"'AND WHEN YOU'RE THOO, I GOT ANOTHER GOLD PIECE FOR YOU.'"—[See p. 146.]

OGEECHEE CROSS-FIRINGS

A Novel

By R. M. JOHNSTON

AUTHOR OF

"MR. ABSALOM BILLINGSLEA" "DUKESBOROUGH TALES"
"OLD MARK LANGSTON" ETC.

"*Entys'd*
To take to his new love, and leave her old despys'd"
FAËRIE QUEENE

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
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1889

TO THE MEMORY

OF

RIGHT REV. GEORGE FOSTER PIERCE

WHO DURING MANY YEARS WAS THE AUTHOR'S CLOSE NEIGHBOR AND FRIEND
WHOSE LOVE OF THE HUMOROUS, BOTH AS A HEARER AND A REHEARSER
WHOSE MARVELLOUS PERSONAL BEAUTY, WHOSE DEVOUT, INNOCENT
LIFE, AND WHOSE UNRIVALLED ELOQUENCE MADE HIM OF
ALL MEN IN HIS NATIVE STATE DURING HIS TIME
THE ONE MOST ADMIRED, LOVED, AND REVERED

THIS STORY

Is Affectionately Dedicated

ILLUSTRATIONS.

OGEECHEE CROSS-FIRINGS.

I.

The Joyners, besides fifty negroes, owned a thousand acres of Ogeechee bottom-land, extending southward to the Mays, who, with as many slaves, paid taxes on over thirteen hundred acres. The mansion of the former, square, two-storied, with attic, was situate a few rods from the public thoroughfare leading from Augusta on the Savannah, through Gateston, the county-seat, to Milledgeville, then the capital of the state. In a similar house, with a somewhat more tasteful piazza, a mile below, a little removed from a neighborhood road extending down the river-bank to the Shoals, dwelt the Mays. Equidistant, near the Gateston road, were the Dosters, in

their story-and-a-half house, who, with a dozen slaves and about three hundred acres of land, rolling and much thinner than their neighbors', were doing at least as well as could have been expected. The Joyners and Mays had been intimately friendly always, and no neighbor had ever believed himself so dull a prophet as not to have foreseen, long before William and Harriet May and Hiram and Ellen Joyner were old enough to be thinking about sweethearts, that those two families, like their fine plantations, were destined in time to be united, and by a double bond.

The heads of both these families had deceased. So had that of the Dosters, the last, besides his widow, leaving Thomas, lately grown to manhood, and two younger children. At the period in which occurred what this story is meant to tell, Hiram and William were about twenty-two, and Ellen and Harriet nineteen and eighteen.

But for the demise of Mr. Doster, Thomas would have had a better education. This event made necessary his leaving the state college at the end of the junior year, in order

to conduct the family business. To the necessity that called him away he yielded with more reluctance because he was to leave behind a very dear cousin, with whom the expectation had been to study and enter into a partnership for the practice of the law. Yet in this while he had learned quite as much of books as either of the young men his more favored neighbors, who after leaving the academy had been two years at the University of Virginia, where they had spent money to such figures that their mothers readily assented to their proposal to return home without academic degrees. For three years past they had been managing in some sort the goodly estates left by their fathers; but some said that but for their negro foremen the plantations would deteriorate faster. Much of their time had been spent in fox-hunting, bird-hunting, and other field-sports, in horseback journeyings to Milledgeville and Augusta, and in other ways which they regarded their fortunes ample enough to allow. Each, however, had reasonably good moral character, and was frank enough to admit to his mother sometimes that, compared with

that of the Dosters, their place was not kept up sufficiently, and that, upon ground well known to be less productive, the Doster crops were better. Yet all along it had been hoped that after a while, particularly when they had married and settled down to steady business, Hiram and William would make good, energetic, prosperous citizens like their fathers.

The Mays were tall, slender, and fair; the Joyners of middle height, dark hair and complexion; Ellen somewhat petite, her brother stout and strongly set. The girls were considered quite pretty after their separate styles, and their brothers would have been slow to believe that Tom Doster, midway between them as to figure and complexion, was considered by most people rather better-looking than either. The education of the girls was excellent for those times. It was only about a year back when they had come out of the female academy at Gateston, wherein they had spent all their years since very young girlhood. This academy, founded and kept by Rev. Mr. Wyman, a Baptist clergyman, native of Vermont, had, and most

deservedly, a very high reputation, that had extended throughout the state and into several adjoining. All branches taught in New-England seminaries, including music, drawing, and painting, were in the course which both the girls had made, not only with satisfaction, but high honors. Ellen played on the piano uncommonly well, and Harriet, less skilful there, was a sweeter singer. The young men were quite proud of these accomplishments of their sisters, but for which it was thought that they might have exerted themselves more for their own development. As it was, they held to their fox-hunting and other amusements, each satisfied apparently with the thought that when the time should come for subtracting from the other's family he would give in exchange a value regarded equal to that which he would receive.

