor little thing would do 'ithout you, let alone me. I'm thankful it ain't to go clean away, and that it's to be with as good a man as Lewis, which, I've heard Br'er Mark say, his betters was nowheres, to his opinions. And I wants, and my desires is, that you *allays* feel like this house were a home to you whenever you can come to it, as long and me and Polly lives; and if I die first—"

She looked anxiously behind her, and tears came to her eyes.

"My dearest, best friend, if Polly should outlive you, and I continue in life, I will be to her, or try to be to her, what you are."

The old lady bowed her head and sobbed.

"Godamighty bless you for them words: it's Him that put 'em in your mouth."

She rose, wiped her eyes, and said,

"Now you go 'long to bed. I know you're tired, and got them long praars to say yit to boot."

Saying thus, she went softly out, lingered a moment over the child, then retired to her chamber.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### LITTLE POLLY GETS BETTER AND BETTER.

ACCORDING to her own accounts of herself little Polly Cheney had been growing continually better and better. During the absence of Miss Woodbridge her improvement had not been so pronounced as usual, although to her grandmother's morning inquiries she had always answered, as

usual, "Better, grammar—better." The character of Polly's infirmity was such as never to have been the occasion of physical suffering—a sort of paralysis of the spine. A disposition of mind, originally ardent, had been softened into a sweetness that touched all hearts. Grateful for the ministrations of all, her spirit overflowed with affection for her grandmother and Rebecca Woodbridge. These kept wakeful at nights, as only women can do, to attend upon her wants.

In spite of the long, dry summer the invalid put in her daily claims to improvement. Only one thing disturbed her tranquillity, and that had begun to perplex her grandmother as well, but mainly because that good woman feared it was a sign of greater weakening in her precious charge. One evening Polly said,

"Grammar, I want to be bapitized."

Mrs. Toliver actually jumped up out of her chair.

"That is, grammar, when you think I'm good enough. When will that be, grammar?"

"My precioucest, darlin'est darlin'!" began Mrs. Toliver, as if she were full of words; but she had to move back her chair somewhat, and then she looked down upon Polly with an expression mingled of respect, awe, and fright. Recognizing the necessity of composing herself, she blandly answered, "As soon as you can git a leetle older and a heap better, and can tell a good expeunce."

"But, grammar, I'm a heap better now. But I can't tell a expeunce. What is that, grammar?"

Now, that question had never before been submitted to Mrs. Toliver for specific solution. She knew that she understood for herself, "and, by good rights, a-reason'ble speakin'," as she would have expressed it, she supposed that other people ought to understand equally for themselves.

Yet she remembered that the education of her granddaughter in almost all points had necessarily been very limited. So now she must answer with prudent reservation.

"A expeunce, darlin', a expeunce—you mind, my child—is—ahem! Yes, indeed, that it is. A expeunce is—ah—a-waitin', as it war, ontwell the door o' the Church is open; for you know, precious, that the Church have *got* to open her door, and which she can't move a single blessed peg ontwell her door *are* open."

From the frown that came down from the speaker's face one might have imagined that she regarded herself as one placed at the Church-door to guard it against all who meditated forcible entry.

"*Her* door, grammar? What makes you say *her*?"

Mrs. Toliver threw her head back, and for several moments painfully contemplated a knot in the ceiling above her head.

"Sects and sections, Polly," she answered, after a few moments' pause, "is a thing that— Well, to tell the fact of the business, Sister Jook have got 'em so mixed up in my mind that a person that's modest natchelly feel ncnpushed when they talkin' about 'em. Yit, my precious, sections is things that—" But somehow the proper words with which to define a term of such intricate, extensive, and lately uncertain meaning would not present themselves. Not exactly giving up the subject, she passed on to another, capable of more lucid and satisfactory exposition.

"When the Church have opened—when the *door* of the Church, you mind, Polly—when *it* have opened, then and at which time a expeunce, I mout perceed on to say, is a—ahem!—it's a-tellin' of *too* the Church, when and arfter her door have been open— Lord, have mercy on my soul *and* body! Yes, darlin'," she continued, after a pause, in which

her confidence was somewhat regained, "it make no odds what's the sects ner sections o' them that's a-knockin' and a-askin' to be let in—they *has* to tell the Church of the op'rations o' grace in the sinner's heart, and the Holy Sperit a-doin' of its level best on the said siuner's heart, and a-leadin' him to 'turn, sinner, turn,' and a-askin' of him, in powerful langwidges, 'Why will ye die?' and then a-encouragin' of him to say, 'Saw ye my Saviour?'"

Mrs. Toliver thought she had never been so astonished as now to find how many words, some of lengthened sound and subtle intention, and even others borrowed from the poets, were required to clearly define what to her own mind had ever appeared so simple.

"But, grammar," persisted Polly, "I don't know them. I just know my prayers. I say them in my mind many, many times. But I haven't learnt *them*. Why don't you and Miss Arbecca learn 'em to me?"

"My Lord!" exclaimed Mrs. Toliver, "what *is* a body to do in sich a case?" She rose, smoothed Polly's pillow and bedclothes anew, saying the while, "Never mind, precious; it'll all come right." Then she went to her chamber, threw herself upon the bed, and wept sorely.

For the first time during her long sickness Polly was insistent. When Rebecca came in to sit by her she said,

"Miss Arbecca, they won't baprtize me, and I've heard 'em *all* say that a person have to be baprtized to get to heaven." Then tears were in her eyes.

"Oh, darling, they'll baprtize you some time, I suppose."

"No; grammar says I must go to the door of the Church, and knock at it, and even then I'll have to tell a expence about my heart and about the Holy Sperrit, and I haven't learnt them yit."

"When the time comes, Polly—and it isn't far off"—she

paused, knelt down, and kissed the pale little face—"you can go to the Church-door, and inside, too, and tell all that will be needed."

"You think so?" Then, with a smile, she continued: "I know

'Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,  
Let thy bright beams arise.'

Maybe Mr. Holmes and them don't know I can say that."

The plaintive tone in which this humble boast was uttered melted the heart of her attendant. Yet, although her eyes were streaming, she answered, cheerfully,

"And that is enough, my precious—the very greatest plenty. Do not be uneasy. You will be baptized in good time: I give you my word for that."

"Will you, Miss Arbecca?"

"That I will."

"Then I won't be uneasy any more."

A fortnight passed, during which time Polly grew better and better with surprising speed. It was beautiful to see how God had withheld from her pain of every sort. One morning it would have seemed, from her report, as if little was needed to impart to her perpetual youth. Before this her bed had been removed into her grandmother's chamber, and the two ladies had lately been remaining alternately awake during the nights. On this morning—it was a Saturday—Polly awakened in exuberant spirits. Mrs. Toliver, with that strange faculty of women, that men, the most loving and faithful, never have, of sleeping at shortest intervals, and waking instantly when needed even for unimportant service, heard her say,

"Oh, grammar! I'm a heap better—the heapest of all the bestest—"

But Polly could not quite make her way in the midst of

these double superlatives. They, however, put the old lady on a pinnacle of wakefulness not far below which she had been while her boarder was watching. She rose hastily, and went with unwonted irregularity at whatever came to hand. Polly was so proud of her improvement that she boasted of it during the entire day. Both sat by her bed, the young woman frequently offering hearty congratulations, the old lady shedding silent tears continuously. In the afternoon Mrs. Reuben Quillian came in and sat, while tears also at intervals coursed down her smooth face. Late in the evening, leaning over Polly, kissing and bidding her good-bye, she said she would come again in the morning.

“Thanky, Aunt Quillian, and I’ll be a heap better then.”

Mrs. Catlin had been coming and going all day. When it was dusk she came in again, and declared that she meant to stay, unless they drove her away. She had often begged them to let her sit by Polly at night while they took needed rest.

When the clock struck twelve, Polly (now grown ecstatic with the sense of renewed health) said, suddenly,

“Grammar, it’s Sunday now, isn’t it?”

“Yes, darling.”

Polly lay awhile silent; then, opening wide her eyes, she said,

“Miss Arbecca, I’m going to church, ain’t I?”

“Gone!” cried Mrs. Toliver, letting fall both arms by the side of her chair. Then, throwing back her head, she wept aloud.

“Not yet,” said Rebecca—“not yet; but the end is not far. What must I do for her?”

“My God! my God! Talk to her, Miss Arbecca, and do whatever she wants. I’ve got no sense.”

“Now, it’s jes nonsense,” began Mrs. Catlin, whose eyes



were fountains of tears, "for as affectionate and keerful and good a woman to be accusin' of herself—"

But, firm as was Mrs. Catlin in general, she had to succumb, and she and her neighbor wept in each other's arms as if they had been twin sisters. Rebecca, going to the well, drew a bucket of water, filled a goblet, and, returning, placed it on a little table near Polly's head.

"Yes," repeated Polly, not noticing the other ladies, "I'm going to church, Miss Arbecca. Please won't you get out my new white frock, and help me put it on? Thanky. Would you wear a pink belt or a blue one? *I think a blue one.*"

"Just my idea, darling."

"Now, come on."

"Right, Polly—ready."

"Did you ever see a sick person get well so fast? I can run, Miss Arbecca, if you can. Here's Mr. Hallier's, here's Mr. Quillian's, yonder's the church, and, look, Miss Arbecca! it's open. Oh, you all didn't know I could say it, but I can, and you may listen :

'Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,  
Let thy bright beams arise.'

Now baptize me."

The last words were uttered in a tone of command, the only that Polly had ever employed. Rebecca, dipping her fingers in the goblet of water, placed it upon Polly's forehead and pronounced the solemn words of the baptismal rite.

"Now I'm a Babtist, ain't I?"

"That you are, precious."

"Glory be to God!" cried Mrs. Catlin.

Mrs. Toliver, sliding from her chair, fell upon the floor in helpless prostration.

"Oh, grammar," said Polly, once more, "look!"

Then her tongue lay, her lips lost their tension, and her heart ceased to beat, while her eyes were still bright with their recent beholding.

They buried Polly at the plantation, by the side of her grandfather. Incapacitated for the task of the funeral, Mrs. Toliver devolved all arrangements upon Rebecca. The custom was to envelop the bodies of the dead in a shroud; but she put on the things Polly had ordered for her baptismal, strewed her over with roses, and placed a bunch of violets in her hand. People stood back as the young woman, white with watching and sympathy, lifted the little body, laid it in the coffin, and, when covered in the grave, strewed it with flowers and flower-leaves. Mark Langston was there, among a large company of others. The solemn yet unterrified countenance with which he looked into the narrow cell, soon to be his own, impressed all. Some heard him say, as he turned away, "God is making up His jewels, and a bright one was this little afflicted."

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### REBECCA WOODBRIDGE PROPOSES TO RESIGN.

It was, perhaps, well for Mrs. Toliver that her grief for Polly's departure was diverted in part by other troubles. The baptism of the child by Miss Woodbridge was commented on freely, especially by the Dukes. The question with Mrs. Duke was, what was this world coming to? Mr. Duke congratulated himself that he had not formally connected himself with a Church that allowed such as that, though he was free to admit, he said, that it was none of his business.

They might break up the Church, and even the school to boot, if they wanted to; he would try, as he had been doing always, to get along independently of both. The Quillians regretted the occurrence, but uttered and felt no complaint against Rebecca for an action that, in the circumstances, seemed almost unavoidable. Mrs. Catlin said that, as for her part, her opinion was that people ought to be glad instead of sorry about the business. Mark Langston put a quietus on the complainings by saying, in his modest, firm manner, that his sister was one to be pitied instead of being blamed; that she ought not in conscience to be held responsible for what she did or what she allowed at the hour of departure of one so dear. Mrs. Toliver herself went so far as to say that, if it was to go over, she would do it again; that no harm had been done by anybody; and as for Miss Arbecca Woodridge, she would rather take her chances for Heaven, "heathen as she were, than some Babbises she knew right there in that blessed town;" that from the "tech" of that young woman's hand no harm had ever come to that blessed child, from the first time she smoothed her pillow till the laying her in her coffin. But for the earnest remonstrance of her brother and Reuben Quillian she would have referred the matter to the Church Conference. On their urging that harm might come from such action to the Church, and possibly to Miss Woodbridge, she yielded.

"That's who they're arter," she said, "not me; and I wish they may all live to be half as good as she is, heathen as she mout be. To think that my feelins has to be all tore up about that poor little thing that's now a angel in heaven! I tell you, Br'er Mark, that them that does it got mighty little feelin' of no sort."

Having carried his point of keeping the matter out of

the Church, wherein he could not clearly see how it was to be managed, Mark said not a word in chiding such and other angry words of his sister. Afterward he said to Reuben Quillian,

“My expeunce of women, Br'er Quillian—'specially good women, like Sister Nancy—when they get real vig'ous mad, and got some occasion for it to boot, is to let 'em have rope. When they've let theirselves out a while it ain't hard to draw 'em in.”

Mrs. Toliver was right. The real game was Rebecca Woodbridge, the hunter being, not Mrs. but Kinsley Duke. When Lucius Woodbridge returned and heard the report of all this, and what had been said by this family concerning his sister's faith and her journey with Lewis Sanders to Locust Grove, he said,

“Well, Rebecca, the only thing proper to do, it seems to me, is for you to resign your position.”

“Mr. Sanders says that must be done.”

“You have seen him, then?”

“Of course I have. For what else did I leave you in Athens, brother?”

“I see—I see.”

He looked abstractedly on the floor for a few moments; then, raising his calm, thoughtful face, he said,

“Rebecca, but for this little episode of yours, I should have no doubt. I am considering how such action will be regarded when it is known that you have reason to rely upon another defender in the community besides myself.”

“Just so,” she answered, “and my conduct might be misconstrued. I will tell Mr. Sanders.”

“And suppose he were to insist?”

“He will not, Lucius; he cannot. My services until the end of this year belong to you and these trustees. The

right in them I have not yielded, because I cannot yield it to others."

"Spoken like a true Vermonter! My advice, however, is to offer a resignation."

"Here is the letter I have written."

"Has Mr. Sanders seen it?"

"Bless your heart! he dictated it."

The letter ran thus:

"At Mrs. Toliver's, August 1.

"*To Mr. Kinsey Duke:*

"SIR,—Information has reached me that there is some apprehension in the community that my services as assistant in the school are not as important as was expected when they were engaged. I therefore propose to resign my position, and will thank you to so notify the board of trustees at once.

With great respect,

"REBECCA WOODBRIDGE."

"A right note," said the brother; "brief, compact, without spite or innuendo. Send it. When they act upon it I may send in one of my own, supplementary to the one they have already gotten from me, notifying them of my intention to retire from the school at the end of this year."

"What, Lucius? This must not hurt your relations in the community."

He took her face in his two hands, drew it to his own, kissed her, and said,

"There, now, my sister. One case at a time."

The board at their meeting passed a unanimous resolution requesting Miss Woodbridge to withdraw her letter, and fully approving all her conduct in the office she had held. They all knew what sort of letter Reuben Quillian had in his pocket from Lucius Woodbridge, to be offered in case of other action. Colonel Porter, who offered the

resolution, said that, although the religious faith of Miss Woodbridge differed in some points from that of the rest of the community, yet this fact had been well known and discussed in the board before she was called ; and that since she had been in Dukesborough her deportment had been uniformly upright and discreet. He had authority from one of the very staunchest members of the principal church in Dukesborough for saying that, in her opinion, Miss Woodbridge was a woman remarkably devout in her religious duties, and her conduct might be regarded rather as that to be imitated than avoided. The case went quite contrary to the expectations of the president. After the passage of the resolution he bluntly said,

“ Needn’t make so much fuss about it. Let ’em go ’long and ’tend to their business till time’s out.”

“ That is just what they have been and doubtless will persist in doing, Mr. President,” quietly answered Reuben Quillian.

The second term opened with new accessions. All houses that would receive boarders were full. Mrs. Toliver, though frequently applied to, declined all except (for a brief sojourn) Amanda Jarrell, whose father had gone away. Aggy spent her days on the lot and her nights at Jesse Lines’s. This arrangement Amanda had made with Doolana, whose request to her father, close as he was with others, had prevailed.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. JESSE LINES SEEKS TO MAKE AN ADVANTAGEOUS TRADE.

THE care of the orphan and other anxieties were telling upon the guardian more sensibly and rapidly than ever. His solicitude for his daughter grew with the decline of his strength, and, in spite of her repeated earnest remonstrances, he would sometimes persist in urging upon her the importance of her acting, before his death, upon his counsels. Ever since that daughter's birth he had been dreaming—yet, until lately, only dreaming—of her alliance with the son of Kinsey Duke, a fortune which to his mind appeared the most felicitous and exalted that could befall her. Having detected the unwonted anxiety of Kinsey Duke during several preceding months, he had determined, as always heretofore, to trade upon it and obtain all possible benefits. Knowing that the acquaintance he had with Mr. Duke's affairs was not sufficient to account for all of that increased anxiety, and remembering that the concealment of such acquaintance was, in one sense, as important to himself as to Mr. Duke, he had lain upon his bed and studied how to explain it. The conclusion of his mind was, that the discovery of what was known by himself was feared by Mr. Duke, as likely to lead to that of things of greater importance which to him were unknown. In his circumlocutory, whining way he had hinted to his visitor these suspicions from time to time, and, as the sequel will show, had made, or created opportunities to make, out of them what he desired. One

obstacle hindered—the last he could have expected—the unreasonableness of which he could not comprehend, but he anguished in his heart in contemplating it.

“I could do so much more for you, Dooly, alive than dead,” he said to her one day—“more than you consate of.”

For some time his talk had been a torment to her.

“Pa,” she said, bitterly, “to think that I were to be made an object of bargain and sale between you and Mr. Duke! You and he have been bargaining and selling with each other from a time before I was ever born, but I don’t think that, until lately, you’ve ever thought of trading about your own and only child.”

“It ain’t a-tradin’ *of* you, Dooly,” he replied, with piteous remonstrance on her continued misunderstanding of the case—“it ain’t a-tradin’ *of* you, my child, it’s a-tradin’ *for* you; and *ef* you’d help me, or *ef* you’d let me, it ’d git—and git for nothin’, as it were—a pile—jes a level pile o’ fortin for you, land, niggers, *and* money. My Lord! why can’t the child see what’s to her own intrusts?”