Thomas Doster had made it appear very soon after leaving college that this movement meant business. The vigor and economy with which he had managed the farm were such that in three years enough had been laid up to purchase two hundred more acres and a family of negroes. For some

considerable time people had been saying what a fine young man Tom Doster was. The Dosters, belonging to the same church, visited with the other two families, but not nearly so often as those with each other. The young men, particularly William May, who was of heartier temperament than Hiram, rather liked Tom, and in their own families might go so far as to admit that his example, if such a thing were necessary, might be worth imitating. If they felt like patronizing him, they could not do so to much extent, something in his manner, except when in presence of the girls, putting such deportment in restraint. Every week-day he was to be seen, in his plain, home-made, well-fitting clothes, where either the plough hands or the hoe hands were at work, and the passing by of old or young, male or female, seemed to affect in no wise the feeling of manhood as, thus homely clad, he kept at his work. Right often, as the girls with their brothers, or one with him of the other, were riding past, he would take off his broad-brimmed hat, return their salutation, and, if happening to be near the fence, come forward

HOW THE MAY PLANTATION WAS FARMED.

at notice of disposition to linger for a brief chat. On Sundays when there was meeting at Horeb, a mile or so inland from the Joyners', he put on his best, and looked the equal of anybody there. Occasionally, when one of the girls had ridden there on horseback, accompanied by her brother, he proposed to escort her home, and — but not often — accepted the invitation to dinner which it was customary in all country neighborhoods to extend on such occasions.

"Tom's a stirring fellow," said Will May to Harriet one day, when, after some conversation with him as he sat upon his fence, they were passing on.

"Yes," she answered; "I think Tom Doster is a very promising young man; handsome too, even in his homespun clothes. I suspect that he would have made a good lawyer."

"Best as it is; indeed lucky, in my opinion. There's no good in a fellow trying to rise too far above his raising. It's well for Tom Doster that he could not go to the bar. He's proud enough, hard as he has to work, and he cannot, if he ever tries, conceal his

aspiring nature. I like Tom very well myself as a neighbor; but Hiram, especially of late, doesn't. Hiram says that Tom is as proud as if he owned both our plantations and his little patch of ground besides."

"I don't see why he might not feel as proud as other people, brother Will. He's young, handsome, intelligent, industrious, and of as good family as any, if they do have less property. I should not call *pride* the feeling that keeps him from looking up to those who are in more favored conditions. I should rather name it a sense of freedom, which every man who feels himself to be a gentleman is bound to have."

"Yes; and that's just the way, as Hiram says, that Ellen talks, and both of you are rather imprudent in the way you treat Tom Doster; and I tell you now, Harriet, that Hiram especially doesn't like it."

"Oho! He doesn't! nor do you, I see. Well, Ellen and I must amend our speech, and be more circumspect in our behavior, even if we cannot help our tastes and manners."

Then she looked back with mock regret

toward Tom, who was working away as if he had forgotten having seen and talked with them.

"Come, Harriet, you needn't put on airs."

"Of course not, before my brother Will, and especially before Hiram, of whose displeasure he warns me. But," she added, to tease her brother, "they do say that Tom's cousin has grown to be handsomer even than him. I'll have to see for myself before I can believe it."

"Wasn't that a pretty come off? He and Tom were to be two great lawyers, you know; and their grand scheme has wound up by Tom being, as his father before him was, a common, hard-working farmer, and his cousin a Methodist preacher."

"It *was* rather strange. As for poor Tom, the disappointment was unavoidable, and, like a true man always will in such cases, he has borne it not only patiently, but cheerfully. His cousin Henry, I doubt not, is following what he believes to be the line of his duty, and if so, that shows him to be a true man also."

"Everybody to his notion. Let us get on."

They urged their horses to a brisker pace, that soon brought them to the Joyners', where they tarried awhile before returning home.

Henry Doster was son of Tom's uncle, who dwelt several miles beyond Gateston, and whose estate was somewhat larger than that of his deceased brother. Everybody, his parents, even himself, had been expecting, ever since he first entered college, and until just before he was to leave, that he was to become a lawyer. But about a couple of months before graduation, at the head of his class, during a revival meeting of the Methodist church in Athens, the seat of the state university, he, who always had been piously inclined, became convinced that he had a call to the sacred ministry. His parents, not church members, but rather affiliating with the Baptists, felt a double disappointment. Yet they loved and respected him too well to complain. He was as gentle as he was handsome and gifted. While in college he had the good-fortune to be popular both with faculty and students, because he deported himself just as he ought before all. Of olive complexion, brown eyes and hair, his face on

occasion would light into redness as decided as ever painted the fairest cheek. When he was in animated declamation his form of five feet ten swayed with a grace more engaging because unstudied, even unconscious, and his voice, at all times sweet, rang sonorous and true as a clarion's. His college mates had prophesied for him an eminent career at the bar, and many felt regret more than surprise at the course which, suddenly, as it seemed, he had resolved to pursue. At Commencement he made his modest valedictory with much *éclat*, smilingly bade adieu to all his associates and acquaintance; then returned to his home, and went to preparing himself for the solemn work that he was to undertake.

II.

The two leading religious denominations, as now, were then nearly equally divided in middle Georgia, the ascendency held by the Methodists in the towns and villages being balanced by that of the Baptists in the rural districts. Not very many of the clergy of either had received a college education, yet many of them were very efficient preachers, and some eloquent to a high degree. The Methodists were well pleased at the accession of a young man in whom was such goodly promise. Brief preliminaries were required for the pulpit, and only a few months after the time when Henry Doster had counted upon applying for admission to the bar he was preaching the gospel. So young, and modest as young, it was thought well that for the first year he should work under the guidance of one of the older and more pronounced preachers. Fortunate to both it seemed that the Rev. Allen Swinger, a native of the

county, was holding his headquarters in Gateston, and to him, as assistant in his circuit, Henry was assigned. This gentleman, very tall and muscular, had been in his youth a noted fighter, having won his wife, so the tradition went, by his conquest of a formidable rival, and he had not left behind all of his native combativeness when he advanced upon a higher field. He was fond of wielding what he styled his sledge-hammer, not only against sinners in general, but pronounced opponents of his own faith, of the entire certitude of which he never had felt a doubt since the day on which he embraced it first. Yet he was, or he meant to be, as pious as he was aggressive, and he cordially believed that his interest in the welfare of souls, outsiders and nominal insiders, was as good as the best. Many and many a time, with emphasis, would he talk about thus:

"If Allen Swinger know anything at all about hisself, his own self, and if *he* don't, the question arise who do, but if so be, I am not aginst none of their souls' salvations, if they would only git their consents to give up their mean ways, and then git right straight up and

come aright straight along where everybody that ain't a actuil a blinded with predijice is obleeged to see, plain as open and shet, is the way they got to foller so they mayn't git conswined not only to fire but brimstone sprinkled on top of that, which every sence I ben converted myself, like a bran' snatched from the burnin', I ben astonished that anybody could ever be such a big fool as to think he could stand ary one, let alone both. Now as for Henry Dawster, if he wasn't quite so thin skin, and if he could get his consents to pitch in four-an'-a-half* aginst worldlyans, and be more vigious on them Babtisses, which if they ain't headed they goin' to take this whole country, same like the sand of Egyp', him and me together could git up rewivals a'most a constant. But I can't yit git him to make charges on 'em. That whut I call comin' down out the pulpit and marchin' right on *to* 'em, right and left. Yit he's a good religious boy, same as a good Meth'dis' woman that don't know how to be anything else, and I love him a'most a like he were my own child, and, in time, and speshual, when he git hisself

* Mr. Swinger by this phrase meant *fore and aft.*

a wife, I shall count on his spreadin' hisself accordin' to his talons, which, jest betwix me and you, to go no furder, he's got a plenty, more than any one man's sheer, when he have the expeunce to go along with 'em."

Unlike as were these two, a friendship amounting to affection united them. The absence of everything like envy in Mr. Swinger, instead the bounding pride he felt in Henry's superior gifts, and his eagerness to help in such employment as he believed would develop and exhibit them to best advantage; on the other side, the young man's ready performance of every service assigned, his confidence in the single-minded integrity with which Mr. Swinger deported himself toward him, bound them, in not long time, closely and fondly. In spite of his general sternness of manner and speech, Mr. Swinger had much softness of spirit and considerable humor. The submission of a sinner or any other kind of enemy would melt his ire to tenderness instantly. He could tell a joke with excellent effect, and he would do so even when himself was the butt of its ridicule, and his delight at such rehearsal was

equal to his hearers' in the laughter thus provoked. He believed, and he so assured the young preacher often, that he could never make important continued headway in his profession as long as he remained single. His talks upon the subject discovered some romance in his being.

"Bacheldrin, Henry Dawster, now they may be some kind of men that bacheldrin suit; but they monst'ous few, and a preacher, speshual Meth'dis', not among 'em. Make no odds how much a young preacher in the first off-start in his mad careers, so to speak, may think more of hisself than other people think he's liable to, and he mayn't feel like he want to bother and hamper hisself with one single female section of people, yit he'll find in time that the time will come, and that mayby suddent, when his holt will begin to loosen, and it'll keep on a-loosenin' tell he'll have to let her drap. And it's speshual the case when he have good looks, but which I've never ben oneasy about your settin' Tar River afire on *them* score. Yit so it is, and I have yit to see the bachelder preacher that won't knock under in the course of time. Because for

"'NOW THEY MAY BE SOME KIND OF MEN THAT BACHELDRIN SUIT.'"

why? In every combunity that I've ever ben anywhere they always girls, and not only them, but widders and old maids of all age and description, that in a case like the present they everlastin' workin' up shoe-slippers, or money-pusses, or dressin'-gownds, or neck-hankchers, or somethin' of some kind that no nation of men of no kind ever had any use for, but which in the first place that they'll go to conwince him, if he don't look out, that he's too good to go and preach to common poor people at ill-convenant places. *And*, at last, he'll see that sech foolishness have to stop, and 'stid of sech onuseless articles, which nobody, much less a Meth'dis' preacher, have no yearthly necessity for, he'll find that what he want is a *wife*, not only for company, but for makin', and mendin', and keep him decent respectable. Now it ain't that I would ricommend any young man to go into the very *market* of young women, as it were, like he was after a horse or a piece of prop'ty. No, *sir;* and if a man is any account he'll wait, no matter how long time it take, tell he fall dead in love with jes one lone partic'lar one by herself, and feel like,

thoo every bone in his natur', that she's the onliest pink of perfection they is, make no deffunce how much the gittin' of married bound to take the aige off sech as that. No, *sir;* and I tell you now, Henry Dawster, 'twer'n't for sech *as* that, that aige would be took off a heap sooner and a heap more of it. Yes, sir, my boy, wait tell she strike you a centre shot, and you feel like the ground ain't hardly good enough for her to walk on it. *Of* course a feller bound to find out in time, and when it's all over, that his wife ain't of that angel kind of women love-tales tells about; and you mayn't believe it, but often I've sot up a mighty nigh all night with a toller candle, and sometimes nothin' but a light'rd knot fire, a-purusin' *Alonzer and Melissy*, and *The Bandit's Bride*, and sech, and cried, and wantin' to be thar, and, jerkin' out my knife, hack them villion's heads off, and takin' them women off somewheres and live together, jes me and them, by ourselves. *Yit* I know, well as anybody that ain't a borned fool obleeged to know, he can't expect a wife who have the keer of a family to be always a-settin' up in the parlor with her best frock