“Pa, my interests, all that are worth providing for, lie along the way in which my conscience leads. I know little of trading; but my idea of it, as good men ought to practise it, is, that it occurs where one has something to sell that he does not need to keep, and the other, who wants it, offers for it a fair price, both for the buyer and the seller; but that there are some things that cannot be offered for sale, nor bought at any price, of however small importance they may seem to the possessor.”

“Fact,” said Jesse, with sad contempt, looking up to the ceiling—“fact: she know no more about tradin’ than a baby. And, when my head do git cold, they’ll cheat her out of every blessed thing I leaves her, and bring her to the dinner-pot and the wash-tub. They ain’t no sense,



Doolana," he continued, turning toward her with passion, "in sich talkin' about tradin'; it's all a pack of cussed foolishness, sich tradin' as that; and them that trades in that way will be po', and keep po', and they'll deserve to be po' forever an' eternally, and never git their nose off'n the grindstone."

Yet the anger he felt grew out of his parental love—now stronger than that of life—and it speedily subsided before his eager desire for her welfare. She made no answer to these last words, but sat looking upon him with affectionate pity. Straining his failing eyes to give persuasive expression to what he particularly had to tell, he said,

"Dooly, when you was gone this evenin' Am Jook were here, and which he said he come o' part to see you, and I were that sorry you weren't here that I—"

"Not said so to him, pa, I hope?"

"No, Dooly, not quite. I didn't quite git it out, because I thought maybe 'tweren't best, and you moutr't like it."

"I think he knew I was not here, pa. I saw him as he rode by Mr. Jarrell's, where I went to meet Amanda, and help her and Aggy about some matters. I think he saw me, but I am not sure; and, as to that, am not concerned whether he did or not. His father sent him, no doubt."

"Nary doubt about that—nary single, cussed, everlastin', Continental doubt about that," said he, in eagerly abject triumph, "and which make the case so much more walible—so much stronger—if you only knowed it. Am Jook know better than to not obey *his* father; but which *my* child is the child of a old, afflicted, and—"

Then he looked as if his heart was breaking with the sense of the undutifulness of his only offspring. Again he essayed the sweetly sly and the softly persuasive.

"He said he were comin' agin, Dooly."

“To see you, pa?”

“Now, about as to who he were comin’ to see, Dooly, Am didn’t adzactly norate, but my consate were he were a-meanin’ of you.”

He said this with an air of pleasant mystery, and added,

“I think—that is, my s’picious is—that he were sort o’ kind o’ jealous.”

Doolana leaned her elbows on his cot and looked searchingly into his face. Her gaze—as none other could have done—embarrassed him. His craven yet loving heart struggled how best to make known what was on his mind.

“I never told you that that feller Barney Jarrell, afore he left, ast my leave for to cote you. I never told *you*; but I told Kinsey Jook, and he were disgusted and he were jest horrified at the idee.”

Doolana’s face up to her hair and her neck down to the hem of her collar were covered with scarlet, and she breathed like one who had run a race. Her father, dull to such sights, observed not the change, and continued :

“Yes, he ast me, he did, and I ’fused him pine-blank. I jest ast him what he thought of the idee of my givin’ up my only daughter to a po’ son-of-a-gun like him, arfter I’d had to work and projick, and take nigh cuts to git together what little I got for her to live on when my head got cold. It were jest more’n I could stand, and I told him the sooner he left this house the better for him and me both.”

The scarlet went gradually away.

“And now you see, Dooly, what a gentlemanly young man Am Jook is. He said he had ’spicioned of him a-wantin’ o’ you, and he weren’t surprised, and he never said a word agin him; but, instid o’ that, he went on to say that he thought Barney Jarrell, a-reasonable speakin’, were a clever, nice man, but which, if you wanted to marry, you

ought to marry ekal to any of 'em, and which— Oh, how it did make me wish I could git up, and git out, and git about, and show my onlest child how I could perwide for her ef she'd let me!"

Filial love, filial duty, pity, maidenly shame, honor, newly, imperceptibly risen love, with recent assurance of its reciprocation—all were in the heart of Doolana. Looking calmly at her father, she said,

"I've begged you before, father, many times, that if there's anything to settle between you and Mr. Duke, and especially if you owe him anything—"

"Me owe Kinch Jook!" he exclaimed, with angry disgust. "Not a red cent do I owe him. What you talkin' about?"

"I didn't know, pa. I did not know but that you owed him even a great sum, because you seem so eager to part with the very honor of your only child. Let that go. If Mr. Duke owes you anything, I've begged you to have it paid or in some way settled or ascertained while you are both living and the evidences of such a debt are in existence, known and acknowledged by you both. Do not, I beg you, pa—do not leave it for ma and me—"

"My Lord! Doolana, what you everlastin'ly fetchin' in your ma for, when you know she's a older person than what I am, and, a-exceptin' o' my leg, more 'flicted, and by good rights it's obleeged to not to be 'spected but what I'll outlast her, and which if I didn't I should leave my prop'ty, what little I got, to you, and not to her?"

"Very well, then; if I should outlive you I must settle alone this debt. But I tell you now that if I have this to do, nothing shall ever be paid me, by Mr. Duke or anybody else, unless there are writings to show for it which he cannot and will not desire to dispnte. You have not been

a man, pa, to let debts due you go out of date or lose the evidences of their existence, even when owed by men too poor to pay you. What is there that can make you so indulgent with a man that is the very richest in the county?"

"Because—because—because," he said, his eyes glistening through the glaze of age and infirmity, "I want, not for myself, but for my onlest child, a intrust, extry, high up beyant what the law allow, for the walue o' my services and thirty years o' waitin' on him. Ef, oh, my God! ef I could have his son for my son-in-law—and I could, ef she'd jest know how to play her keards, or if she'd jest set still and let me give her the wink how to play 'em—it 'd be a collectin o' my debt, principal, interest, lawyer-fee, and cost, and then I wouldn't wallie death no more'n I wallies a fly," and he waved his flap contemptuously in the air.

"Well, pa," said Doolana, rising, "I owe to you, next to God, my existence—"

"Thar it is agin, fetchin' in of Godamighty, when I've told her over and over that *He's* got nothin' 't all to do with sich a case, no more'n He have with the man in the moon a-burnin' of his bresh."

"He has *all* to do with such things, pa. I repeat, next to Him, I owe you all service and all obedience consistent with my conscience, which, now that I am no longer a child, has its claims upon me. Whatever settlement is to be had with Mr. Duke that I may be ever called upon to make must be in accordance with those claims; and I tell you yet again that it can never be by my marriage with a man who loves me not, and whom I do not and could not love. If Mr. Duke were willing for his son to marry me—"

"And which I keep on a-tellin' of you he's more'n willin'—he's jest anxious."

"And that son were willing—"

"And which what else did he come here for? Don't you know, Doolana, he keer no more for me than he keer for a old dyin' dog?"

He looked at his daughter as if she must yield before this climax of the argument. She looked down upon him with compassion as profound as her filial affection.

"Not a bit more—not one bit, my dear, broken, prostrate father. You spoke the truth when you said that. If the things which you say this young man is ready to do be thus, it is from a motive of *fear*—a fear of what you and his father are able to do, and of which only you and his father may know, excepting one other"—she slowly lifted her finger and her eyes upward, and solemnly concluded—"and that is—*God*."

The old man shuddered on his bed.

"Oh, my father! if there is anything you know that ought not to have been kept secret, do not, I implore you, do not wait for God to reveal it. Tell it, my poor father, while you have a tongue to utter and there are ears to hear. But do not make the condition either of telling or remaining silent the bargaining away of your own child. God hears me when I say to you that *I am not for sale*."

"Name o' Godamighty, Doolana, who wants to sell *you*? I ain't a-wantin' to *sell*: I want to *buy*; and it'll be buyin' cheap, and it'll be bnyin' *riches* for you—for jest you, my own and onlest child."

His lower jaw trembled amid the conflict of a sudden fear of judgment to come with his boundless ambition for his daughter.

"Father," said Doolana, walking about the room, with

uplifted arms, "I would better, and I would rather, be sold myself as a slave than accept of riches other than what might fall to me with the approval of God and my conscience. As for my marriage with Ammon Duke, that is impossible, even if I knew what I could never be made to know, that he preferred me to any other woman for his wife. I had better—"

She covered her face for a moment with her hands; then, flinging them far apart, resumed:

"Yes; I would better be she of whom I have heard the boys in school read in their Virgil and Ovid. Rather than follow Ammon Duke as his wife I would better be changed into the heifer, and over mountain and forest and plain go lowing after the footsteps of my mate. The stings of the fabled insect in that case would be small pain compared with those of conscience and shame in the other."

She left him, and he heard her outside speaking with Aggy, who had just come for the night. Calling petulantly for the negro, she came in courtesying.

"What's your name?"

"Aggy, sir."

"Whar did you all come from, anyhow?"

"We moved here from South Carolina, sir."

"Was you borned thar?"

"No, sir; my marster bought me in Virginy."

"Borned thar, was you?"

"I never knowed exactly whar I were born, marster."

"Not know whar you was borned?"

"No, sir. I were sold, and I don't 'member as they ever told me whar I were born."

"Didn't you have no mammy nor daddy, and weren't no more niggers sold by your old marster than jest you one?"

Aggy, remembering her master's counsel, replied that she remembered almost nothing either of the sale or her family.

"How old is you?"

"I don't know, marster; but I reckon I might be forty or fifty year old."

"Forty or fifty. You don't know which?"

"No, marster; but I know I'm getting along in years."

"Yes, that's in gener'l the case with niggers: they all want to go for bein' old and broke down, and git off'n work, and have to be supported. You don't look not scaceley forty, let alone no fifty."

"I'm obleeged to be over that, marster."

"You say you was sold. What were your old marster's name?"

"Now, marster, you too hard for me. I done forgot that too."

He looked at her narrowly for a moment; then, taking his flap, he turned his head away, saying,

"You may go."

As she was leaving he said,

"Stop a minute. Is anybody thar by the door behind me?"

"No, marster."

"You fetch your own victuals, don't you? You ain't a-livin' off'n me, is you?"

"Oh no, sir. I eat at home, and I brought my own bedclothes. My marster said also that I must help Miss Doolana when I could, and I do."

"Umph! humph! Go on."

Aggy's return had been later than usual.

"What make you so late this evenin' like?" asked old Vilet.

"I waited to see my young mistess off, granny."

"What make you call me 'granny?' Miss Doolana call me dat. But you ain't so mighty young fo' you to say 'granny' to me, not you ain't. Ef you can't jes call me 'Wilet,' why can't you say 'Aunt Wilet,' like t'other niggers that's ageable like you?"

"May I call you 'mammy?'"

"Yes, ef you wants ter. I been a-consatin' that I jes as live you would, becuse I heerd you say they sometimes calls you Betsy. I had a little gal o' that name once, but she died. They carr'd her off, and I allays 'lowed maybe the po' little thing died a-cryin' for her mammy. I speck she were better off than a-livin' tore off'n me. Is you got any mammy o' your own?"

There were none but those two in the cabin. The younger got down upon her knees, and, in the light made by the small pine-knot fire, turned her streaming eyes up to the face of the elder, and, taking her withered hands, said,

"Yes, mammy, your child better have died than lived as I have, torn from my family. I'm thankful you let me call you 'mammy.' You're all I've ever had since I was a little child."

"Po' thing!" said Vilet, extending her hands and laying them on Aggy's shoulder. "Call me 'mammy' ef you want to, and Godamighty bless you, and me too."

After a moment Aggy rose, took from her basket chicken, biscuit, and a small bundle.

"Here's some tea and sugar my young mistess sent you, and I'm to let her know when they give out."

"Why, Lord bless your young mistess for sendin' and you for fetchin'! Miss Doolana never lets me suffer for nothin', but I'm obleeged to you all jes the same."



That night, by Doolana's consent, Aggy's cot was removed into Vilet's cabin.

"Oh yes, honey," said the old lady, when asked by Doolana permission. "'Pear like she good 'oman, and I done told her she may call me 'mammy,' as she got none o' her own, and my childern got dar own famblies. Let de gal stay 'long o' me ef she want ter."

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### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE PARTY AT THE ACADEMY.

It was a custom of this school to have occasional Friday evening parties given by the pupils, the males furnishing confectionery, the females, through their parents and hosts, the cake and other substantials. Full of innocent gayety these parties. Not a few among the best families in the State can trace their beginnings to those reunions of their parents when in the heyday of youth at the Dukesborough academy. None were considered too old, and not many too young, to attend. Even many of the negroes in the village were wont to gather in the grove, look in through the windows at the merry sports within, and get their part of the good things that were left unconsumed on the table. Promenades, games, such as "Fishing," "Upon Honor," "Criticism," "Cross-questions," and others, were indulged in by boys and girls of all sizes, interluded with music performed by Miss Woodbridge and her pupils.

One of these parties was held not long after the events last recorded. It had cost demonstrations and persuasions to induce Mrs. Toliver to attend. She had been mourning her grandchild with a sorrow profound and tender as if she

had been her own offspring and depended upon her breast. Her brother, Rebecca Woodbridge, the Mrs. Quillians, more than all, Mrs. Catlin had chided and encouraged. When the time for the party came Mrs. Catlin, though avowing a desire to go, declared that she would not put foot out of her house while her friend and neighbor was shut up at home, indulging in grief for afflictions that had been sent with intentions of only good, as well for the living as the dead. Then Miss Woodbridge had talked about Polly's present estate in such ways as had led the old lady sometimes to laugh aloud in ecstacy while thinking of the felicity to which Polly had arisen. Wonderful this faculty of good women to condole with one another! Above this the balm that Heaven sends to those who have been faithful to such trusts, which, without their knowing whence and wherefore it comes, brings healing. The bereaved listened to comforting words like as the dry earth receives the summer rain.

"Oh, Sister Catlin, Miss Arbecca say I ought to go, and you say you won't go 'ithout me. I'm no use to nobody now, seem to me; but I'll go."

The parties all began by candle-light, and were over by eleven. Elderly persons, except such as were needed to see the things put up and sent away, usually left by nine. Mrs. Toliver, Mrs. Quillian, and Mrs. Catlin were walking home together in the bright moonlight.

"Well," said Mrs. Toliver, "it's mighty pretty to be young and active. As for me, I love to see young people enjoyin' theirselves, when it's done in reason."

"What a nice, sweet child is Mr. Jarrell's daughter!" said Mrs. Quillian.

"You may well say that," answered Mrs. Toliver. "There's somethin' in them people, Sister Quillian, jes as sure as you and Sister Catlin been borned."

"Does anybody know where Mr. Jarrell has gone?" inquired Mrs. Catlin.

"To Virginia, on some business, I have heard," answered Mrs. Quillian.

"That's what Mandy say," added Mrs. Toliver. "You know me and Miss Arbecca takin' keer o' her best we can while he's gone, and if that child don't show raisin', *I* don't know what you mean *by* raisin'."

"My husband," said Mrs. Quillian, "says he considers Mr. Jarrell an uncommonly sensible and upright man, and he hopes he will conclude to settle here."

"Br'er Woodidge say the same," said Mrs. Toliver. "Him and Mr. Jarrell seems to have growed very thick together."

After other talk, and when Mrs. Quillian had reached and entered her own gate, the other two continuing on together, Mrs. Catlin remarked,

"Mrs. Jook didn't 'pear to enjoy herself to-night well as common."

"Jes so I consated, *I* see. Maybe it mont of been from Harriet Quillian a-dodgin' from goin' in to supper along 'ith Am, and him a-havin' to put up 'ith Doolana Lines."

"But, Sister Toliver, Am seemed very attentive to Doolana. First time I ever saw him so."

"Think I didn't see that? I sposed it were to spite Harriet, or at leastways to make her think he were independent of her, and which he mont persuade that to some people, but not to me."

"Well, as for me, I think Doolana is worth all the attentions he gave her."

"Who you talkin' 'bout, 'oman? Think I don't know Doolana Lines? Don't I know Doolana Lines? Bless your soul! If Am Jook only knowed it, Doolana Lines is worth

all o' him, and so much above him that he can't see, not Am Jook can't, how fur she is above him. I'm a-speakin' now in the pint, not of money, and niggers, and land, but in the pint o' ca-recter. With exceptions o' Miss Arbecca, I don't know any young 'oman that's Doolana's ekal, and I don't put even *her* above Doolana, exceptin' in the pint of playin' on the peaner and bein' usen to seein' of more societies o' people. Doolana Lines have a edjocation along o' the best, and, 't weren't for her triflin' old father, that gurl mout have married well before now. But *he's* enough to pull back and hold back even a nicer gurl than Doolana, if thar's any sich to be found, and whicli if they is, *I* don't know whar."

"Sometimes Doolana, to me, look pretty. She did to-night. Am Jook looked at her as if he liked her."

"Doolana Lines, Sister Catlin, *allays* looks pretty to me. Maybe because I know she's so good and religious. As for Am Jook, he'd be doin' the best day's work he ever done to cote her and to marry her, which I don't supposin' he have no notion o' doin'; and, if he did, his pa nor neither special his ma would hear of sich."

"Do you suppose he could get her?"

"Well, now, Sister Catlin, you askin' of me a long question—too long for me to answer. The gurl have a mighty po' time at home, though she won't own it, at leastways along of old Jes Lines. As for her mother, she's the very salt o' this yeth, and it's her, and not him, by good luck Doolana's took arfter. I've heerd Doolana say that she not even not thought about marryin' endurin' of her pa's life-time, and which it look like the old creetur, spite o' his bedridden, goin' to live to Methusalem. *Yit, ef* Am Jook was to want Doolana, and ef he was to cote her right pine-blank, straight up and down, *I* can't say what mout happen.