on a-listenin' to him a everlastin' cotin' kiss verses, like he used to did. *And*, besides, what's a heap more, if anything, for the argyment of this p'int of the case, he have ben conwinced long before now, and that without her a-tellin' him, that he ain't, nor he never were, nother the General Wash'n't'n nor the Jul'us Cæsar he want to make her believe when she took him. *But*, Henry Dawster, sech idees does a man good in the first off-start; and when he's done married and settled down, fa'r and squar', if he'll be true, and he won't be too fault-findy, he'll yit think his own wife is the best of the whole kerhoot of 'em, jes as every married man had ought to think of his wife; and as for old bachelders, he'll always feel sorry for any sech a cold, froggy set, like I've ben sorry for 'em ever sence me and Hester took up together. *No*, sir; or, I may ruther say, *yes*, sir; you should ought to wait tell you find one you think is a Wenus or a Juberter, or whut them po-uts calls 'em in their po'try; and when you do, then far'-well world."

It was interesting to see the relations between them, one with the unstudied speech

and manners of a rude pioneer, the other with those of a culture needed for the work of new social conditions. The younger, while he could not but be amused at what must soon become obsolete, yet reverenced with all his heart the honest earnestness that persisted in methods which he would not have known how to attempt to change. The elder was as courageously upright and as fondly affectionate as he was barbarous in outward appearance and demeanor. The love he had for his protégé, especially his eager wish that he should make an early happy marriage, led him often to talk of his own young time and of his conjugal life, in which it was easy to be seen that much of true love's fruition had fallen to his lot.

The new preacher boarded with the Ingrams, whose handsome mansion, in a grove of red oak and black-jack, stood at the head of a street called Maiden Lane, on the side of which, where it made a bend, was Mr. Wyman's academy. Behind, extending south and southwest, was their plantation of two thousand acres. Here also had boarded Harriet and Ellen while at school; for in

those times families who were at the highest in property and social position, for the sake of the school and the churches, took boarders, and that at nominal charges, considering the living dispensed by them. Mrs. Ingram, a niece of Mrs. May, had been brought up a Baptist, but after her intermarriage had accepted the faith of her husband, a Methodist class-leader. As neither of the congregations could afford to hold public worship every Sunday, the members of each commonly attended that of the other on alternate meeting-days, notwithstanding the oft discussion of denominational differences. These, even sometimes when acrimonious, were ignored in neighborly intercourse; for indeed the Rev. Mr. Bullington, a near neighbor of the Ogeechee Dosters, who served both Horeb and the Baptist church in Gateston, was believed by his brethren to know, when duly roused, about as well as Mr. Swinger, how to meet blows and to give. Mr. Wyman not often preached there, suspecting that his brother Bullington's feelings were a little hurt sometimes at the praise bestowed upon his more learned discourses, and when he did,

recognizing the policy and the duty, as far as possible, of being all things to all men, seldom preached mere doctrinal sermons.

Our girls occasionally visited the Ingrams, Ellen as freely, because she knew that she was as welcome, as Harriet. Henry Doster had seen them seldom, and not at all since he had first gone to college. One day, when he had been in the village several weeks, Mrs. Ingram, happening to enter one of the stores, met at the door Harriet May, who was about to return home in the family gig, in which her brother had brought her.

"Caught you at last," said Mrs. Ingram, "just as you were about to steal off. What have I done to all you people that not one of you has darkened my door in weeks on weeks? Will May, you may just go home by yourself, and tell Aunt Martha I kept Harriet and carried her home with me, that being the only way that I could get her there. You young folks ought to be ashamed of yourselves for not calling on my boarder and showing him some attention. I tell you now that he is as good company as anybody, if he is a preacher."

"Why, Cousin Emily," answered Harriet,

A MORNING AT MRS. INGRAM'S.

looking down at her plain gingham, "I couldn't stay to-night. I just came to town to get some things for ma, and—"

"You needn't say you can't, for I say you shall; and if Will is too busy with the plantation work, or rather with his hunting and running about, to come for you in two or three days, I'll get Mr. Ingram to take you, or I'll send you in the carriage."

"Stay, Harriet, if you'd like," said Will. "I'll come for you whenever you say. You needn't be troubled about your dress. That's good enough for kinfolks and a preacher, Methodist at that."

"Methodist at that!" retorted Mrs. Ingram. "I wish you were as good as Henry Doster; and if you didn't think so much of your own good looks, you'd wish you were as handsome. But you are a good boy for giving up so nicely for Harriet to stay. Now do, my dear Will, you and Hiram, please make a set call soon on Mr. Doster, and tell Ellen as you go by there that if she has anything against Emily Ingram, that respectable lady would like to know, soon as convenient, what it is; and you tell her further that if she does not come to

my house within less than one week from this day I will see if it is possible to know the reason why, and tell her that I said it in earnest and without cracking a single smile. Hear?"