It ain't my opinions that Doolana 'd feel so monstous powerful stuck up by sich a offer as people mout supposen; and ef she had all the say about it, my opinions ruther is, she'd say 'No.' My opinions only, you mind, Sister Catlin. For I've saw in my time so many nice women a-marryin' of triflin' men that I've gin out long ago of sayin' of right down flat-footed who'll have who and who won't. These sections o' men-persons has somehows cotch up along of a heap o' persuadin' ways—defer'nt ones 'ith defer'nt women—and which I sposen all women that's married or been married know that from their own expeunce, and a many a one of 'em found it out too late and to their sorrow. *Yit, ef Am Jook*, ef, you mind, Sister Catlin—and *f*'s the longest letter in the book—but yit ef Am Duke was to cote Doolana, and old Jes Lines knowed it, he'd rise outen that bed whar he been layin' so long but what he'd make her say 'Yes,' or he'd break his t'other old leg a-tryin'."

Mrs. Catlin laughed heartily at this speech.

"How handsome Lewis Sanders looked to-night! Do you know, Sister Toliver, that he looked to me like that poor boy Gerald?"

"Bless your soul, 'oman! I consated the same thing. Ef I didn't you may kill me, Sister Catlin."

"He was devoted to Miss Arbecca, and she seem well pleased with him."

"Hush! Don't say a word. Don't you much as breathe it, at leastways that I said so, but they both of 'em thinks the sun rise on the top and set at the bottom o' one another."

They were now opposite Mrs. Catlin's gate, and, after the usual mutual complainings of each other's too infrequent visits, separated for the night.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## MR. DUKE AND MR. RIDDLE AT MARK LANGSTON'S.

THE mind of Kinsey Duke, never wholly at ease, grew more and more restless. Always curt, abrupt in the few words he employed in public and in his own family, to the latter especially he had become more morose after every recent visit to Jesse Lines. Ammon, like his father in many respects, though inheriting some of the refinement of manners of his mother, had never known what it was to disobey him. Mysterious hints of the power in Jesse to inflict most serious injury upon the whole family, followed by repeated orders thereto from his father, wrung from him at last the consent to offer himself in marriage to Doolana, intending, and so his father understanding, that if she should accept, to interpose delays of one and another kind until the death of her father, which, after long, unaccountable delay, seemed evidently approaching. If things should come to the worst, the father argued, and the marriage must take place, worse than that had happened, and might happen again. This coalition was kept secret from Mrs. Duke, who, in spite of one rejection of Ammon by Harriet Quillian, hoped for a different result from continued pursuit, and whom not even the dread of her husband would have hindered from offering violent opposition to an alliance so far below her ambition.

We have seen how such a suit was likely to result. The attitude of Doolana alarmed Kinsey Duke, the more so when,

for the first time, he noticed in Jesse Lines evidences of remorse, particularly in the case of Mark Langston, regarding whom both—especially Mr. Duke—had some unpleasant recollections.

One night, after a visit in which the two had had a long talk together about the old man, Mr. Duke lay awake until near dawn. Next morning he rode to the mill, whence, after a brief inspection, he passed on. It was the first formal visit that he had made in a long time. Mark was in his piazza, mending a set of warping-bars. The sound of the hammer and his face being turned to the wall prevented notice of the approach of his visitor until the latter had ascended the steps and saluted him.

“Morning, Mr. Langson.”

Turning, Mark extended his hand, and said, in hospitable tones,

“Why, it’s Mr. Duke! Take a seat, Mr. Duke. How are you and family?”

“Only moderate, Mr. Langson. How you?”

“About as common, Mr. Duke. Very well for an old man. Lately I haven’t been sleeping quite enough, seems to me. I wake up before day, and have to get up. Lying there wide awake tires me more than getting up and going to work. Yet I’ve every reason to be thankful.”

With an abashed look, Mr. Duke said,

“Think it’s high time you quit work, Mr. Langson. Come to offer you some niggers—Josh and his family.”

Just then Baldwin Riddle, who seldom omitted a morning visit to Mark, rode up to the gate. Observing Mr. Duke, he merely saluted both, without manifesting an intention to dismount.

“Light, Baldy,” said Mark—“light, my son. No secrets. There’s a horse-shoe on that other red-oak.”

Mr. Duke was at first somewhat embarrassed, but, after some reflection, he was rather gratified to have Baldy witness his offer. Shaking hands with as much cordiality as he could command, he reiterated to Mark what he had said.

"What do you say, Baldy?" asked Mark.

For the first time in many years, when in company confined to persons of the male sex, Baldy was embarrassed. Flattening his lips into a broad smile, he answered,

"It's your transactions, Uncle Mark, and not mine."

The old man turned his eyes upon Mr. Duke. The dignity of his tone and mien were most mild, but most impressive :

"Mr. Duke, I've been always poor. I've had to work ever since I was a child. But, most of the time, I've had good health, and I've always been paid well for my work. I've never been without a-plenty to eat and to wear; and though I've had afflictions, they haven't been as many nor as heavy as most have had that's lived to my age. I'm now seventy-six—over my three score and ten—and though I do have some of the labor and sorrow that the wise man tells of in Scripture, Godamighty have in general prepared me for it, and I were never better contented than I've been in these last years of my life. And now, when I'm going on to my seventy-seven, I can lift up my hand, and my tongue, and my heart, and say, with the psalmist, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.'"

He raised his eyes, and those of Kinsey Duke fell to the floor. Baldy seemed to have caught a sudden violent cold. Drawing out his great bandanna, he gave his nose a blast that was loud and vast. Rising from his chair, he rushed to the warping-bars, as if with hope that exercise thereon might give some relief. He felt first one peg, then another,



essaying an additional screwing at every one. During the rest of the conversation between the other two he walked up and down, surveying, first with one eye, then the other, the several stories of pegs, occasionally plunging angrily at one that pointed forth too much or too little, and screwing alternately to the right or the left, so as to put it even with its fellows. When Mark, after expressing his thanks, declined all service from Mr. Duke, of any sort, in a way which, though polite, showed that repetition and insistence would be useless, and the two regarded one another as if the one, though aged, was mighty, the other a suppliant, not deserving but receiving pardon, Baldy's lips flattened still more, and his long, white teeth glistened, as if eager for a bite of human flesh. Suddenly rushing to the top of the steps, he shouted to his horse,

"Be done there, Charles Henry! Never see a previous horse-fly before, I 'spect."

The gentlemen looked out, and concluded probably that Mr. Riddle's voice had frightened away the insect, as Charles Henry was standing perfectly quiet. His owner, however, went out, unbuckled the girth, buckled it again at the same hole, took off the martingale-rings, and put them on again; he then got behind the huge oak, and pressed his body against it, extending his arms as far as they could reach around it. This last action he afterward explained to Lewis Sanders thus:

"I had it to do, Lewis, or bust wide open."

Mr. Duke did not linger, disappointed and angry. He rose, after a few moments, took abrupt leave of Mr. Langston, came forth, and, after he had mounted his horse, said, reproachfully, to Baldy,

"Believe you more'n anybody else put him against me. Could do something for him 't weren't for you."

Baldy chuckled, but uttered not a word in reply. Calling to Mr. Langston that he could not tarry longer this morning, he mounted, and rode on with Mr. Duke.

"I don't know adzactly," said he, looking back toward the house, and speaking leisurely—"I don't know, not adzactly, I don't, whether I gethered all o' your last previous remarks. Did you go for to mean for to insinooate that it were me that kept Uncle Mark from takin' of your niggers?"

"I said believed you put Mr. Langson against me."

After waiting until they had passed entirely out of view of the place of their recent starting, Baldy said, "Mr. Duke, supposen we have our previous convisation about Uncle Mark? I can step upon top o' the boards when we through with him. I thought I'd jes natchelly ast you what could of put it in your desires to insult Unele Mark by offerin' o' niggers to him at his time o' life, when you ought to be obleeged to know that he'd turn hissself agin any sich transactions."

Mr. Duke's lip quivered. Dull man as he was, he felt keenly Baldy's preferring, to that of his own, notice of the imagined injuries to Mr. Langston. A stranger to physical fear, and conscious of being Baldy's superior in bodily strength, he yet could not but feel some sense of inferiority, especially in the thought that Mark Langston may have construed as Baldy did the offer he had just extended. Always constrained to find words to express even his clearest thoughts, he now remained silent.

"I think," said Baldy, with aggravating coolness, "I cau argify your reason. Kinsey Duke, Godamighty ain't told on you yit, but He's arfter you. He's a-beginnin' to make up His mind that it's a-gittin' mighty nigh the time, because Uncle Mark is gittin' of old, and my opinions is you 'spicions you hears the trompin' of His horse's feet behind you. I didn't want to tell you so in Unele Mark's own

house, but, although Uncle Mark no kin to me, I'd a-been 'shamed o' myself ef I hadn't of told you somewhars or somewhars else."

Kinsey Duke's face reddened from chin to scalp, his hand trembled, and the plaited leather on his loaded whip-handle shrieked under his grasp. Baldy had no other weapon than a long green-hickory riding-switch. Glaring upon him with fury, Mr. Duke, in the midst of his hot breathings, hissed,

"Had anything to 'fend yourself—"

"Wants nothin' more 'n this, sir," said Baldy, gayly, lifting his switch.

Maddened beyond all control, Mr. Duke screamed,

"Scoundrel! Liar!"

No sooner were the words uttered than Baldy, wheeling his horse, and drawing tight the bridle-reins with his left hand, rose in the stirrups, and brought down the switch with all his might across the shoulders of his opponent, shouting the while,

"There! Take that, you robber and insulter of old people! Next to a cowhide the hickory is the prevousest thing for you."

The horses, both spirited, excited by the tumult, dashed off, one toward Mr. Langston's, the other in the opposite direction. Baldy checked his in a very few moments, but that of Mr. Duke—his rider having dropped the reins while shifting and poising his whip—could not be taken up until he had reached the mill, nearly a mile distant. Infuriated with rage and shame, Mr. Duke would have returned at once to the scene of combat but that Colonel Porter, who, happening to be there, inspecting some lumber he had ordered, dissuaded him, arguing that before he could reach it Baldy would doubtless have gone away. When the latter, recovering control of his horse, turned again and saw that of his

adversary rushing off, the rider holding to the mane with one hand, and with the other clutching wildly for the bridle, he broke into loud laughter, and shouted,

“Go it, Kinch! You’re a-gainin’ on him.”

After waiting several moments he turned again and made through the woods the circuit of Mark’s house. When he emerged into the road beyond he renewed his laughter, and, ever laughing, went pacing on. Occasionally lifting his switch, he would run it softly through his bridle-hand, and say about thus:

“You’ll do to go ’long with Miss Nancy. It won’t do to let *you* w’ar out arfter what you’ve done. Yit I weren’t a-intendin’ to put you on top of him, and wouldn’t of done it but for his sass; but them’s langwidges we can’t put up with, ain’t they?”

Instead of returning home, as at first intending, he turned and rode to the store. There he found Lewis Sanders, dressed as if on a Sunday morning, and giving some directions to a clerk newly employed.

“Bless my soul!” said Baldy. “Dressed up same as if you was goin’ to meetin’—samer, too, in fact. Kervats and ribbins and broadcloth is obleeged to rise when people puts on theirselves their very best on weeky-days. Can you ’ford to speak a few priminary lines to jes a or’nary fellow that can’t ’ford to w’ar Sunday clothes of a Sadurday?”

After relating the recent occurrences Baldy said,

“And, oh, Lewis! you ought—I jes natchelly wish you could have viewed Uncle Mark. Blamed ef he didn’t look like old King Abom.”

“Old King who?”

“Old King Abom, or Aberham, or whatsomever were his name, a-settin’ befo’ his tent and a-judgin’ o’ the twelve tribes o’ Iser’l.”

"I'm afraid you've got things somewhat mixed, Baldy."

"Maybe so. I don't perless to be a Scriptorian. But Uncle Mark look like the grandest of 'em all—Aberham, or Jobab, or I-chabod, or whomsoever were the biggest of 'em. Kinch Duke looked like he were pleadin' for his life, and a-knowin' he were pleadin' in wain. I knewed he were a scounderl, but I never knewed he were sich a fool as he thought he could 'pose on as smart a man as Uncle Mark in that kind o' style. I tell you, Lewis, Godamighty's arfter Kinch Duke, and He's a-gain-in' on him fast. Somethin' 's jumped up, sure as you're born—a coon or a polecat. I sposen, from them clothes and that smellin'-vial I smells on you, you goin' to town?"

"Yes. I have an engagement with Mr. Woodbridge."

"Takin' a nubbin' to the old cow, as the sayin' is, while stealin' the calf? Umph! humph! Well, joy go with you. I were at Missis Toliver's yisterday, and I spoke a good word for you."

"Bless your heart, you dear old fellow!"

"Yes. I told the young female that you was the easiest, good-naturedest, good-for-nothin'est son-of-a-gun in this neighborhood, and that when she got you she could peck you ontell you was perfec'y bald, and yit never cherrip."

"And what did she say?"

"She up, she did, and she say that that were adzactly the kind o' fellow she wanted for a husband. Say she to me: 'Mr. Riddle,' says she, 'I first set my cap for you; but when I saw what a determined, high-tempered person you were I got frightened, and turned to Mr. Sanders'—and which go to show how much foolishness a blame fine woman can run on with, and yit be pleasant and lovely as the days is long. I tell you, boy, she's a jeweld of a woman, ef ever there was one o' them."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF MR. LINES.

A JOURNEY from Georgia to Virginia and back half a century and more ago was long and toilsome. Over the rough dirt-roads a man on horseback might make his thirty-five miles a day, whereas on wheels he must be content, if carrying burdens of any magnitude, with half of that or less. Whatever business one had ought to be wound up fully, if possible; for such a journey, except by an occasional trader in negroes, was not likely to be made more than once during a lifetime. Expedition was Barney Jarrell when he worked at all. But he had now several jobs on his hands. Besides his own, he must settle his mother's affairs preparatory to a removal that it had been determined should be permanent. He had written to Woodbridge immediately on reaching his mother of her persistence in the desire to press the pursuit he had begun to all consequences, sad as she was at the contemplation of some that seemed possible. He had been gone several months when Lewis Sanders set out on horseback for another portion of the State of Virginia, on an errand which, hopeless as it appeared, he had concluded, after conferring with Colonel Porter and Lucius Woodbridge, to undertake.

Four months make a difference in even so slow-moving a society as that of Dukesborough. At the instance of Woodbridge the trustees had called a young man from Vermont, named Ingraham, who was already installed and

learning the ways and means. Rebecca continued to teach with her accustomed energy and good-will. Mrs. Toliver, though she could never speak of Polly without tears, yet often got the sweet consolations that Heaven sends to those who have faithfully performed duties to departed friends and lovers, and who afterward trust for inseparable reunion. Wonderful this compensation of Heaven! When our beloved depart from us, after, yea, sometimes in the midst of our anguish, our consolations are sweeter and more abounding according as those were more beloved within degrees lawful to human loves, and our service to them more assiduous and affectionate.

Baldwin Riddle could never be brought by Mr. Langston to admit even too great haste in his conduct toward Mr. Duke—the only occasion when he had ever gainsaid that high authority.

“I’m sorry I were obleeged to do it, Uncle Mark; but he got off light compar’d with what, to my opinions, is a-comin’. He’s oneasy about somethin’. It’s—to my opinions, you mind, Uncle Mark—because he feel that God-arnighty’s arfter him.”

“Ah, Baldy, my son, *He’s* after us all. We’ve all come short of *His* glory.”

“I ain’t a-speakin’ nor a-noratin’ about the Judgment-day, Uncle Mark. I know everybody’s got to come to that some time or ’nother. What I’m a-talkin’ about at the present futur’ is that it’s, to my opinions, that a settlement, or a part, and a big part of one at that, is to be had with him before that time, and betwixt now and his grave.”

He sent word to Mr. Duke, in effect, that he was sorry that the behavior of his horse had put him at such disadvantage, and that, if desired, he would meet him, allowing him to name the time and place, in order to give him the

opportunity of returning the only blow given in the late collision. Mr. Duke answered that, but for such accident, he would have taken more of Baldwin Riddle's hide than he had ever gotten off the back of a negro. After reflection, however, he told the interlocutor that he need not repeat these words, as he preferred to settle with Baldy in his own way.

The truth was that Mr. Duke was thinking more of other matters than the blow of Baldy's switch. Baldy's menacing, prophetic words, enraging as they had been when uttered, had sunk deep in his mind and led him to speculate with continual anxiety upon the extent of Barney Jarrell's confidences in the matter of their late conversation. A man accustomed to strife and risks of many kinds, grown familiar with the exactions of courts in the matter of evidence in judicial trials, he felt confident in being able to withstand Barney's meditated attack, especially if Jesse Lines would die, or continue to hold a secret he had had for many a year. He was, however, most uneasy about that. Doolana Lines had frightened him more than the increasing moroseness of her father, and other alarming circumstances. As for Jesse Lines, the time seemed to be hastening when the accounts of the orphan and all others in which he was interested must be wound up. As the invalid grew weaker his suspiciousness and his fretfulness increased. The failure of the great ambition of his heart, just at the time when it appeared easy and ready to be fulfilled, induced a disappointment that with such a spirit can find no relief except in complaints to all who come into his presence. He had intimated to Mr. Duke that he did not fully trust his and Ammon's sincerity regarding his daughter, an intimation that was soon followed by a formal proposal of marriage—which Doolana promptly declined.



Nothing could compensate for the escape of the prize which, after so long, secret, weary pursuit, he had been about to put forth his hand to seize. The mind of Jesse Lines had never been so painfully agitated as by the thought that, when this family, that had been the bane of his life, were at last willing and offering to gratify the dearest wish he had ever indulged, obstacles most unexpected and insurmountable appeared in his own house. The contemplation of these, instead of appeasing his chagrin, exasperated it. To Doolana herself—whom he loved the more because the only being he had ever loved—he had not heart to utter words of reproach. Indeed—such is the power of virtue like hers—she had seemed to him still more precious after rejecting the suit of Ammon Duke. For the first time in his life he looked with disgust upon those below whom he had regarded himself heretofore, and was angry because they had made themselves so unworthy of an alliance that he yet desired even more than the prolongation of his own existence. There is something in the writhing exertions of even the impotent when dying that seems terribly impressive. For very many years Kinsey Duke had treated Jesse Lines as a mule—valuable for most of the uses in which such a beast may be employed, though obstinate; disposed both to kick and to bite, yet yielding to the constraint of a strong bridle and liberal provender. Greatly surprised, therefore, and anxious was he when the tether his hands had held so long had been sundered, and the animal, in its last days, seemed venturing its claims to different treatment and the demand for things that had been so long withheld. It was sickening to the heart of Kinsey Duke to see the poor invalid and listen to his ceaseless complainings. Yet he was uneasy when keeping himself away. One Sunday evening, among other things, occurred the following dialogue:

"See how it is, Jes. She won't have him. Wish she would, so as to unite families."

Jesse Lines, his pale face turned toward his visitor, his eyes never or almost never winking, answered,

"Famblies united! Yon know you don't want it. Ef they was promersed to git married to-morrow, and I was to die when they was a-jinin' of hands, and Am Jook didn't, *you'd* strike 'em apart."

"What make you hurt my feelings, Jes, by such talk? Done all I could. Am, too. Marry Miss Doolana to-day, if say so."

"Thar's the cussedness of it," said Jesse. "She declare she don't want him and won't have him. And Doolana is one o' the few people—leastways o' them that I knows of—that means what she say. Ef people I've had to deal with had of been like Doolana, I mout of been a defernt man from what I am now. My Lord! why *couldn't* your son, with all his chances, have tried to make of hisself somethin' that a girl like Doolana moun't feel like she were flingin' herself away if she took up with 'em? It do beat all creation. Here you've raised your only son, and that 'ith a silver spoon, that God knows you weren't usin' to yourself no more'n me, and yit he ain't fittin' to git for a wife as po' a girl as Doolana Lines. 'Pears to me you'd all be ashamed o' yourselves not to be able, with all your money and all your 'vantages, to raise jes one lone boy-child fittin' to git as po' a girl as Doolana Lines."

This insult, boring like an auger, Kinsey Duke had to bear both because it was deserved, and especially because he knew he dared not resent it. He said not a word in answer.

After a short pause Jesse continued:

"What about the old man Langson? What about him?"

Dog-goned it all! I'm even a-dreamin' o' him o' nights here lately, about things that never bothered me before. What about him?"

"Offered him Josh and his whole family—offered to do anything. Won't take 'em, nor let me help him."

"Too late, Kinch—too late!"

So solemn and sepulchral were these words that Mr. Duke's face, habitually red, now turned white.

"Too late for that and a'most everything else. I wish to God we hadn't of done it; at leastways me. As for you, you're so grand and big you can stand these back-licks when a po', old, 'flicted like me can't. I wish *I* hadn't of done it. You made me—that is, you and your old father. And don't you know, Kinch Jook, that lately—jes here lately—I've been a-thinkin' that *ef* they is any hell—and by good rights, a-reason'ble speakin', 'pears like they ought to be, you know—jes here lately I've been a-thinkin' that your father's obleeged to be *thar*?"

Pale with horror was the face and glaring the eyes of Jesse Lines. The strong man rose and backed himself as from a precipice that hung over a bottomless pit. The old man looked contemptuous, saying,

"Oh, set down—set down. Don't be a-cavortin' afore me. I don't supposen but what you're natchelly afeared o' fol-lerin' him; but he's a good long way ahead o' you yit. Set down—set down, Kinch Jook. Me and you is in the same boat, exceptin' that it were you—that is, you and your cussed old father—that put me *thar*. Set down, and don't try to come the camp-mectin' and the revival over me. As for me, *I* needn't be skeert, I don't supposen. Po' creeters like me, that never had no edjecation and no chances, I sposens sich as us natchelly belongs to the devil, though Doolana say defernt; she say—but never mind what *she* say about sich

as me, which is liable to git kicked from Dan to Basherby, and from thar back agin, up and down the line. But big folks like you could—and, by good rights, seem like you ought to try to git outen his way. Yit, as I said, it's too late; and yit I can't keep from bein' of sorry that I had anything to do with it. They was the lovelest, prettest childern I ever see, and the innocentest. They didn't ast me to keep thar secret exceptin' for a little while, and on-twell the old man could be brung in; and when at last they 'spected, and I ought to opened my mouth, you and your father shet it, and you arfterwards kep it shot. And now I wish to God you and him, or me—one—had of been dead when you told me to 'shet and I shot. Yit I allays believed your father never told me no lies when he told me that you stepped into that poor boy's shoes, as you had the good rights to do then, when he pulled 'em off for good. I've not never had a doubt as for her a-dyin'. But here lately I've been a-spicionen that what were said about that nigger a-dyin' *is* lies, and when lies begins to come in on a feller they ain't no tellin' whar they goin' to stop."

"What 'spicions talkin' about, Jes? Weren't I sued for damages, and had to settle the case?"

"Yes—yes," said Jesse, with languid, dubious admission. "And yit—and yit—did you ever study the face o' that nigger o' Barney Jarrell's?"

His gaze bore upon Kinsey Duke with a searchingness that, together with his words, awed and terrified.

"T ain't possible," he said. "Never saw her die, but never donbted it. Wouldn't settled case if I had. 'Magination, Jes—'magination."

"Maybe so, and maybe not. She have been stayin' here o' nights sence her marster been gone, and I've picked her sever'l times. I ain't got much, for she make out like she's

a fool and got no ricollection, though Doolana say she smartest nigger in town or anywhars about. Kinch Jook, ef you has fooled me about that, you've done it about t'other things, and, ef so, you're the Godamightiest— No, I promised Doolana I'd try to quit cussin'. But look here, man: ef you has fooled me, and I find it out, even ef I die before I can tell on you, I'll *hant* you, and I'll come out o' the grave and out o' hell-fire to do it! Look at me. Tell me agin, how come that boy to git drowned? *Did you do it?"*

The horror of Kinsey Duke was so natural, his denial of murder so heartfelt, as the tears came into his eyes, that Jesse's suspicions on that score were subdned. Feeling, though not expressing in words, regret for the implication, he said,

"I'm a po' man, Mr. Jook, and a old man, and a afflicted man, and a disappointed man, and a man that feel like I ain't long for this world—and yit, somehow, I don't feel adzactly in my mind that I were ready for nary 'nother—and I'm discontented with myself and everybody else—exceptin' of Doolana; and I got so I got no confidence in nobody, exceptin' of her, and I never knows what to believe and what not to believe what people tells me—exceptin' of Doolana."

The thought of her who was so dear to him subdned his passion, and he soon became calm. After other conversation Mr. Duke handed him a paper to read. It purported to be his will, one of the items of which contained a bequest to Doolana of the negro Josh and his family, eight in all. Jesse read it with considerable yet dubious interest, then said,

"I've heerd Jedge Dooly and Jedge Tait both of 'em say that a will weren't worth of a Continental red cent ontell the man was dead that made it, no matter how long he lived arfter makin' of it; and them it's willed to, even if it

ain't altered, has to wait, be it long or be it short. Now, a deed is deferut. Whar prop'ty is palmed on a body, jes perpendicular, straight up and down, it make a power o' deference—that is, in course, for them that loves prop'ty, and wants prop'ty, and ruther have prop'ty at the present than to be a-waitin' oncertain for it, and maybe a-wantin' to see them dead that they knows has give it to 'em by their wills."

His visitor had anticipated these remarks, and he drew from his pocket another paper—a deed of gift to Doolana for the same property—and then professed his readiness to execute whenever she was ready to receive.

"Thar's the de-ficulty," said Jesse, bitterly, his thoughts all turned from remorse to resentment—"thar's the dog-goned de-ficulty. Doolana wouldn't take them niggers, jes dry so. I must take time to think how to manage it. That wouldn't hender you doin' anything for the old man Langson, would it, Mr. Jook?"

"Certainly not, Jes. Owe Mr. Langson nothin', but would help him any way in the world he'd let me."

"All right—all right. Thinkin' of the old man been bothern' me lately. But if a man won't *let* a body help, why, he jes won't, you know, 'ithout a feller do it a-onbe-knownst, and which that's what *I* should ricommend, or at leastways try it."

Jesse turned upon his back, closed his eyes, and lay for a while silent, exhausted by the previous excitement and present collapse. One, even a slight, grasp of the powerful hand of Kinsey Duke would have throttled him. Looking upon the emaciated form, the latter thought, more than ever before, how much his death would benefit himself. The thought, eager at first, gradually grew painful to one not audacious nor evil enough to act. After a few mo-

ments Jesse opened his eyes, and, repeating that he would think upon his visitor's offer, requested him to leave. Mr. Duke rose, and, with warmer assurances of friendship than ever, went away.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### BARNEY JARRELL VISITS MR. LINES BY NIGHT.

SCARCELY had Mr. Duke, on his progress toward home, passed Barney Jarrell's gate, when a young negro man rode up. A scream of joy burst from Aggy, who was walking in the front yard, before Doolana and Amanda, who sat in the piazza. When the new-comer was released from Aggy's arms Amanda shook his hand cordially, and asked, "How far behind are the rest?"

"About an hour, Miss 'Mandy. Marster sent me on to let you know, and help mammy to get supper."

"Charley! Charley!" cried Aggy. "Bless the Lord, how the child have growed!"

The dusk had just set in when Barney arrived with his suite. A covered spring-wagon brought himself and his mother, followed by two other wagons, one drawn by two, the other by four horses—about a dozen women and children; while a corresponding number of men and boys accompanied on foot. Though not wholly unexpected, the meeting was not less joyous. Barney's mother, travel-worn and care-worn, still bore the remains of considerable beauty, and had the air of gentility that neither age nor care can dissipate. Doolana had been preparing to return home when the forerunner arrived. At the earnest entreaty of Amanda, who promised safe escort, she remained. Later, Lucius

Woodbridge, with his sister, called to inquire the cause of Amanda's detention from Mrs. Toliver's. He and Barney after supper took a long walk together. Interesting was what each had to say, especially that by Woodbridge concerning Lewis Sanders and the purport of his journey to Virginia. It was full bedtime before Barney could set out with Doolana. Late as it was, and nearly a mile the journey, Barney proceeded slowly. It soon appeared that the refusal by Jesse Lines of his suit had not subdued nor diminished his interest in the case. Never having been courted—at least, by any one in her opinion worth accepting—never having contemplated marriage as possible in the present condition of her family, yet, conscious of late emotions which she often blushed to admit to her own heart, she had been fluttered ever since Barney's return; and when, leaving the house, he offered his arm and she took it, she wished—rather she suspected she ought to wish—that she had gone home at her first intention. Barney—eager, after so long absence—soon let out the words he could not keep back, and they had not gone a third of the way when the girl was in his arms, struggling, feebly, indeed, to release herself. Soon as she could find words she let Barney know that she had heard of his application to her father, and that otherwise she would not so soon—oh, never—oh, dear me! never—no, never! She thought she owed that much to herself and her sex.

When they had reached the end of their walk Barney was about to take his leave.

"No," said Doolana, "you must go in. Pa will not like it if I do alone."

"But he is asleep, no doubt, and I should disturb him. Besides, meeting me thus would excite him. I'd better call to-morrow."



"No; to-night. He is not asleep, and would not be till my return, if it were not in two days. I shall tell him to-night. It is best. To him the night is as the day. I must tell him at once, and in your presence. I desire you to see him, and me with him, just as we are. Besides, I could not deceive him if I were to try, and that he knows I never have done. I will go round to the back-door and let you in at the front. Don't advance. Wait here at the gate till I call you. He would hear your step, and, knowing it to be a strange one, would be excited, sure enough."

She walked around to the back-door, where a stout negro sat upon the steps, an axe lying beside him. Roused from his nodding, he rose, lifting his implement, but lowering it instantly, as his young mistress turned the corner of the house.

"That will do, Peter," she said. "Thank you. You can go now."

"Dat you, Miss D'lana? Bless your soul!" said the man, as he shouldered his axe and walked away.

A few moments afterward Doolana called from the front-door,

"Come in, Mr. Jarrell."

Barney, on entering, advanced to the old man, took his hand, expressed gratification at meeting him after his long absence, and hoped he was in better condition than when he had last seen him.

"Yes," answered Jesse, "and you know, jest as well as I do, and 'bleeged to know, that I ain't not nigh in as good conditions. Everybody these days projecks with me, and tries to fool me—exceptin' o' her. She hain't never done it yit, as I knows of—'ithout she's a-doin' of it now."

"And ma. You know she never trifles with you, pa."

"Oh, your ma!" he said, impatiently. "She don't try

to do it nor try not to do it. You needn't be a-cotin' your ma on me. Give the man a cheer. Don't set it thar—further down thar. Now you set here, and tell me what made you come a-bogin' and a-trapesin' home this time o' night along o' him."

"Pa," she answered, "the man who brought me home to-night, and whom I asked to come in, that he might hear at once what you had to say, is the one I expect to marry."

She turned and looked upon Barney, and even by the light of the tallow-candle her face lit up as it had never done before. Dim though the light, and bleared her father's eyes, he noticed her blushes and radiant joy, and the pain exhibited in his face was piteous. He grasped his flap with unwonted vigor, but immediately relaxed it, and, after a silence of several moments, said,

"I knowed it; soon as you said he were out thar at the gate! Goin' off to leave me here to die by myself! I wouldn't of treated a ole, broke-down, wore-out horse so, that had broke hisself down a-workin' for me; or, at least-ways, before I did leave him, I'd a-tuck pity on him, and a-knocked him in the head with a axe and put him out o' his misery. I'd a-never left him to die jes so, by hisself."

"My dear Mr. Lines," said Barney, "we propose to do nothing without your consent, and not, in any event, for Miss Doolana to leave you."

"I wants none o' your talk, sir!" he replied, fiercely. "It's my daughter I want to talk to me, if she can be so kind and so condescendin', before she take up along 'ith you. When you goin', Doolana, if I mout be so bold as to ast questions about people's business that don't consarn me? If I was in your place I'd try to be decent about it, and not go trapesin' along the public road of a night with a man I knowed nothin' about, leastways ontell I were mar-

ried to him. Whar you 'spect to live? You know I can't scacely s'port the dead-heads that's on me now, let alone the pilin' of any more of 'em on top o' me."

"Oh, my father—my father!" cried Doolana, in an anguish of shame. "You would not talk so, and hurt my feelings so, if you were not worn down by sickness and other troubles. I am not going to marry as long as you live. It is only because I never have deceived you that I wished you to know whom I expected to marry, if I should outlive you. You shall have no more burdens—at least, of my bringing; though such would not be the case, as Mr. Jarrell is abundantly able to take care of himself and me, and help you besides."

"Help me besides!" said Jesse, contemptuously.

"He could, pa, and he would, and he so desires. If you will listen to him he will tell you how he proposes to do so. Will you listen to him?"

"No, not if *he* talk to me. He may talk to you, if you want him to. I've been fooled with too much now to be fooled by a new fresh customer. Let him talk to you. I'll lay here and listen to his talk, and tell you, off and on, when and whar he's a-foolin' of you. Anybody can do that 'ith you. You're as easy fooled as a chicken that's jest had sense enough, and no more, to peck hisself outen his mammy's aig. Let him perceed on along o' his norations."

She motioned to Barney to speak.

"Miss Doolana," began Barney, in a candid, manly, cheerful tone, "your father's opposition to me is most natural, since he knows so little about me, my family, and my affairs. Of course he would be unwilling, in any circumstances, to part from his only daughter, whose society and attentions are so dear and necessary to him—"

"Foolin' you a'ready," said Jesse, compressing his lips

and drawing a long breath; "for everybody, exceptions o' the aforesaid young chicken, know that circum'ances alters cases. Stick a pin right thar, won't you?"

Barney smiled and continued, as if unconscious of having been interrupted:

"Or for her to marry at any time, except with a man who was abundantly able, outside of any property she might inherit, to maintain her in the style in which she has always lived."

"Jest that kind o' talk, the wery words *and* langwidges, that fools people—'specially women! That man have studied langwidges, he have, not only in the daytime, but o' nights and Sundays. He know whar the Jack's a-goin' to fall in Old Sledge, even befo' the keards is cut, he do."

Barney could not refrain from a momentary smile; but it was, probably, intended more for Doolana's relief than indicative of his sense of humor. Then he went on:

"The state of my affairs, as I told you to-night, is such that I could not propose marriage until a settlement of some matters—especially appertaining to my niece—is had, which, probably for some time to come, will require close attention on my part. My intention now was simply to ascertain how you might regard such a proposition hereafter, always provided that whatever might be agreed upon should be with your father's consent."

"I'm now of sixty-eight year old," said Jesse, calmly, casting a recollecting look up toward the ceiling, "and, if I remembers right, a-goin' on to my sixty-nine; and I don't think I ever, not sence I been borned, that I never heerd a man that could pile up more words *and* langwidges, and them of a kind that fools people, and 'special them that ain't cut thar eye-teeth."

He raised his flap and commencing slowly fanning.

With unabated cheerfulness Barney continued :

“And now, Miss Doolana, since I am so happy as to find that my suit will not be disagreeable to you when it shall become proper to press it, I would regard it as a favor from your father if he would allow me to advise with him on some matters of present interest, and especially to ask him if he could find on his farm any employment for seven or eight negro men and boys that I have just brought with me. As I had heard that he was clearing a piece of woodland, it occurred to me that he might be able to use them to advantage. - Having no work myself for them to do, I would rather they were employed than remain idle. Of course I should expect no compensation, and would supply their rations the while.”

At the word “negro” Jesse lowered his flap and fixed his eyes intently on Barney.

“Niggers? Has you got any niggers besides o’ that ’oman?”

“A few, sir: some eighteen or twenty.”

“Which is it: eighteen er twenty?”

“I think, sir—indeed, I am quite sure—that there are just twenty-two in all.”

“Any mortgages on ’em, or executions agin ’em?”

“Nothing of either kind, sir. We are not in debt. Besides, we have a few thousands of dollars which we would like to invest.”

“*We*? Who do you mean by *we*?”

“My mother and myself.”

“Then the prop’ty ain’t yourn, now in hand. You’ve got the old lady on your hands, and has to look to her, has you?”

“Oh, father—father!” cried Doolana, covering her face with her handkerchief, “how *can* you talk so?”