"I hear, cousin. If Ellen wants to come, I'll bring her up to-morrow in our carriage. Maybe I'd better be with her when she meets the Doster that's so awfully good-looking."

"I didn't so describe him, you conceited fellow. I only intimated that some people might dare to think him handsomer than even you. Well, off with you. Good-by. My love to aunty and all the Joyners."

III.

"How did you girls like the young preacher?" Mrs. May asked of her daughter on her return.

"Oh, ma, I was glad Cousin Emily kept me, although I felt not quite comfortable in an every-day frock in presence of a young man so well dressed and so cultivated. However, the next day, when Ellen brought me another, I was already at ease."

"Yes; Ellen sent me word by Will that she was going to join you at Emily's, and suggested that you might like me to send you something."

"Bless Ellen's heart, and yours too! You are both so thoughtful. Henry Doster doesn't look like a preacher, ma. He's handsome too, and a good talker, and a good listener."

"What did he talk about?"

"Oh, lots of things — society, books, music—"

"And religion?"

"No, ma'am, not at all. I suppose he thought that young girls and of Baptist people would not care to hear a Methodist preacher discourse in private on religion, and when they were guests in the house where he lived. I thought that was very polite and sensible. Yet at bedtime he made the most beautiful prayer. His voice, especially when it takes on a religious tone, is very impressive. We were not long on books, I assure you. I suspect he saw that Ellen and I were not anxious he should find how few we had read, and he let us drop the subject when he saw that we wanted to. Pious as he is, yet he is full of fun. Cousin Emily says he tells her things about old Mr. Swinger that she and he both, and so does the old man when present, laugh at till they have to cry. But he didn't talk about him to us. That, I suppose, he felt would be telling tales out of school. He's devoted to music. He sang a very good tenor with some of my songs, and he said to me privately that Ellen played better than any person he'd ever heard. He evidently admires Ellen highly."

"Is he like Tom?"

"Not very; but rather. Ellen thinks he's handsomer than Tom. I hardly think so. He's very fond of Tom, and he said that he had promised to make him a visit before long. Brother Will did not come to the house until it was nearly time for us to start back. But I was glad that he did come at last, and was polite enough to invite Henry Doster, when he was in the neighborhood, to call upon us."

"William ought to have done that, of course, and, to tell the truth, I'd like to see him myself after all the talk about his being so smart and such a fine preacher."

"He'll call here, I doubt not, when he comes to see Tom. I hope Hiram will call upon him before that, and I hope that when the young man does call, brother Will won't be as condescending in manners to him as he is to Tom."

"William does seem to rather wish to patronize Tom. I wish in my heart he'd be as attentive to business as Tom Doster. The Doster property is improving and increasing constantly, while, if it wasn't for Levi, ours would go to rack faster than it is going already. If he and Ellen are ever to marry, I

wish they'd do it soon, and let him settle down to work. Hiram does some better than he; but there's room for improvement there too."

"The difficulty with both of them, ma, is that they've been so long taking some things for granted that—"

"Oh, well, well, child, let us all hope they'll see in good time the need of a change, and then go seriously about making it. Go to your room now and change your frock. I want you to help Ritter in baking some cakes."

The mothers of these families much desired to each have the other's daughter for her daughter-in-law, though the contemplation of the other's son in corresponding relationship was far from eager. The young men had received many an earnest parental admonition of the danger of losing what they had been counting on always in security; and for more than a year past they had been growing more anxious upon the subject than they would have admitted to any. Especially was it thus with Hiram, who, of the two, was more single-minded, of far greater persistence

in sullen purpose, and capable of deep resentment of injury done or suspected to be intended. Not courteous by nature, he had ever deported himself toward both the girls as if neither had right to opinion as to the disposition which circumstances had destined. William May, gay, volatile, was fond of teasing his little sweetheart in all ways within the limit of impunity. In neither case had been that ardor of pursuit which is always becoming, and which is almost always necessary with such girls as Harriet and Ellen. Therefore, when courtship began to be avowed, the men were surprised, and Hiram indignant, though much frightened, when their proposals were checked by the girls, who said, smiling, that, having been confined at school so long, they must have rest of indefinite duration, with as much freedom and fun in it as possible. They were lovely girls. None knew that fact better than Hiram and Will, and, I may add, Tom Doster, who lived so near, yet regarded himself as so far away. No doubt from childhood they had looked forward to the destiny which to all minds seemed inevitable. Yet now, become women,

they felt that influences of a kind hitherto unknown must accrue before they could consent to take such steps.

Although Tom Doster had never shown, as he was aware of, any preference for either, Hiram, particularly since his own most unexpected discouragement, suspected him of wishing to marry Harriet, and for some time past what had been meant for condescension toward him had given place to a reserve that illy concealed his jealous hostility. If Tom's preference had been for Ellen, such hostility would have been as deep, though different in kind. But in that case he could have given, as he knew, open and effectual expression to it, and this he would have done with his native arbitrary resoluteness, knowing well that his chances of getting Harriet, uncertain, as he had been startled to find them, would be reduced to nothing unless Will was to have Ellen in exchange. Tom was aware of this suspicion, which, whether well founded or not, was then known to none besides himself. He had been meeting Hiram's new manners as he had his former, apparently not noticing that they were different from what he might

have been better pleased to see. His visits, especially at the Joyners', continued as theretofore, infrequent and seemingly, if not really, accidental. Several times, however, within the last six months, when the girls, together or singly, were visiting friends in town, he went there, and—generally with his cousin—called upon them whenever they were elsewhere than at the Ingrams'. In this time Henry Doster had become well acquainted with both; but it was near the end of the spring before he made his long-promised visit to Tom. This occurred only a few days after a call which Hiram, responding to many suggestions from both families thereto, had made upon him.