"Doolana," answered her father, "this here talk I'm now a-havin' with this here man here is—*business*; and business is a somethin' that women, and 'special one like you, that they don't understand, and its reason'ble to supposen that this here man here do."

"Your father, Miss Doolana," said Barney, lowering his head, and plucking slightly at the skirt of her frock, "is right. No man ought to consent for his daughter to make a matrimonial engagement with any man before being informed fully in all matters belonging to him."

"Umph—humph! Ah, ha! I told you I knowed he knowed what's business betwixt man and man—a-leavin' out of women, and a-keepin' of the docket clear o' them." Judge Dooly, in Jesse's opinion, could not have put the case in better terms.

"The negroes belong to me," continued Barney; "the greater part of the money to my mother, though I own quite enough of that to purchase and stock a farm of reasonable size, which I am intending to do. My mother would reside with me or not, according as it suited her views and those of whomsoever I might marry."

"Doolana," said her father, with the deliberate, nnos-tentatious dignity he thought becoming the occasion, "you know, my daughter, that it have always ben my wishes and my desires—that is, sence you've ben growned, and mout natchel you mout be of a-lookin' around and a-look-in' for somebody for to be a companion—that it have ben my wishes and my desires that you should settle yonrself and a-endnorin' o' my lifetime; that is, a-perwidin'—for you know, my child, that I were—as it were, so to speak—a-ahem!—I may say, *raised* in the law, and served my time on the bench as jestic under severial jedges o' the Northern Circuit, and 'special Jedge Dooly, and which

me and him was jes like brothers, we was that thick together; and, gurl as you was, even when you was borned, and I knowed you allays would be obleeged to be a gurl, I named you arfter him; and he laughed, he did, the old jedge did, sich were his pleasure when I told him of it; and which I ought to know, even if I didn't, that the law, she's jest natchel full o' powisoes and powosoes, and which—*aheem!*—it make me say, a-perwidin' you could settle yourself in a way whar you could see your way eler. You've had offers—some of 'em good 'uns—and yit your respects of your father has been that—that you've kicked 'em all, high and low, good, bad, and indefernt, ontwell now. And now, on the day and year aforesaid, I now tell you that my desires, a-bein' yit as aforesaid, and so forth as aforesaid, and on the day and year as aforesaid, 'ithout the multiplyin' o' words in the said behalves o' the parties as aforesaid—I say that so fur as *I'm* consarued, to the best o' my knowledge, information, hearsay, *and* belief, the same as if it were a case in Eequity—well, you has my permissions to go straight to-morrow to the bakin' o' your cakes, the whippin' o' your syllabub, and the makin' o' your weddin'-frock, and the balance o' your close and weddin' fixin's genilly."

As well as he could Barney ignored and covered Doolana's continued confusion.

"As to my family, Mr. Lines, it is proper for you to know—what I have told Miss Doolana—that, though honorably born, I am not entitled to the name which I have borne here. You shall know in time why I have adopted it—rather why I have not held to the one by which I am known at home. My mother was a widow with one young son when she was married to my father. He called himself William Jones, and claimed to be from near Winnsborough,

"Doolana," answered her father, "this here talk I'm now a-havin' with this here man here is—*business*; and business is a somethin' that women, and 'special one like you, that they don't understand, and its reason'ble to supposen that this here man here do."

"Your father, Miss Doolana," said Barney, lowering his head, and plucking slightly at the skirt of her frock, "is right. No man ought to consent for his daughter to make a matrimonial engagement with any man before being informed fully in all matters belonging to him."

"Umph—humph! Ah, ha! I told you I knowed he knowed what's business betwixt man and man—a-leavin' out of women, and a-keepin' of the docket clear o' them." Judge Dooly, in Jesse's opinion, could not have put the case in better terms.

"The negroes belong to me," continued Barney; "the greater part of the money to my mother, though I own quite enough of that to purchase and stock a farm of reasonable size, which I am intending to do. My mother would reside with me or not, according as it suited her views and those of whomsoever I might marry."

"Doolana," said her father, with the deliberate, unostentatious dignity he thought becoming the occasion, "you know, my daughter, that it have always ben my wishes and my desires—that is, sence you've ben growned, and mout natchel you mout be of a-lookin' around and a-lookin' for somebody for to be a companion—that it have ben my wishes and my desires that you should settle yourself and a-enduorin' o' my lifetime; that is, a-perwidin'—for you know, my child, that I were—as it were, so to speak—ahem!—I may say, *raised* in the law, and served my time on the bench as jestic under severial judges o' the Northern Circuit, and 'special Judge Dooly, and which



me and him was jes like brothers, we was that thick together; and, gurl as you was, even when you was borned, and I knowed you allays would be obleeged to be a gurl, I nained you arfter him; and he laughed, he did, the old jedge did, sich were his pleasure when I told him of it; and which I ought to know, even if I didn't, that the law, she's jest natchel full o' powisoes and powosoes, and which—*aheem!*—it make me say, a-perwidin' you could settle yourself in a way whar you could see your way cler. You've had offers—some of 'em good 'uns—and yit your respects of your father has been that—that you've kicked 'em all, high and low, good, bad, and indefernt, ontwell now. And now, on the day and year aforesaid, I now tell you that my desires, a-bein' yit as aforesaid, and so forth as aforesaid, and on the day and year as aforesaid, 'ithout the multiplyin' o' words in the said behalves o' the parties as aforesaid—I say that so fur as *I'm* consarned, to the best o' my knowledge, information, hearsay, *and* belief, the same as if it were a case in Eequity—well, you has my permissions to go straight to-morrow to the bakin' o' your cakes, the whippin' o' your syllabub, and the makin' o' your weddin'-frock, and the balance o' your close and weddin' fixin's genilly."

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in South Carolina. In a few months after the marriage, saying that he had been suddenly called home on account of pressing business, he left my mother, and never returned. What became of him she never could ascertain, although inquiries were made at Winnsborough and elsewhere. At the former place none could be found who professed to have known a person of the name and description given. Yet, for the sake of his honor, her own, and of her child afterward born (myself), she tried to conclude that he had died somewhere in circumstances that prevented notice to his family. Having been led, only very lately, to think it possible to obtain information of use to my niece, and being advised to move with caution, I temporarily adopted the name by which I am known here."

"What year were that?" inquired Jesse, cool as if he were asking of the foaling of a colt he was thinking to purchase.

"Seventeen hundred and ninety-eight."

"Seventeen ninety-eight. I 'members that year," he answered, solemnly. "It were a dry year, and it were a year of a good smart o' meanness of warous kinds. Yes—yes, that were a bad year. And you never seed your father—not as you knowed of? Well, thar's many that has that 'd a-done better and been better off ef they hadn't a-saw theirn. That needn't to make not the littlest, Continentalest bit o' deference betwixt you and Doolana. In this here country of ourn that we has for the present, Mr.—whatsoever your names is: I keer nothin' about your *names*, nor how warous they mout be—ef you can stan' up to the 'foresaid itums of the bill and account; for, as I were a-sayin', in this here present country it's time flung away to be a-grubbin' and a-enquirin' and a-fussin' about breed, whether it's the breed o' dogs *er* people."

Poor Doolana!

Yet her future husband forbore not to comfort and support her. He chatted for some minutes afterward as if nothing had been said but what was consistent with entire delicacy. He loved her—so he always said—so much the more for leading him at once to comprehend her family status. Apologizing for having stayed so long at an unseasonable hour, he took his leave. Doolana, to whose eyelids sleep was not to come that night, after a few moments' delay with her father, went to her bedroom, got a book, and sat down to read. Her father called her back.

"Why can't you set in here and read, ef you ain't a-goin' to bed? They ain't no sleep in me nuther, not for a long time. What's that you readin', anyhow? Don't see how *you* can be a-readin' with the fix your mind's in. *I* couldn't. But I suppose people's defer'nt, even them o' the same families. What book you readin'?"

"The Proverbs, pa."

"The what?"

"The Proverbs of Solomon, in the Bible."

"My Lord! What you want to be readin' in sich a onfriendly book in sich a time as now?"

"Unfriendly, pa? The Bible an unfriendly book?"

"It may not be onfriendly to you; but to me—well, as fur as I can go to say about that book, it ain't what I call friendly—not to me it ain't. I've tuck her up time and time agin, and tried to read in her—as fur as I can understan' her, and which they's a heap in her *I* can't understan', ner make head ner tails of—but which somehow she always seem onfriendly to me and agin me. I ain't no great reader, nohow, as you know, 'special sence my 'fiction. But, when I does read, I wants to read in a book which, ef she can't be 'special friendly and pinted friendly, ain't at least

onfriendly; or, ef it actilly ain't a-namin' o' me by name, and abusin' of me, yit is constant a-hintin' round me—and which I were never a man that had to be kicked down-stars befo' I could take a hint. Now you jes read out loud whar you is a while, and less see how she go."

She read as follows:

"'A righteous man hateth lying; but a wicked man is loathsome and cometh to shame.'"

"'Thar!'" cried he, in undisguised resentment. "'Didn't I tell you so? Shet her up. For Godamighty's sake, Doolana, shet her up!'"

In the deep of the night, fear, undefined though it was, had gotten hold of him, and he looked beseechingly at his daughter.

"My dear father," she said, closing the book, "this could not apply to you in special, for you were never a man that loved lying—nor practised it."

"No. I never—that is, as a gener'l thing—I never were a man that went about a-practisin' o' lies—leastways on no great scale, like a heap o' people I've knowed; and as for the lovin' of 'em, I allays hated 'em, 'special when I caught t'other people a-tellin' of 'em to me. But I has stood by and let 'em tell 'em to t'other people, and hain't corrected 'em, and that's jes what that book's a-pinted hintin' at right thar whar you was a-readin', perwidin' she was a-hintin' at anythin'. She can't fool me; for I tell you agin I were never a man that, before he could take a hint, he had to be kicked down-stars."

With such and other conversation they spent most of the remainder of the night. Toward dawn he fell into sleep, when Doolana withdrew to her chamber.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## A PREDICTION BY MR. LINES IS VERIFIED.

THE arrival of so many new-comers naturally excited much interest in so limited a community. Even the pupils of the school, residents and boarders, had something to say. The father of Amanda Jarrell, hitherto considered of small means, returning with wagons and horses, and "droves" of negroes, as some had it, rose high in the regard of such as associated great wealth with high respectability. His mother kept herself closely at home. The ladies of the village soon called upon her, and reports as to her demeanor were very favorable. Mrs. Duke, feeling safe in going wherever the Quillians went, paid her respects in time respectably late.

"A vigorous person she seems to have been—oldish now, and suspicious-looking," she remarked to her husband.

"'Spicious?" answered Mr. Duke. "What about?"

"Nothing in particular, husband, I suppose. Doubtless it was only her manner. I judge that she has not been much in society—at least, since she was young. She has the manners, though, of one who, in her day, has gone with the best."

The frame of Kinsey Duke had become such that he was anxious about all new events. What Jesse Lines had said of his vague suspicions about the negro woman Aggy had disturbed him greatly. On her, he reflected, Barney Jarrell founded his case. Though convinced of the

worthlessness of the testimony that a negro might have to offer to a court of justice, yet, constrained to admit the possibility of Aggy's identity with the little negress whom he had sold thirty years ago, he dreaded the effect upon his reputation in the community if that identity should become known or even suspected by others. On the night of his last return from Jesse Lines's, Dave, his negro factotum, paid a visit to Aggy. He had dressed himself in his best clothes, and was bearing to her a proposition of marriage, though several years her junior. Meeting the crowd that had arrived, and finding no opportunity to declare himself, Dave took his leave, and reported to his master the state of affairs. Sleepless, therefore, was his master that night. On the day after his wife's call upon Barney's mother he rode over to see the invalid. More than a week had now passed since his last visit. He found his friend not only not fretful, but calm, and at times cheerful. Throughout the visit (as her father had directed) Doolana sat in the room. Jesse waved his flap, but not angrily, at insect enemies, real and imaginary; talked incessantly about the weather and the crops, and seemed in better, even friendlier, spirits than he had been for years past. He looked at his visitor but once during the interview, but it was a look that caused the latter to turn somewhat pale. But Jesse withdrew his eyes, resumed the subject of crops and weather, and talked and talked and talked.

"Good-bye, Mr. Jook," he said, when the time came to part. "It'll all come right. I've had some talk with the party named in the deed. It'll all come right. You needn't bother yourself to come till I send for you. It won't be long. My wife ain't so mighty powerful well. But she'll peerten up soon, and then we can talk business. 'Pon my soul, Mr. Jook, never seed you look better. Health's a

great thing, Mr. Jook, to them that's got it; but what is it to them that hain't? But never mind; all 'll come right. Good-bye."

As Mr. Duke was riding by Barney's house on his return he noticed Amanda and her grandmother sitting in the piazza. The latter had laid her work in her lap, and was absorbed in regarding him. He returned her look momentarily, bowed as he passed, and, after riding several paces, turned and saw her, standing on the edge of the piazza, following him with her eyes. Muttering an oath, he spurred on his horse.

The culmination of matters of primary interest in this story was retarded for several days by an event occurring in the domestic circle of Jesse Lines. In the case of her who had had the honor of being his wife he was a true prophet. On the third day from that whereon she had taken finally to her bed she died. Jesse had to acknowledge that she had held on longer than he had expected, and far beyond what might have been believed, "by good rights, a-reason'ble speakin', and considerin', you mind." He had always known, of course, that she was to go before him, and perhaps it was that foreknowledge which had deferred in his mind thoughts of the necessity of making special preparations for such an important change in his own career. He behaved himself on the occasion with much propriety. With Doolana's outpouring grief he felt a placid sympathy that gave a tremor to his many words of consolation which it made him feel sweet himself to hear. He had himself shaved and brushed up, his best clothes taken out and put on, and he felt a consciousness of physical, intellectual, and moral strength that he had not known for years. The directions he gave as to the funeral were on a scale of circumstantiality and liberality that, considering

who it was that did it all, was highly commendable. His calmness, so soothing to his feelings, was interrupted somewhat by Doolana's asking if he would not see the corpse.

"Lord a' mercy, Doolana!" was his answer.

"I think you ought to, pa. You'll see the sweetest face you ever looked on. Her very face shows that she's in heaven."

Never having loved, but always neglected, though never harshly treated his wife, Jesse felt neither grief nor remorse. He at length suffered himself to be persuaded to look upon the deceased. They brought in the coffin, and laid it beside his cot, upon two chairs. He leaned over, gave one long, piteous cry, then turned away, and wept and wept. In the midst of his lamentation the only words he ejaculated were—and they were repeated many times—"Too late! too late!"

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A CITATION FROM THE COURT OF ORDINARY, WITH SOME OF ITS RESULTS.

WHEN a young man is winding up the work of one profession preparatory to entering another he has to be careful that his undertakings not yet fulfilled do not suffer from relaxed attention. With him the passing time seems longer the less of it that remains. Lucius Woodbridge had been reared in a discipline that insisted upon the discharge of the very last item of a man's obligations. Such a man—become justly responsive to such influences—must pay all debts, and be satisfied only until he have an acquittal of interest as well as principal. The young man, therefore,



did his remaining work with an energy and efficiency that made all interested in the school feel reluctant to lose him. To forefend all charges or insinuations of neglect, he did so as to seem to all, patrons and pupils, to be exerting his full strength for the first time. The conferences with Barney Jarrell—now more frequent and prolonged—instead of subtracting from the energy and value of his daily duties at school, seemed to enhance them. Yet his successor, upon whom that work was soon to devolve, showed that he had been well chosen; and it helped him—and he knew it—when the head-master asked for and obtained a week's holiday.

Before this Woodbridge had advised with Reuben Quilian and Colonel Porter as to the propriety of his extending legal counsel, while still in the school, in a matter that was likely, if not compromised, to lead to an important lawsuit against a member of the board of trustees—a matter, he added, that was not only inevitable, but, for special reasons, required despatch. Without inquiring who was the person, or what the nature and merits of the case, they answered promptly that they saw no reasons against such a course. For some time he had been studying the law regarding the issuing of a writ known, in the parlance of the courts, as that of *de bene esse*, in order to perpetuate the testimony of a witness whose physical condition made probable his dying before the case to which he had been or might be summoned could be tried. The presiding judge resided in a distant county, on the northern border of the circuit. Thither Woodbridge repaired, and returned late one Saturday evening.

On the morning of that day occurred what was sufficient to startle that small community thoroughly. Mr. Duke had scarcely been seen by any of the villagers for several days. Rising from bed early, he had ridden to his mill or to one

or another of his plantations, not returning until late in the evening. This being the day for the arrival of the weekly newspaper from Milledgeville, he walked up to the post-office. Already several persons were in the piazza from town and country—the two Quillians, Colonel Porter, and Baldwin Riddle among them—and they were discussing an advertisement that appeared in the *Southern Recorder*, in which all legal notices in the county required by law to be published were wont to appear. Said Reuben Quillian,

“I remember the lad well. But it has been twenty-five or thirty years since we heard he was dead. He had no property here that I ever heard of. You ought to remember him, Baldy. He used to be a good deal about Brother Langston’s, and I remember that toward the last he stayed about as much at Sister Toliver’s as at Mrs. Catlin’s, who was his aunt.”

“I ’members him,” said Baldy—“a fine, prevous growed-up boy. Yonder comes the man that knewed more o’ his transactions than anybody else, Mr. Quillian. Supposen you puts him on the stand?”

Just at that moment Mr. Duke came up. After salutations in general, in which nothing special was to be remarked except a more than usual reddening of Mr. Duke’s face when he saw Baldy, Reuben Quillian said,

“Mr. Duke, here’s an advertisement that you’ll no doubt be interested in.”

Although the president of the board of trustees of the Dukesborough academy, Mr. Duke did not feel himself competent to read aloud for others’ as well as his own benefit; so he asked Mr. Quillian to read it. It was a citation in usual form by the Court of Ordinary of the county that letters of administration had been applied for by Gerald Fitzgerald on the estate, being in the said county or else-

where in the State, of Gerald Fitzgerald, late of the County of Berkeley, State of Virginia.