During the sojourn of a couple of days the cousins paid a visit together to the Mays and Joyners. The easy courteousness of the preacher made a good impression on the mothers. Mrs. Joyner, a much more ardent partisan of Horeb than Mrs. May, said that she could not but wonder and be sorry that such a fine, bright young man could ever have become a Methodist preacher. Will and Hiram, as in their mothers' presence

they must, behaved with decent hospitality, although Ellen thought her brother might have made fewer allusions to the profession of the principal visitor, and perhaps Harriet would have been more pleased if Will had been less punctiliously gracious.

"Two remarkably fine young women, Tom," Henry said when, having parted from the Joyners, they had mounted their horses for the return. "I wonder you haven't fallen in love with one of them. Indeed, I am inclined to suspect you have—perhaps with Miss May, as I noticed that you had rather more to say to her than to the other."

Tom laughed and answered: "Yes, they are very fine girls; but I've never indulged what thoughts I may have let come into my mind occasionally."

"Why not?"

"Oh, reasons enough, Henry, for that."

"Are they actually engaged, think you, either couple?"

"I can't say. If they are not, it amounts to about the same. It has been understood always that it is to be so some time or other, and the girls, knowing that, feel, I suppose,

that they needn't be in a hurry. Those boys, I think I have noticed, have been getting impatient about matters. You can see that by their confounded over-politeness to gentlemen in their own houses, which means that gentlemen may take notice that if they come there for any purpose outside of paying ordinary neighborly civilities, they may as well keep away. Ma says she doesn't believe that they are engaged; and she says furthermore," he added, with a not quite hearty smile, "that each of the mothers is anxious for her son's marriage with the other's daughter as soon, and wants her own daughter's put off as late, as possible. It's a right interesting case, is it not, where in the swap each has to give so much boot."

They walked their horses for a while in silence.

"Tom," his cousin at length said, "if you are satisfied that these girls are not engaged, and if you have a feeling in that way, I cannot see why you should repress it, unless you are confident that its indulgence would be hopeless. It is plain to me that both of them like you, and in the looks of each, when the

name of her brother's friend was mentioned, especially in the case of Miss May, there was something—well, it seemed to me a sort of pain, indifference—which led her to turn from the subject. Now, my dear old fellow," laying his hand fondly on Tom's shoulder, "I don't ask you for your confidence, though I rather think that I might get what in such a case I should freely give to you; but if, as I suspect, you do love one of these young women, you ought to know that a man is under some bonds to his own heart and its honorable ambitions, and I have never known one who with greater propriety than yourself may feel and use all manful means to the fulfilment of such obligation."

Suddenly turning upon him, Tom said, playfully: "Looky here, my boy, why not take some of that counsel to yourself? There are two of those women and but one of me."

Henry blushed slightly, and, looking forward, answered, with solemnity: "My dear Tom, if I should ever look for a wife, my best chances, I suppose, to say nothing of congruity, would be among the Methodists. I

doubt if I shall ever marry, bound as I am to an itinerary life, which perhaps no woman whom I could admire sufficiently, especially if she were not of my religious faith, could be expected to endure without complaint. But you," turning to him again—"you, my dear Tom, so upright, energetic, constantly bettering your condition, with promise of a career higher, far above those young men, and with a manfuler appreciation than theirs of these young women whom they have not cultivated the manhood to deserve—if you want one of them, and do not believe that you would be interfering with a pre-contract, expressed or implied, I repeat it, you owe it to every behest of your being as a freeman to enter these lists."

They had turned into the grove fronting the house, when, checking their horses simultaneously, they dismounted. There was so much of solemn earnestness in Henry's words that when they had seated themselves upon the projecting roots of one of the oak-trees, Tom told him without reserve the secret that hitherto had been kept within his own breast. Henry, putting his arms around him, and lay-

ing his head upon his breast, was silent for a minute. Then, lifting himself upright, he said, with glowing face:

"Oh, Tom! my beloved, my most precious old Tom! Thankful am I, oh, so thankful! Yet I would have chosen, and I would have prayed to die rather than not avoid a conflict between your heart and mine! You understand now my earnest wish to look into yours. Give me your hand. Hand in hand we will go to meet these arrogant youths, who already claim what they have never learned how to sue for and to win. Let us commit the issue to God, who, I do not doubt, will order whatever is best for all."

IV.

Promptly began a change in Tom Doster's life. Not neglecting any part of his work, he thenceforth went more frequently not only to the Mays', but the Joyners'; for kindred to his own was the cause of the cousin who had imparted to him the new courage by which he was now inspired. Increased freedom of speech was noticeable at both houses, particularly when one or both of the young men were present. It looked as if he meant to show that he felt himself to be any man's equal in whatever a man may strive with honor to achieve, regarding the risks and dangers at what they were worth, no less, no more. Always having ignored the condescensions of William May and Hiram Joyner's supercilious reserve, he treated the expression and the withholding of their opinions as if they were of the same importance in his mind as those of any others in the neighborhood. It was plain that he had de-

cided to be necessary not only courage, but timely exhibitions of it. His cousin acted similarly whenever in their society. He saw the girls always when they were in town, and several times within the space of a few weeks had visited them at home, sometimes with Tom, more often alone. Though little used to the society of young women, the instincts of a true lover who had been born and reared a gentleman taught him at once all the manners he needed. Before the summer was ended it began to be talked in the village, and throughout the region between it and the river, that Tom Doster was courting Harriet May and Henry courting Ellen Joyner, both, to all appearances, with very fair prospects of success. What made the rumor seem more probable was that not one of them, male or female, when joked upon the subject, either admitted or denied.