It seemed well for Mr. Duke that he had already seated himself upon one of the benches of the piazza. Gazing not at Mr. Quillian, but at the newspaper he held in his hand, and leaning against the railing that extended between the piazza-posts, he clutched at it, as if fearing that otherwise he must fall to the floor. Every tooth in Baldy's head was visible, and his lips flattened into mere wisps of paper as he saw the struggle with the consternation. Partially recovering himself after a few moments, Mr. Duke rose, and, saying he knew nothing at all about the subject, got his own mail and set off to return home.

"I told Uncle Mark that Godamighty were arter him, and a-gainin' on him. Sure's you're born, He's about to grab him."

"Come, Baldy," said Mr. Quillian, "you're too quick. We must not judge any man before hearing the evidence against him."

"Oh, I ain't a-jedgin' of him, Mr. Quillian. I ain't his jedge. He'll find a Jedge that know better what to do with him than me. Didn't you see how he hilt on to the railin'?"

"He did seem embarrassed, Baldy; but, you know, Mr. Duke is an excitable man, and perhaps—"

"Oh, prehaps! But, gentlemen, these transactions goin' to make a previous case."

The party at the post-office soon separated, and the news was spread rapidly. Mrs. Toliver had gone that morning to her plantation. She returned just as Rebecca Woodbridge came in after meeting her brother, who, on his return from his journey, had summoned her there. Said Mrs. Toliver:

"Miss Arbecca, tell me, what *is* all this hurrain' and hul-

labalooin' about that boy Fitz Jarel? I never 'spected to hear of him agin, or at leastways as a-livin', or the dyin' and leavin' o' prop'ty about here. Some say he's dead, and some say he's come to life agin, and here they has it. What do Br'er Woodidge say? They say he know all about it, and he got it from Mandy's pa, or at leastways they 'spicions it, and which, to my opinions, he a sight better keep on 'ith his school, and let 'lone a business whar, as for me, I can't see cler how he's to keep up 'ith his religion. For them lawyers, seems to me, is the most Gallio-like, nothin'-keerin', helter-skelter people I ever see. When they puts up here at Hallier's, on their way to cotes or a-comin' from 'em—even ef it's of a Sunday night—you can hear 'em all over town, a-tellin' o' their jokes and a-laughin' like they keerd nothin' for God ner man; and which, when people's a-comin' from pra'r-meetin'—even as old people as what I am—and hears 'em, I can't keep, not to save my own life, I can't keep from laughin' myself, 'stid of a-meditatin', as I ought, and so git no benefits of the meetin'. But that ain't neither here ner thar now. What do your br'er say about it?"

"You'll have to ask him, my dear friend. The most I know is from copying some of his papers, and he almost made me swear that I would not so much as open my month about that."

"Umph! humph! Thar it is. They'll hunt up people, livin' and dead, smooth and silent like a cat, and the first thing a body know they got 'em, like a duck got a June-bug, whar he can't kick, ner squeal, ner squirm. He were a monstous pretty boy, and I thought a mighty much of him ontwell he help Mr. Jook rnn off with poor Emily. As for any prop'ty he left here, he never had none that ever I knowed of, exceptin' what he had in his trunk and on his

back. Mr. Jook may know about it, if anybody do; and ef he did, I should of thought he'd a-told somebody about it before now. But him, ner neither his father before him, weren't never the kind to bother theirselves about helpin' other people to *their* rights. They both diwided betwixt 'em poor Emily's prop'ty that old Albert Semmes left her. The law give it to 'em, and Br'er Mark keerd no great deal about it before, and he keerd nothin' when his child left him and died away off yonder. It's a curous case. God-amighty understand it; I don't."

Immediately after supper Barney Jarrell walked up to Hallier's. While he had known of the forthcoming of the advertisement that had just appeared, though nothing had been said between him and his counsel as to the name in whose favor the application to the Court of Ordinary was to be made, yet he was surprised at seeing the one that had been inserted. Woodbridge, when they had retired to his room, showed him the judge's order for the issuance of the process for taking the testimony of Jesse Lines, and was in spirits more exuberant than Barney believed possible to a nature usually so staid and serious.

"But who is the living Fitzgerald that applies for the letters of administration?" asked Barney.

Woodbridge, removing the cigar from his mouth, blew into the air a long, slender cone of smoke and thoughtfully contemplated its dissolution. After a time he answered,

"A mere citation, Mr. Jarrell, for administration on the estates of decedents does not need to be very explicit, especially in the matter of the applicant's name. It is merely a notice that any one may give that such administration must be granted, when the term of the notice has expired, to somebody. I inserted that name for several reasons: one because, as I said, there was no need to be explicit in

this preliminary stage; another, because I believed Kinsey Duke might feel less secure by meditating on the thought that there is near him an enemy who sees him, but whom he cannot see. One more reason I have; but, if you have no objection, I will postpone telling that for a few days. May I?"

"Certainly," answered Barney, cordially. "I know it's all right."

"I think so. Our case goes reasonably well. I say *our* case; for I have come to feel a strong personal interest in it, somehow. By-the-way, I found a letter here from Mr. Sanders on my return. The postmaster said it came the day I left. He will be back soon."

"A very interesting young man he is."

"Yes; I like Mr. Sanders." Then he made attenuated cones of smoke.

"Mr. Woodbridge," said Barney, resuming the conversation, "I rather feel that I ought to—if not make another appeal to Mr. Duke—at least warn him of my intentions and their grounds. Mr. Lines has sent him a message to come to see him to-morrow; but I feel as if I ought to hint to him how his reputation may be affected by what is coming."

"As you please." He reflected a moment, and added, "It may be gratifying to you hereafter, on some accounts, to remember that you dealt kindly with him."

It was the period of full moon. Though the year was far advanced the air had the softness and balm that make the fall sweetest of all seasons in Georgia. It was about eight o'clock when Barney, having left Hallier's, reached Barfield's. He paused and debated whether to proceed on down the street or turn up to Mr. Duke's. Recalling the last remark of Woodbridge, he began the ascent. Mr. Duke was walking alone up and down his piazza. The

perturbation of his mind, increased by the event of the morning, had subsided much. He had not heard of the new relation of Barney Jarrell to Jesse Lines, and when recovered from the confusion produced by the advertisement of the *Recorder* he called to mind what Jesse had said at their last interview, and he had no doubt that the delay in being sent for—at least, he hoped so—was attributable to the death of Mrs. Lines. Convinced that by singular mischance the woman Aggy was the same with the child Betsy Semmes, nevertheless his experience in judicial litigation assured him that he need have no fear as to whatever she might have to relate, provided Jesse Lines would remain silent. The physician who occasionally attended the latter had said that he would not survive until winter. Once Jesse was in his grave Mr. Duke felt secure of saving everything that was in danger. In any event it was not possible, he thought, to lose all. Thus he had already found some diversion to his anxiety in the courage to which he had nerved himself, when the invalid's message came. He at once drew up another deed, in which, besides the negroes named in the one already offered, he included, as compensation for the possible loss of Betsy, a negro man famous in the neighborhood for his value, whom Jesse had often mentioned in terms of admiration. So he was surprised at the relief that the calm autumn night had brought after so troubled a day.

This was the first meeting with Barney since his return.

"Haven't seen you before since you got back, Mr. Jarrell," he said, hospitably. "Take a seat. Would of called to see you, but been busy. Wife called on your mother. Very much pleased. How she like the country, and how is she, anyhow?"

"Thanks for your inquiry, Mr. Duke. My mother seems

more indisposed than I hoped she would be after so many days' rest. I came for a little chat, if you are at leisure."

Mr. Duke, looking around him, rose, and proposed, the night being so fair, that they should take a walk. They went forth. Reaching the foot of the hill, they entered the academy lane, and not until they had arrived at a large hickory in the grove and were rested on a bench beneath it did Barney begin what he had to say.

"After what has passed between you and myself, Mr. Duke, I thought I ought to notify you that, having been convinced that my niece is rightfully entitled to the estate once belonging to Emily Langston, I am preparing, as her guardian, to institute suit for its recovery."

"Are—are you?"

"I am."

"Got your evidence all right, suppose?"

He used the language and the manner of one who, having been often in court, had learned the conduct of a litigant.

"As for evidence, Mr. Duke, it is such as to make it morally certain, to my mind, that her cause ought to prevail, if it do not."

"Nigger evidence, suppose?"

Remembering that he had sought this interview more from compassion than any other motive, Barney repressed what otherwise he might have said, and framed his reply with the view to show Mr. Duke how imprudent had been his question.

"I said nothing of negro evidence, sir. To what sort do you allude?"

"Meant no nigger particular, sir. Talk like your evidence wasn't what court ask for. Thought might be nigger. Man there, Mr. Jarrell, got to have good evidence. S'pose you know that, sir?"



"I have no experience, Mr. Duke, in judicial trials. You, who have, can speak with confidence as to what they require in disputing claims. Yet I do know that cases in court are sometimes brought to a decision, in the absence of human testimony, by circumstantial evidence."

"What you drivin' at now, sir?"

"Suppose, sir, it should be proved to the satisfaction—I will not say of a court, but of this community—that Emily Langston gave birth to a child that, in spite of the neglect of its supposed father, lived to the years of maturity, but, dying, left a descendant, who is now alive?"

"All that supposed, sir, when we talked about it before."

"True, sir; and I have not forgotten your disclaimer of paternity to such possible offspring."

"Admitted nothing about it, sir. You made your own case, sir."

"You must have forgotten your words, sir," said Barney, greatly moved by the disgust he felt.

"Say, never admitted any such child ever born, sir. Understand me, sir, please."

"Be it so. Let us take that to be the extent of your admission. But I am now proceeding (independently of what may be your own recollection of the facts) upon the assumption that that one is susceptible of proof—at least, such proof as would be satisfactory to all thoughtful, candid minds in this community. In that event they will naturally inquire why the birth of that child was so long concealed. If some persons should argue that such concealment had been made by a son-in-law, in order to save Mr. Langston from the knowledge of his daughter's dishonor, the majority of those whose judgment in all serious matters is worth most would condemn it. But now, sir, let us sup-

pose that an orphaned girl has come into the community, claiming to be the descendant of Emily Langston, and that it has been known that she and her adult friends in her behalf not only do not believe that Mr. Duke is not her ancestor, but that he and Emily Langston were ever intermarried? Suppose—forbear, sir, please, a moment longer—suppose that the negro girl, Betsy Semmes, for many reasons supposed to be dead, should be ascertained to be alive and now in this village?”

Mr. Duke had risen during this last speech, and even in the shaded moonlight could be seen the struggle he was making with various emotions.

“Got any more supposings, sir? Suppose all night, if you want to. No law against *supposing*, that I know of.”

Barney, retaining his seat, more calm yet more cool, with the serenity of a man thoroughly courageous, said, in a low tone,

“These are all the suppositions I have to make to-night, Mr. Duke. I felt that I ought to present them for your consideration. In my farther action in the case I shall be guided by my counsel.”

After regarding Barney for several moments Mr. Duke said,

“*Your* citation see in paper to-day, eh? Thought your name Jarrell. Claim to be Fitzgerald, sir?”

“My name is not Jarrell, Mr. Duke, nor is it Fitzgerald. That, however, has nothing to do with the matters of present discussion. I will now bid you good-night, sir.”

His companion, saying that he would walk as far as the church, and return home by the main street, went along. Neither spoke for some time. Finally Mr. Duke broke the silence.

“Very hard, Mr. Jarrell, like me, getting old, have self

and family tore up with lawsuits, and—and—such as that."

Barney was sensibly touched by the profound sadness of these words. But he made no answer. They walked on to the church-well, where they must separate.

"Can't understand," said Mr. Duke, stopping, "how such things, 'stead of coming on before, wait till man getting old."

"Mr. Duke, what we know, or believe we know, we did not until very lately. If we had known we should have moved long ago."

"Would suppose, Mr. Jarrell, that people would be monstrous careful believin' what they hear—'specially from niggers—and bringing 'em up against old men with families. Should suppose they'd be willing to compromise."

"Mr. Duke, without being able to see how just such a matter can be compromised, I will suggest to you to consider that yourself at your leisure. Should you wish to see me particularly hereafter, I will be at your service. My mother is far from being well, and I must now return to her."

Barney, bidding good-night, walked on home, and Mr. Duke turned up the street. He had proceeded a couple of hundreds of yards, when two horsemen, who had turned in from the road leading from the north, overtook him. One of them he recognized to be Lewis Sanders. The other seemed to be a man of sixty years or thereabout. Lewis checked his horse for a moment to salute Mr. Duke, and as these moved, chatting together, the other horseman reined back a few paces, and followed on behind, until they reached the walk that led to Mr. Duke's mansion. The stranger looked at the latter as he moved off, and so continued for several rods.

"I expected to find him," said he to Lewis, "and I am already about sure that I have."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

MRS. TOLIVER'S SPECULATIONS AS TO NEWS BROUGHT BY  
LEWIS SANDERS.

At about nine o'clock Mrs. Toliver and her boarder had just risen from their seats in the parlor preparatory to go up-stairs to their chambers, when a negro boy from the tavern came running to the door with a note to Rebecca.

"Tell him, all right: I will remain here until he comes."

"Who can that be a-sendin' of letters this time o' night? 'Pears like it fetches good news, the way you smiles."

"My dear friend, Lewis has returned, is now at Hallier's, and will call by here in half an hour, on his way home."

"That so? He mout of come a little sooner or a little later, and of not of egzited you out of a night's sleep. How-beever, people ain't young but onst, and they has to have their times. But don't you and him set up down here too late. You both of you done cut all your teeth before now, and ought to know what's what. They ain't so mighty powerful many young people I'd go off to bed and leave 'em down-stars with young men. But somehow I feel like I can trust you and Lewis."

"That's a good dear! He will not wish to remain very long, or, if he does, I will not let him."

Mrs. Toliver then went up-stairs. An hour and a half afterward, Rebecca, having also ascended, was moving softly into her chamber, when she heard, spoken in quite a wakeful tone,

"Nobody needn't to be a-creepin' along out thar. Nobody's asleep here as anybody knows of, nor not a-nigh of it."

Pushing open the door, Rebecca passed into Mrs. Tolver's room, set the candle on the bureau, ran to the bed whereon her hostess was resting, leaned over, lifted her arms, and, putting them around her own neck, said,

"I'm so glad you are not asleep! I wanted, before I slept myself, to feel these dear arms around me again."

Then she fell upon her breast and sobbed.

The old lady's alarm was but momentary. Rude though her nature was, she felt assured that Rebecca's sobs did not proceed from grief.

"Lookee here, young 'oman: now, none o' your tryin' to smother me; you jes git right straight off'n top o' me."

Rising to a sitting position, she desired Rebecca to seat herself upon the bed-rail; then, opening wide her arms, she drew her within them.

"Ef I've got to hug you, let a body do it when she can do it convenient. Come, now," she continued, after a few moments, "that 'll do. I'd ruther hear what you got to say than so much carrin' on. I don't know—not as for myself, I don't—how people could 'spect people to go to sleep when thar's candles a-burnin' down-stars, and people a-talkin', and a body mout natchelly ast theirselves, ef they got nobody else to ast but theirselves, what can people have to be talkin' about so much at this time o' night that they can't wait till mornin'?"

"My best, dearest friend, I rejoice that you are awake, so that you can say another prayer for me and bless me to-night."

"Lawsamercy, child! you ought by good rights to know that it ain't in people, 'special a ole sinner like me, to be

a-blessin' of people. People can pray to Godamighty, and I do try to pray; but I don't deny that it's not freckwent enough, and it's in a po', blind, lame, and haltin' way. But the blessin's *a-got* to come from Godamighty. But what about Lewis Sanders? Ef you got anything to tell me, don't keep a-talkin' and a-keepin' me awake all night a-waitin' to hear what it is."

"Well, my friend, Lewis has been to the grave of his mother."

"Well, my child, you know, and Lewis ought to know, that it's appinted to all onst to die, and arfter that the judgment. I hope he found that she were a respectable person of the female sect and sections."

"Of that there is no doubt. She is of as good family as—as any in this neighborhood."

She took a chair by the bedside and looked eagerly at Mrs. Toliver.

"When you begin to talk about good famblies in this here neighborhood here, Miss Arbecca Woodidge, a body got to stop and think; and the question is, what kind o' goodness people means by sich langwidges. F' instant, thar's the Jooks: as for them, they now, it seem, *runs* on famblies, 'special since Sister Jook, who were a Baswell, from Broad River, got among 'em. Before her day the Jooks runned on nothin' but gittin' and getherin' up all they could. Sence she have got among 'em it 'pear like that people got to understand that the Jooks is all of 'em King George's childern, or ef not his'n they at leastways come from some o' his ars, egzecutors, or administrators, so to speak, and which it's appinted to them special to keep the breed o' sich people from runnin' ont o' date. Now, as for Kernel Porter and the Quillians, they never runned on *thar* famblies, but they, ever sence I've knowed 'em,

opens thar doors, and keeps 'em open, for po' and rich. Yit, in old Virginy, people says that knows that they was jst as free along with governors and jedges as they is now 'ith Br'er Mark and me. And then thar's us, me and Br'er Mark; or, a-leavin' of me out, for decent politeness' sake, thar's Br'er Mark, that I don't supposen thar's anybody in this neighborhood, man or 'oman, grown person or child, old or young, maled or femaled, white or black, or merlatter, but what, ef they was to git on the stand and kiss the book, they'd swar that, to the best o' thar knowledge, Br'er Mark never stoled nothin' from them that they knowed of; and which Br'er Mark's grandfather—that's, you mind, on his mother's side—were a 'Piscapolian preacher; and Sister Quillian say that, as for them, they used, them and their famblies, they used to live on the fat o' the land, and they runned along on the very top o' the pot in 'siety; and which the fambly turned agin Br'er Mark's mother, and which she were, in cose, obleeged to be mine also, and likewise because she got married to a po' man and a Babtis', and so thar it is; but which Br'er Mark hisself keer nothin' about famblies, and he say that Jim Griffin—which, as for him and his fambly, they mout of jst growed out o' the ground as fur as anybody know whar they ris from—but which Br'er Mark say that as long as Jim Griffin make the shoe he do, and don't try to palm off mean leather and rotten thread on people, and fling in shoe-strings (and them greased honest and fa'r), him and his fambly 's as good as nary 'nother. But which, upon my soul, Arbecca Woodige, if you keep on a-talkin' about the warous famblies in this here neighborhood here, and keep me awake and a-waitin', I sha'n't git no sleep till daybreak; and it look like by good rights as to-morrow is of a meetin'-day; and it not a-comin' but onst a month, a body ought to try to git some

sleep, and not to be a-constant a-noddin' and a-bumpin' of thar heads agin the benches before 'em ner the back o' them that's a settin' on' em, and 'special enduorin of the sermon, which I were allays ashamed o' myself and mortified with myself to boot that somehow I sildom can keep from noddin' in the sermon, onlest it's a fun'il sermon, or in time of a revival, so I can get to cryin' and give my nose a good blowin', and— But, law me! ain't you *never* goin' to tell me about Lewis Sanders'es people?"

She settled herself more firmly on her seat, drew up first one pillow, then the other, rested her elbows upon them, and looked as though she intended, if compelled to listen to Miss Woodbridge all night, to guard herself, if possible, against fatigue.

"Lewis's mother, dear friend, is—or was—exactly of the rank of Mr. Langston."

The mysterious look Rebecca gave was answered by the a stern inquiry:

"Look at me, young 'oman—look straight at me. What you drivin' at with them langwidges and them 'spicious looks?"

"Lewis Sanders is the son of Emily Langston!"

Tossing away the pillows from beneath her arms, lifting the bedclothes and dashing them against the foot-board, Mrs. Toliver rose from the bed, strode to the bureau, seized her spectacles, and put them on. Her nightcap was awry, and her tangled gray locks were dispersed over her back and bosom. Glaring upon Rebecca, she said,

"That *can't* be so."

"It can be, and is."

The old lady looked up, joined her hands, and prayed,

"May Godamighty forgive you, Kinsey Jook, for flingin' off her child and youn to boot!"



"Mr. Duke, thank God, dear friend, is not Lewis's father!"

"What?" cried Mrs. Toliver, in increased consternation.

"Lewis was afraid he was until reaching home to-night."

"Afraid! My Lord! is the boy afraid o' bein' the child of his father which and who his mother were married to? What sort o' talk's that? What's this world a-comin' to?"

"Now, my dear friend, I've told you all I know. He tells me that brother says we must rest perfectly secure—that in a very short time, perhaps next week, the whole history will fully appear, and show that Lewis is the son of Emily Langston, and not the son of Mr. Duke, and yet is as honorably born as any other man."

The old lady was bewildered.

"I understands no sich doctings of people's a-gittin' of married and a-havin' of childern and yit a-not of bein' the fathers of 'em. What *will* po' Br'er Mark say to sich as that? He have had enough already, seem like—"

She sank into a chair and wept heartily. As soon as possible Rebecca got away to her own chamber. She was awakened more than once during the night by groans uttered in that adjoining.

The next day was the monthly meeting for the Baptist church. In the mind of Lucius Woodbridge was a sense of regret that he had been so much engrossed with earthly interests as not to feel fully prepared for this solemn occasion. But for its recurrence he would have visited or called upon Barney Jarrell early in the morning, in order to confer with him upon startling intelligence he had received the night before from the old gentleman who had come with Lewis Sanders. As it was, he sent him a note next morning, just before going to church. It was a line or two of introduction to this stranger, and invited Barney to a conference early in the afternoon.

## CHAPTER XL.

## ONE MORE VISIT FROM MR. DUKE TO HIS INVALID FRIEND.

IN spite of something like assurance in the mind of Kinsey Duke that he was safe against assault through the courts—the danger that from long experience he regarded as most to be dreaded—he spent a restless night. Annoyed by the anxiety of his wife on account of his unusual wakefulness, he at length rose from bed, after muttering several imprecations upon her, and retired to another chamber. Next morning he waited for the time to come when stricter privacy could be had at the house of Jesse Lines by the withdrawal of Doolana, who he supposed would go to church. Looking over toward Barney Jarrell's as he passed, and seeing no person, he concluded that all had gone on to meeting, though it was half an hour at least before it would be necessary for those who resided so near to set out.

Now, Barney an hour before had taken his mother over to Jesse's. She had been in rather depressed spirits for several days, and complained of being unwell. They had, therefore, determined to keep away from religious service that morning and spend the day at Jesse's.

When his arrival was announced Barney's mother was sitting by Jesse's bedside, while Barney and Doolana were walking in the garden in the rear of the house. About half a mile from the village Mr. Duke overtook the stranger whom he had seen the night before, who was walking leisurely along the road. Only a few words passed between

them, in the uttering of which the old man eyed him in a manner which so annoyed him that he spurred his horse on.

At his approach Barney's mother rose and retired into the adjoining chamber. After his entrance, the stranger coming up and inquiring for Barney, the latter left Doolana, came around the house to the gate, and, having read Woodbridge's note, the two stood there and talked earnestly together for some time, after which they walked quietly to the front steps of the mansion, on the lowest of which they sat down and waited for Mr. Duke to come out.

Never had Kinsey Duke gone to this place with greater heaviness upon his heart. Conscious that if he had a *forte* it was not the employment of words for comforting the afflicted, even while trying to frame a few phrases he remembered with pain how often he had ridiculed the woman who had lately died, and been the means, not only of diminishing the value of her counsels and remonstrances, but of subtracting from her husband's respect and affection. Though never having been an inebriate, yet this morning his face, red and swollen, looked as if he had lately been in a debauch.

When he saw the pale, dead-looking countenance of Jesse he shuddered; but, blundering out a few words of sympathy, he took the chair vacated by Barney's mother, sat down, and the two looked in silence at each other. The look, the sound of Jesse's voice, assured the visitor that a great change had been wrought since he had been there last.

"Mr. Jook," said Jesse, after a pause of several moments, "ef you come to see me about the losin' of my wife, I some runther you wouldn't name her name. She's dead and goned, and somehows I don't keer to hear her name named, exceptin' o' them that keerd anything for her when she were a-livin'. I were never that to her I ought to of been, and which

I know and I'm obleeged to acknowledge that that's mosely my own lookout, and nobody else's; and yit—"

He paused, and a tear was in his eye. He wiped it away, and proceeded:

"And yit it weren't so much what I done to *her*, but what I done to myself. I never beat her, ner cussed her, ner 'bused her jes so right out and out, though I has freck-went got mad, and cussed all around and about her. I'm thankful to say that I never cussed *her* pine-blank, pinte, straight up and down. For she were one o' them kind that—well, upon my soul! I don't see how a mean, bitin' dog, ef he could of knowed how too cuss, could of had the heart to cuss a person that meant no more harm than what she did, nother for man ner for beast. But what I were a-talk-in' about were this: she were a person that hated—because she were a kind of a person that couldn't jes natchel keep from hatin'—the ways of people that she knowed weren't fa'r and straight up and down. I knowed that, and, 'stid o' honorin' her for it, and a-follerin' o' her advice, I turned my heart agin her, and I follered the advice o' your father before you, and arfter he died I follered yourn. I had a toler'ble good start, and were a-doin' of reason'ble well, when your father he made me a jestic o' the peace, and larnt me tricks that now, when it's too late, I'm sorry I ever larnt. But let them go. He got the 'vantage of many another man by 'em, and what good did that do him the day he died? But let that go too, and let everythin' go, exceptin' o' what him and you made me do about them childern."

"Jes," said Mr. Duke, looking around in an agony of anxiety, while he drew from his pocket the deed he had prepared, "for Godamighty's sake let me settle—"

"Hush!" said Jesse, in a voice that sounded as if it had come from the bottom of a grave—"hush! tell I git through,

and then we'll try to see what can be done. When I married them childern I never seed a prettier nor a loviner couple. When they ast me not to tell on 'em tell they give the word and told on theirselves, I told 'em sich as that weren't right to be kep' hid too long, and they promised me that before long he'd other write to his father or go to him—and which the po' boy was afraid of his father, and that he mont turn his back agin the gurl he married. I broke my word to 'em, and I told your father, because I were afeard not to, when I knowed that no sooner did old Ab Semmes die, a-leavin' o' that prop'ty, he writ to you in Firginny, a-orderin' you to come on home and marry the gurl. For he had sot his heart on the land, and 'special on that mill-seat, and he had swore he'd have it when old Ab died. And when I told him the gurl was already done gone-goned and married to that boy, he cussed and he swore agin, he did, and then he made me advise 'em to keep on a-hidin' o' their secret, a-hopin' the boy 'd git tired of her arfter a while, and go off and leave her, a-knowin' he were the onlest child, and his father were rich and old, and helt hisself fur above sich as Mr. Langson; and when he found the boy had no notion o' forsakin' her, and things got to whar they couldn't be hid much longer, we all of us hustled 'em off, and you went along with 'em. And then your father—not me: God know I didn't take no part in that—he spread the news that the gurl had runned off with you, and in your name he took possession o' the niggers and the land. Nobody upon the top o' Godamighty's blessed yeth *but* Am Jook 'd a-done sich a oudacious piece of business; but he were that kind that look like what he wanted bad—like he had been wantin' that land—he'd march into hell-fire for it, or leastways up to its very mouth. He were a-calkilatin' on you a-doggin' of them childern, and a-keepin' 'em from

the boy's father long as you could, and a-puttin' his mind agin the gurl more'n it 'd a-been anyways, and a-insinooat-in' agin her, like she were the offscourin' o' creation. And then, ef that didn't work as he calkilated, he, a-havin' o' possession, spected you'd git a compernise ruther 'n they'd have a law-suit so fur from home, and which they'd know he'd know 'how to keep it in cote, and fret 'em and bother 'em more'n what they'd think the land were worth. As for me, I were to have nothin' to do with it, exceptin' to keep my mouth shet; and at the time, though I knowed it weren't right, yit—yit—oh, my God! ef it was to do over again—But let that go; it's too late for me now to have much luck a-tryin' to gether up pieces o' chainey that's been broke, and scattered, and trompled on, and buried in warons places in the ground now for thirty year. When the letter come from the boy's father that he got drownded, and he said nothin' about the gurl, and your father told me that you had married her so quick because her and you was already fell in love with one another before her husband died, and arfter a while you come back and fotch news that she were dead, I never had—God know I never had—nary doubt that him and you was both a-tellin' o' the truth."

"What *I* said, Jes, was the truth, and—"

"Wait, I tell you. Wait till I git through. Somehow I don't feel—not this mornin', I don't—like I could stand bein' fooled with like I has been; and yit I feels like I wanted, arfter I git through, of a-tryin' to give you some advice, and tharfore *and* wharfore I don't want you to make me mad and make me go to cussin', so I can't do you the favor I've got on my mind, in givin' you advice, if you don't rile me and you'll let me go on with what it's on my mind to say pinted and particklar. Now, will you keep still till I git through—will you or won't you?"

Mr. Duke breathed hard and fast.

"Cert'nly, Jes. Let me defend myself when you git through?"

"When I've done said what I've got to say you may talk all day, ef you want to."

He rested a few moments, then resumed :

"That little nigger gal that you all took along with you, because your father, and you, too, knowed that, little as she were, she 'bleeged to know a few things which suit nary one o' you to git out—when you said she were dead, and her young mistess died without any a'r, I b'lieved them, too, Godamighty know I did, or I wouldn't—at least-ways I hope now I wouldn't—of gone pardners along with you all in the 'vidin' o' that prop'ty, be the pile that fell to me even littler 'n what it were, or be it bigger. I'm thankful I b'lieved all them things. So we jined pardners—me and your pa and you. Your pa he built his mill, and when he got her to runnin' to suit him, no sooner had she got to runnin' smooth and easy, death struck him, and, my Godamighty ! I wonder now it didn't strike me and you with a backhanded lick when it bounced back from him !"

His eyes glared with a horror that was awful to behold. As Kinsey Duke made an uneasy motion he continued, hastily :

"Wait, I tell you ; I ain't nigh through yit. I jes stopped to git my breath. I'll let you know when I'm through. Well," he continued, slowly, in a low tone, "we jined pardners. My part o' the profits, so to speak, little as they was, 'peared to me reason'ble for jest of keepin' o' my mouth shet. My wife, that's dead and gone, though she knowed nothin' o' that cussed business, she were agin my takin' o' them niggers, and she begged me not to do it, because she knowed it were obleeged to be a lie of my

havin' o' the money to buy 'em; and she knowed ef a Jook *give* 'em to me there were obleeged to be somethin' rotten somewhars or somewhars else. It were me then that thought she were a fool. My Lord! the deffer'nt views that deffer'nt people has at deffer'nt times!"

The invalid, as he lay panting, feebly gathering his remaining strength for his last talk, was less an object of commiseration than the powerful man whose breathing could be heard in the four corners of the room. Jesse, without moving the rest of his body, had gradually turned his head until he could look without constraint fully into his visitor's face. Pale, seeming as dead but for the eyes that glistened through the glaze of age and sickness, he pursued deliberately what he had to say, with an occasional interjection of self-reproach of one and another kind, by which it was to be seen that his mind was preyed upon both by remorse and the pain that a bad man suffers when he finds that even in the evil he has done he has been deluded and surpassed by one to whom he believed himself to have been superior in craftiness.

"Now, Kinch Jook," he said, in a tone low but distinctly audible, "they is some things I know positive, and they is some that, if I couldn't sw'ar to, I'm jest as certain of in my mind as if I'd a-been thar and seed 'em; and I've been a-thinkin' jes here lately — jes this week, you may say — I've been a-runnin' over in my mind how I ever could of been sich a Godforsakened fool, although I seed the re-cords o' the case whar they had made out like they sued you for that little nigger and made you compermise the damage — I jes gits disgusted with myself, and see that I must of never had sense enough to git out o' a shower o' rain to of believed any sich a piece o' foolerin'. And yit I'm glad I b'lieved that, too, disgusted as what I am now with myself



*fer* believin' of it. For it make my skeerts cle'r o' what po' old Wilet underwent, though I hain't never been a man that thought much about niggers a-troublin' o' theirselves about the partin' o' women and childern, exceptin' that my wife, that's now dead and gonod, were worked up nigh as bad as old Wilet, and both of 'em a-cryin' bothered and pestered me. And yit I'm thankful, for warous reasons, that she *didn't* die. Now, don't you interrup' me, Kinch Jook, because it's onuseless, and which I have seed the said nigger as aforesaid, and talked with her, and got a pile, jes a level pile, o' information out'n her, and which, ef they can't be fotch up in cote, Godamighty is bound to fetch 'em out some day; and you may mark what I tell you. For somehow, jes here lately, I'm a-beginnin' to b'lieve in God-amighty more'n I used to, and Doolana have said that He want me, before my head git cold, to out with all the meanness I've done myself, and what I know of other people of doin' by my help, and so have everything acknowledged and settled up now; and it's for that reason I sent for you. One time I jes thought I'd shet up my mouth tighter 'n befo' and die jes so, and let things take keer o' theirselves; but Doolana say that won't begin to do, and she have tore up my mind to that, Kinch Jook, that other you got to out with these lies, that's got to be so old that they've got to be rotten, *or I will*. And that not to be a-waitin' for no cote. For, I tell you now, I got no time to be projectin' with the argin' about nigger evidence."

Slight as it was, Kinsey Duke was thankful for the momentary sense of relief from these words, which showed that the evidence of facts, ruinous if established, was of a kind that, in such view of his case, was not to be dreaded. Jesse seemed not to notice this relief. After a moment's rest he proceeded:

“ Now, Kinch Jook, I want you to b'ar in mind that this here case here it ain't a case before Jedge Dooly, ner nary 'nother jedge, that 'll let in this and hustle out that, and stop this lawyer here and that 'n thar, and order the jury what they got to b'lieve and what they gotn't not to b'lieve; and not to save my life can I keep from bein' of sorry for you, a-knowin' how you 'bleeged to feel when you know how this case, onbeknownst to you and suddent, have been sas-sarared and carr'd up to Godamighty, who keer no more about the pints o' law and fetchin' in this and flingin' out that kind o' evidence than—than you did for them little childern o' Emily Langson, and which you can't look me and Godamighty both in the face and say you didn't never knowed of 'em.”

They looked upon each other in silence for several moments. Then the accuser turned his head and, looking upward, said,

“ My God! *you*, 'ithout my a-tellin' of you—you know how he done and projecked 'ith that boy and that girl, and kept 'em both from writin' to nary one o' thar parrents; and how, when the po' boy got drowned, he grabbed hold o' his widder, and promised to car' her to his father; and, 'stid of doin' o' that, how he pulled her here and pulled her thar, up and down, up and down, ontell the po' thing couldn't stand it, and she died, after havin' of her childern; and then how he leff one where it were borned, and hustled off with the tother somewhars, and let it die; or mout a' drowned it, for what I know; but— Oh, my Lord! you *ought* to know, by good rights, what he done with that 'un when he took it away; and I got no doubt you does know, and been a-knowin' of it ever sence he done it, and ef it were the truth or a lie he told that little nigger that it were dead and goned; and the wonder have been with me,

Kinch Jook" (turning his eyes upon him again), "how Godamighty could of stood sich as that so long, and how He could of let you fool people like you did in makin' out like you'd married that poor little widder, and lookin' like you felt so bad for losin' o' your wife, and yit a-goin' straight off and marryin' of another."

Kinsey Duke drew out his handkerchief and wiped away the tears that gushed from his eyes. Compassion at once seized the invalid, and he said,

"You're sorry, is you, Mr. Jook? 'Pon my word, I'm sorry for you."

"Oh, Jes, Jes!" he said, bitterly, "I done nothing in this case wasn't obliged to do. Had my way I'd gone back to Virginny. Didn't want to marry when I did. You know sort of man pa was. But you don't know all. Got all wrong."