Hiram had learned at last that his sister, petite, meek, though she was, could not be controlled entirely by his own imperious will. Without speaking to her on the matter, he ruminated silently upon what course he would pursue if he should be convinced

that there was any just foundation for it. But William May, outspoken always, determined to find out if possible at least how far Harriet was interested in Tom. One day, after returning from one of the fields, having met Tom, who had just come out of the house seeming in contented humor, he said to his sister:

"Harriet, of course I don't believe a word of this talk that is going the rounds about you and Tom Doster. Yet since his cousin, that everybody is flattering out of his senses, has been coming down here, and following you and Ellen all over town when you go there, Tom has gotten to be as proud as a peacock with a full-spread tail, and he behaves as if he felt himself as good as anybody. What the deuce does it all mean? I never saw Hiram so angry in my life."

"I don't see, brother Will, why Tom Doster should not feel as you describe about his 'goodness,' as you call it, compared with that of other young men of his acquaintance," she answered, very, very mildly.

"Well, *I* do; for he has neither the property nor the position to warrant."

"He has not indeed the *property* that, for instance, you have, or Hiram; but as for *position*, you know very well that in this county it is as good as—as anybody's, not only for what depends upon his personal character, but his family, which I have heard pa say was as good as any in all his acquaintance."

"Ay? Well, I merely remark that Hiram is getting furious about the report connecting Ellen's name with that Methodist coxcomb, and he says that it has to stop, otherwise he will forbid his visiting the house. If they were of the right sort of men they would less often come to private houses where they are obliged to know that they are not wanted."

"Brother Will, *I* do not object to the visits of Tom Doster—I, for whom you suppose, perhaps truly, that they are intended mainly, and I have good reason to believe that Ellen feels similarly about those of his cousin. Ma has not forbidden, nor has Mrs. Joyner that I know of, that we receive the visits of these young men, and until that is done I, at least, shall treat them with the same civility with which I have always treated those whom I have taken to be gentlemen."

"My!" he said, pleasantly, as if commending her spirit; "you talk as if you felt independent as a wood-sawyer."

"I know not how independent such a person habitually feels, but I know very well that *I* shall always be a very dependent woman, and so I mean to try to be very careful as to the one on whom I am to depend mainly when—when the time comes. Brother William," she went on, nerved by a feeling stirred by his harsh language, "you and Hiram Joyner have always had some strange notions, and neither of you has had the art, perhaps because you never believed it worth your while, to conceal them. You have acted with me as if you had, and could have had, no other expectation than for me to accept Hiram in marriage whenever he chooses to offer himself, and Hiram has done the same and more with Ellen in her relation to you, and that because such was the surest if not the least troublesome means of accomplishing your own ends. Why could not both, or one of you at least, sue on your own merits?"

"Like Tom Doster, eh?"

"Well," she replied, in yet more animated

tone, "if you so mind, I'll answer, *Yes*, Tom Doster! for if he is moving now, or if he ever will be moving, in the matter of which we are talking, it is or it will be on that line, just as he has been doing ever since I have been old enough to form any judgment on his movements compared with other men's. Now, my dear brother, I am going to ask you a question, which, of course, you'll answer directly or not, as you choose. If you felt perfectly sure that Ellen would never consent to marry you, would you be entirely willing for me to take Hiram?"

The question embarrassed him, but it fretted also. He answered, petulantly, looking away from her, "If you'd accept Hiram, Ellen would engage herself to me to-morrow."

"And you would take her on such terms? Yes," blushing with pain, she said, "my own brother virtually admits that he would, if he could, barter his sister to a man in exchange for that man's sister to wife, although well knowing the infirmities of that man's nature, which would make it impossible for any woman of spirit to live with him happily.

Well, my brother, I cannot be a party to such a bargain, even if it were possible it could be made. But, oh dear! oh dear! how you have mistaken that sweet girl! She is too fine a gentlewoman to talk, even with me, her most intimate friend, about such things; but I am without a doubt that Hiram often and often has conducted himself towards her in that same way, but more offensively, according as he has a domineering spirit, which you have not, and little of affectionateness for his sister or anybody else. Now let me tell you: Hiram Joyner's interference has been the worst possible for you. But for it I am inclined to believe that you might have gotten Ellen in time, if you could have shown to her that your hope and your wishes to win her were based only upon honest endeavors to deserve her. As it is, brother Will, whatever chances you may have had are now gone."

"What?" he cried. "You mean to tell me that Ellen Joyner is going to throw herself away on that whining preacher?"

"Brother William!" She was about to respond with the generous indignation provoked by this insult to an absent friend, but

she repressed it, and said: "I choose not to betray a trust which Ellen has not given me permission to reveal. I said what I did for the purpose of convincing you of the uselessness of any further indulgence of whatever expectation you may have had. Honorable, noble girl that she is, she would not object to that, but would rather desire it. I will not say if the man to whom she has given her affections is or is not Henry Doster, of whom my brother, I am sure, forgot himself just now when he spoke in such grossly unkind and unjust words."