He rose and paced the room. It was a brief conflict between the promptings of conscience and those of self-preservation, and the latter soon prevailed. He looked upon the dying man, and, though he dreaded the persistent deception of one who seemed as if in the very presence of the Almighty, yet he thought of his wife, his son, his large possessions, his headship of the school-board, his good name among men, and felt there was too much to lose without a desperate struggle. He stopped and looked down upon the old invalid whom he had always owned as a slave, until now, when death was approaching, the bonds were breaking, and the master being abused and compassionated; and the thought that ruin was to come upon himself from such a witness, with his one fact and a telltale negro, roused his disgust and impelled him to defiance. The change was observed by Jesse; and though his voice grew not louder, his eyes dilated as he proceeded:

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“ You thought that little nigger were too young and too afeard o’ the threats you gin her, and you carried her away too fur for her to hurt you with her tellin’ about them children, and the nigger ’oman that you fotch home when you come back, and which your old father, as people usened to ’spicion, pizened her to death—Godamighty know ef that’s so too—I don’t; but I’ve found out, jes only here this last week, that when she that same nigger were a-dyin’ she told the tother niggers that you treated Emily Langson like a dog, and that she weren’t no more your wife than she were herself—and not as much—and that she left some children. But *that’s* not so much to the pint as what I’m goin’ to tell you about that little nigger who you carr’ed her away and sold her in the upper part o’ Firginny; and that man that you sold her to got broke, jes only las’ year, and Barney Jarrell seed her in a speckerlator’s gang in Richmond, and bought her; and—”

A low, contemptuous laugh broke from Mr. Duke.

“ Jes Lines, perfect wonder to me how man your sense can believe such stuff.”

“ Umph! humph!” muttered Jesse, with the satisfied smile that a man wears when, having intended, after just remonstrance, to offer salutary advice, he turns away from another by whom his friendly admonitions have been rejected. “ He ’tends to fight it out, I see, like he allays do, and think he can whip, like he allays have. Well, my skeerts is cler—at leastways o’ that.”

He tapped with his flap on the table and called twice, “ Betsy Semmes! Betsy Semmes!”

Immediately the door of the adjoining chamber was opened, and Aggy came forth, followed by her mistress. The negro was trembling. The white woman stood erect, and looked Mr. Duke full in the face.

"At last—at last!" she said.

Kinsey Duke regarded the two as if suddenly roused from a horrid, drunken dream.

"At last, Mr. Lines!" she said, looking, not at him, but at Mr. Duke. "I know not how many wives this gallant gentleman has had, nor how many among them he has forgotten, as he seems to have done in the case of me, Caroline Jamison. Little did I and my son suspect that it was his father that had so outraged Emily Langston Fitzgerald."

"What!" screamed Jesse Lines. Struggling, he raised himself upon his elbows. "And him Doolana's plotted to git married to *is* his son, and the onlest by good rights he's got!" Then he gave a loud, prolonged shriek of exultation. Doolana, rushing in, seated herself upon the bed and took to her bosom his tottering head. He looked up into her face with a smile, and instantly expired. Mr. Duke, drawing from his pocket a knife, strode forward to Aggy, seized her by the throat, and as she dropped upon the floor and he bit at the long, keen blade, it flew to the spring-back handle with a suddenness that drove the point into his mouth and pierced far into the cheek. At that instant Barney and Mr. Granger, coming in, dragged him from the prostrate woman, and wrested the knife from his hand.

"I don't know," said Barney, "whether I ought to kill you or not, you cruel—"

"Hold, my son!" cried his mother. "Hold both your hand and your tongue! That man is your father!" Barney recoiled and leaned against the wall.

"Mr. Duke," said the stranger, "it don't look right to be adding to a man's embarrassments when they're already as much as he can carry. But my name is Granger, and I had the honor of making your acquaintance thirty years

ago, in Norfolk. As you seem to be occupied with other business just now, I refer you for what I had to say about some old transactions to Mr. Lewis Sanders, one of your neighbors."

Until this moment none but Doolana had observed that her father was dead, for what had since occurred was almost in a twinkling. A moan from her, as, with his head reclined upon her bosom, her own leaned against the headboard, attracted attention. Kinsey Duke, staring wildly alternately at Mr. Granger, Barney, and the woman he had deserted, turned toward the bed, whereon the yet open eyes of Jesse seemed to return his gaze. Blood from the wound in his cheek trickled down his shirt-bosom. Lifting his hands, trembling, as if he would screen himself from sight of the emaciated corpse, just as his fingers were meeting before his face he groaned and fell prostrate upon the floor.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

### SEPARATION AND UNION.

THE news flew into the village. The sermon had just been concluded, followed by the hymn and the prayer. Mrs. Duke had been observed to be pale and anxious. Mrs. Toliver, thankful for being saved from somnolency, had felt sweet with the words of consolation as to the recognition of the departed in the next world. For though it was not a set sermon in honor of Sister Lines, who had so recently departed in the midst of holy hopes, it was understood to have been suggested by that peaceful death, and prognostic of what would eventuate when that event was becomingly

solemnized. Mark Langston seemed serene in the thought that the blessedness of such reunion was not far off from him, in preparing himself for which he neither rested nor hasted. Lucius Woodbridge was disquieted by thoughts of having been thinking more of things earthly than heavenly. The Quillians, as always, whether in church or out, were composed and calm. Mrs. Catlin, still as a statue, withheld from nodding by that instinctive sense of politeness which invited guests, who know what is decent, are bound to feel in other folks' houses, was revolving in her mind how it could be that people could preach with such unction, pray so fervently, and sing so with the understanding, and yet confine baptism to immersion, and withhold it from children even when dying. Baldwin Riddle, from honest, humble principle, having occupied a remote back seat, full of respectful deportment, willing to acknowledge himself nothing but a poor worldly fiddler, was neither congratulating in his mind nor envying those who had derived more comfort and instruction than himself from these exercises.

The first to issue from the door heard the news, and, whispering back, it was known before the house was emptied. Several men—some on foot, and some on horseback—repaired to the house of Jesse Lines. Doctor Stone was met at the gate, moving off with the patient, who had been placed in a spring-wagon.

Arrived at home, Mr. Duke called beseechingly for Mark Langston. Mrs. Duke, frantic with terror, after spreading a bed in the parlor, according to her husband's request, knelt beside him as he was laid upon it.

"My Godamighty, Belle!" he exclaimed. "Go away—go clean away—you and Am too. Oh, Lord Godamighty!"

Instinct—fear of she knew not what—made her leap up and shrink as from a dragon. Repairing to her chamber,

she threw herself upon the bed. Seeing the pillow by the side of her own, she sprang forth, and rushing into another room, where her own peculiar belongings were kept, she prostrated herself upon the floor.

The confession made by the sufferer to Mark Langston was complete and abject. Ruined in name, prostrate from bodily exhaustion, which he felt to be incurable, he pleaded the tyranny of his father, who, from his boyhood, had made him the instrument to further, to the extent of his powers, his schemes for family aggrandizement. Him he had never known what it was even to attempt to disobey without punishment that was terrible to remember. The old man had set his heart upon the property of Emily Langston, especially the land. Heretofore, while trading in Virginia, Kinsey, according to instructions from home, had assumed various names, and he assured Mark that even now he did not know to what name he was entitled, as his father had more than once told him that *Duke* was the last of many himself had borne, and that it was of vital importance that his identity should never be ascertained in North Carolina and Virginia. On the death of Albert Semmes he was summoned from Virginia, where he had lately become enamored of Mrs. Jamison, a young widow of the County of Nottaway. On his return his father, finding that the purpose of marrying him to Emily Langston had been disappointed by her previous marriage to the lad Fitzgerald, hurried him off with the young couple, with orders to watch them closely, and, at all events, obtain by any means possible ownership of the bride's landed estate. When they had reached the borders of Virginia the sickness she suffered from on leaving home, and which had increased on the journey, became so serious that she and her husband had to rest, while himself pursued his way, and was married to Mrs. Jamison.



It was two months afterward when he received a letter from Fitzgerald, urging him to go on to his father and endeavor to prepare him for the news of his marriage, and implore his forgiveness. Instead of doing this he repaired to where they were staying. Finding that the wife had somewhat improved, Fitzgerald left her, in compliance with his advice, and, on the way to his father, was drowned while attempting to cross the Rapidan River.

It was in pursuance of his counsels that, besides the brief notes sent from Augusta, they concluded to write no more until reaching their destination. These counsels were in obedience to Ammon Duke, who had determined to make all that was possible out of secrecy, and the increased chances by such conduct that the elder Fitzgerald's disgust would be exacerbated by suspicions of the dishonor of his son's connection. When informed of the lad's death Ammon, who knew not of his son's marriage, sent peremptory orders to him to marry the widow if possible, or, at all events, to prevent her access to her husband's father, or at least his recognition. Finding that Mr. Fitzgerald, now old and infirm, had not heard of his son's marriage, and knowing that it was believed at Dukesborough that he, not young Fitzgerald, was the husband, he took her in charge, under pretence of conducting her to her father-in-law, to whom, in her frantic grief for the loss of her husband, she desired to go. After travelling hither and thither he at last succeeded in convincing her that she would not be recognized by a family so aristocratic. She then fell into despair, and begged to be carried back home. Overcome by pity, he determined to comply with her entreaties, and it was while on the way that, having camped for the night near a country inn in the County of Surry, after giving birth to twins—a male and a female—she died.

The disposition he made of these he solemnly declared to have been intended as only temporary, and to provide for whatever contingencies he should find matters had been placed in by his father in Georgia. On his return he found that he, to whom he had written of these circumstances, had already spread the report of Emily Langston having died—and, of course, childless—and in his name had taken possession of her whole estate. In vain he remonstrated, for it was now evident that farther concealment of facts was necessary to the safety of the whole family. When informed that Kinsey was already married to Mrs. Jamison the old man shuddered with fright and wrath, and said that of all persons the Jamisons were those whom it most behooved him to avoid, and that it had been mainly from some transactions he had had with them that he had fled from North Carolina and taken the name by which he was then known. Compliance with commands seemed inevitable to avoid his father's being disgraced and punished as a felon. It seemed fortunate for the chances of farther concealment of his own doings that his real name while in Virginia had been unknown, except to the child Betsy Semmes and a negro woman whom young Fitzgerald had bought, with his assistance, to wait upon his wife during the period of her sickness. The former he carried to a county far North and sold. The sham suit was afterward instituted, at his father's suggestion, by the advice of the lawyer Staples. The woman he had brought with him. Her he had never had any fear of keeping harmless, from the terror that all his negroes had of him, even if—what he had always suspected—she had doubted the truth of his own asseverations and the general report in the community of his marriage with Emily Langston. What only he had regarded as at all dangerous was the knowledge by Jesse Lines of the

marriage with Fitzgerald. But he had not been in great apprehension from that source, because of the liberal allowance made to him of the spoils and his ignorance of all the other facts in the case.

In all Mr. Duke said to Mark nothing was more affecting than when he spoke of the desertion of his wife. Committed to his father's career of crime, he had obeyed his injunction in marrying the woman whom the latter had chosen for him, though not until after repeated entreaties to be allowed to return to the wife for whom, during thirty years of absence, he had not ceased to feel the affection born during his brief conjugal life. He bewailed most humbly the wrongs he had done to all; but he called upon God to witness that he had done nothing throughout all that sad history from his own volition, except in the marriage with Mrs. Jamison. The tears streamed from his eyes when he spoke of what he would have done and sacrificed, if he had ever known that a child had been born of that marriage. He admitted that for many months he had been tormented by the fear that Amanda Jarrell was a descendant of Emily Langston, but declared, with evident sincerity, that he had never suspected until to-day that such was the case with Lewis Sanders. He appealed finally to Mark for forgiveness, and implored him to use his endeavors to obtain for Mrs. Duke and Ammon as favorable terms as possible. The old man, having no feeling but compassion, freely forgave, and encouraged him to seek the peace of Heaven. When he rose to go Mr. Duke wept aloud.

When Mark had left, Mrs. Duke, clad in the plainest attire, cloaked and bonneted, came from her chamber and, advancing to the parlor-door, said,

“Liar, scoundrel, robber, seducer, assassin! God Almighty may forgive you. *He* can afford it, I suppose. I cannot.”

Looking at him for a few moments, she abruptly turned away, and walked out of the house down the street to the church, where, taking the road leading north, her son found her, an hour afterward, five miles from the village, endeavoring to plod onward upon her weary way.

Mark proceeded slowly up the street to his sister's, where, besides herself, were Rebecca, Amanda, Lewis Sanders, and Baldwin Riddle.

"My Lordofmighty, Br'er Mark!" cried Mrs. Toliver, "what's all this about Mr. Jook's warous wives and women? Is the world a-comin' to a eend? Look like it ought to, by good rights."

"Come, come, now, Sister Nancy. We must think of our own shortcomings, and be thankful that we haven't been beset by the temptations that poor Mr. Duke has had. If I ever saw a case to be pitied it is his, and I hope that never a hard word against him will be spoke by anybody that's nigh to me."

Calm, solemn, majestic, he looked around; then added :

"A heap more has come to me in my old age than I had any right to expect, Lewis. I hain't a doubt but what God put it into my heart to love you soon as you come here, a boy, fifteen year ago. This little one," he continued, as Amanda, answering his beckon, approached him, and he took her hair tenderly in his hands, "she's new to me; but I'm thankful she's been raised so well, and has come, before I die, to take the place of my dear child. Now let your poor old grandfather beg a blessing on you two."

Amanda sank upon her knees. Lewis took the hand of Rebecca, and lingered, looking alternately at her and Mark.

"That's so, then, what I hear?" said Mark, smiling. "Well, my daughter, from what they tell me of you, I'm

glad of it. Bring her along, Lewis. There's another yit," he continued, when they had knelt before him. "Baldy, my son, nobody can git fur ahead of you in my heart."

Baldy made some uncertain steps. When he had approached within a few feet he suddenly stopped, and, the tears streaming from his eyes, shouted, "Oh, Uncle Mark! sich transactions ain't for me." He then rushed from the house and mounted Charles Henry, who, impelled by spur and imprecation, dashed furiously away.

"Poor dear boy!" said Mark, as he fled. "You must all be good to him when I'm gone."

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## CHAPTER XLII.

### SETTLEMENTS.

THE occurrences of Sunday precipitated the settlement of issues that Lucius Woodbridge for some time had been meditating upon, with suspicions that, after the meeting with Mr. Granger, amounted to moral certainty, or at least strongest conviction. Comparing dates of the death of Emily Fitzgerald and of the desertion of Barney Jarrell's mother by her husband, and the descriptions of the latter as given by Barney, with Mr. Granger's recollections of the man who had brought Lewis Sanders when an infant to Norfolk, he had concluded that they were identical. This conclusion was reached too late to notify Barney that night, and, as before said, next morning he wrote to him asking him to call upon him after church or early after dinner. The note was borne by Mr. Granger, who, in his haste to confer with Barney, was unwilling to wait.

Matters that so long had been involved came thus to

sudden solution. Kinsey Duke became a whimpering, harmless imbecile. He conceived an ardent, childish fondness for Barney, and seemed to have wholly forgotten Ammon and his mother. A few days before he died — six months afterward — in a lucid interval, he begged for a sight of Barney's mother. She went to him at once. His penitence was so anguishing that his reason almost immediately again left him, never to return. Although Mrs. Duke would not accept of any property except what she had brought at her intermarriage, Barney without much difficulty, after setting off to Lewis and Amanda that belonging to them, induced Ammon to take half the remainder. When Mr. Duke died, Barney, now married to Doolana, removed to the far west. Aggy and her son Charles accompanied them, as there was now no motive to induce her to remain in her native place. Her mother, already in dotage, could never be brought to realize that Aggy was her daughter. Sometimes she seemed to be on the point of recognition, and as if her natural tenderness would gush forth, but, turning suddenly away, she would cry piteously, and say,

“This here's a gweat big 'oman, and name Aggy. My child was a'most a baby, and she were name Betsy. Don't know what make people try to projick wid old people dat way.”

Her memory, ever travelling back, brought the long past nearer and nearer, and she could not comprehend the changes wrought in thirty years. As Jesse Lines said when, looking upon the corpse of his wife, he thought how differently he might have treated her, it was too late. Yet she grew more and more fond of croning lullaby songs, in mumbling over one of which one day she died.

Not long after the disclosures we have narrated Baldwin

Riddle, having obtained from Mark Langston a reluctant consent, went, at his own expense, to Virginia, and brought back Emily's remains. The servant who accompanied him reported that on their return his master had slept in the wagon during the day, and at night watched at the camp-fire, with a loaded musket by his side.

Mark Langston now, as when he believed himself childless, neither exalted nor depressed, referred all to God. He lived to see several children born to Lewis and Rebecca, and Amanda married to Colin Quillian, Jr., his cousin Harriet having been given to Lucius Woodbridge some years before.

The widows Catlin and Toliver henceforward had doctrinal wars more infrequent and less acrimonious, and their truces were more prolonged and affectionate. The former had grown to be mainly occasional fond entreaties each to the other to study more carefully the words of our Saviour and His first, most favored apostles, if for no other purpose than that they two might be united in all things, as they were in mutual affection. Yet the great mystery, on which each had pondered so many years, as to how the other could have become so pious and lovable in spite of the errors to which she clung to the last, was not to be resolved until, not far apart, they had followed old Mark on the inevitable way.

Baldwin Riddle was long reluctant to admit himself to be an old man. He appointed himself the especial beau of Rebecca Woodbridge's first child, a daughter, named Emily Langston Fitzgerald, until she became old enough to perceive the incongruity, and it then became his pride to be called "grandpa" by her and the younger brothers and sisters. These were the last to hear the discoursings of "Miss Nancy;" but they had been born too late to know, except

by tradition, what used to be the "Walls o' Jericho." The aged warrior-bard, conscious of the decay of strength needed for the rendition of this solemn, heroic piece, was wont to answer their teasings in painless sadness about thus:

"Childern, grandpa's old fingers has got too stiff for them old-fashion, Bible-transactionous, fightin' chunes. You ought to of heerd him when he were young and lively, and he had the strenk and the sperrit. For I tell you it take strenk *and* sperrit, sich as old grandpa ain't got now, to fetch down them everlastin' walls. Even Miss Nancy, seem like, have got stiff like grandpa. Everything have its day—folks and fiddles. But if you childern 'll allays mind what your ma tell you, and never learns how to tell no lies, you 'll go through safe."

THE END.



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