"Oh, confound it all! I take that back, of course. Indeed, as between Henry Doster and Tom, I rather think, if I were a woman— However, I ought not to say that either, to you, though you haven't told me whether or not there's any truth in the blamed report about yourself. The fact is, Harriet, the whole thing has taken me by such surprise that— Hang it all! let it go. I'm left, it seems; and it's some satisfaction to find that out so soon, and by you. All right. I shall bother with the thing no more. I can outlive it, I'm thankful to believe. But Hiram!"

Then he laughed outright, and continued: "Harriet, that young fellow don't know Hiram Joyner. He don't know anything at all about him. You are going to hear of some interesting news when Hiram finds out what you tell me. By the way, Cousin Emily told me this morning in town that you and Ellen had promised to spend camp-meeting at her tent."

"Yes, I'm going, if ma does not object. I haven't asked her yet."

"Methodist stock seems to be rising down here on Ogeechee. Wonder what old man Bullington will think of that; and Hiram—I tell you, and you may tell the rest of them, that when that boy finds out how things are, they'll hear from him."

He rose, and, mounting his horse again, galloped back to the field. Mrs. May, coming in shortly afterward, asked what had they been talking about so loud that she could hear their voices from the door of the kitchen, where she had been standing. When Harriet had answered, she sat down, and after some reflection, said:

"Ah, well! Your father and Mr. Joyner

set a great deal by the hopes they had about their children. If they could have lived to raise their boys so as to be fit for making the right sort of husbands, things might have been different. As it is, they've nobody to blame but themselves, though I've always tried to count on nothing else than for poor William to get Ellen. It would have been the making of him. As for Hiram, I was always afraid of such as that with his rough temper and his disposition to rule everybody about him. But poor Will!"

Then she shed tears.

"But, Harriet"—suddenly rousing herself—"if I was in yours and Ellen's place, after such a—I suppose I may call it disappointment—I just declare I wouldn't be engaging myself to the first man that offered himself. I have nothing against Thomas, who is a good, industrious young man; but I've never even so much as dreamed of your marrying him. The whole thing has taken me by such surprise that I hardly know what to say about it. As for his cousin Henry, I don't know that I ever met a more gentlemanly, well-mannered young man, and between the two,

even if he is a Methodist preacher— Oh, you needn't be smiling in that way, when I'm in dead earnest."

"I beg pardon, ma. I was smiling at your speaking so positively just after declaring that you knew not what to say. I am not going to act precipitately in this matter, my dear mother, and I shall hope to have your approval of whatever I may conclude to do. I'm not much surprised at your preference for Henry over Tom, partly because he is *not* in Tom's place, and partly because you consider him more brilliant, perhaps; and I haven't a doubt that Mrs. Joyner has put before poor, dear Ellen the same comparison reversed, emphasizing Tom's being such a good Baptist."

"You are right there," replied the mother, her natural cheerfulness somewhat restored. "I was over there a little while this morning when you and Ellen went to the Andersons'. Hiram came in where his mother and I were, and he went on terribly about Henry Doster."

"What did Mrs. Joyner say?"

"Not one word. She knows she can't stop Hiram when he begins. But I told the

young gentleman plain that I didn't agree with a word he said about him."

"I'm glad you did. Bless your dear heart, ma, it was like you to refuse to hear in silence abuse of a man who in your opinion had fairly supplanted your own son. Hiram will not hurt Henry Doster by such talk, especially in the estimation of Ellen, grown as she has at last to ignore his imperiousness. If it hadn't been for him, Ellen, I do believe, would have taken brother Will. *His* constant, dogged interference prevented. Did he say anything against Tom?"

"Didn't mention Tom's name; but his mother did, and while she was praising Tom to the skies he looked out the window, and let on as if he were not hearing. Poor sort of behavior, to my opinion. Well! well! but it showed that if he finds out there's anything serious between Henry Doster and Ellen, he'll do his very best to break it up. They are the strongest kind of Baptists, you know; that is, all except Hiram, who, I'm afraid, has no religion of any sort; at least not enough to do him any good; but Ellen and her mother are, Mr. Joyner being the orig-

inal starter of Horeb; and Hiram, if he can't work it with Ellen, will bring in old Brother Bullington and set him at his mother. I pity the poor little thing when that's the case."

Then Mrs. May laughed, this charitable thought having brought that much relief. Harriet joined in heartily to enhance this frame of her mother's mind. Indeed Mrs. May, though a good Baptist woman, would say sometimes that in her opinion there were in the world people as good as those of her own denomination—an admission that Mrs. Joyner might have feared and Mr. Bullington would have known to be imprudent.

This good man lived in a small house with a small farm attached, about a mile north of the Dosters', and about half that distance from Horeb. Tall like Mr. Swinger, but much heavier both in body and in spirit, gloomy-looking at all times, his brows grew darker at any thought of harm done or meditated against either himself or the religious faith of which for many years he had been a very bold, a very loud, and a reasonably acceptable public exponent. It was not often that he laughed, although he did laugh, at

least he tried to laugh sometimes when he had gained some personal or denominational triumph or believed he had some well-founded hope of it. The seasons of his heartiest gayety, if the word could be employed fitly in his case, were wedding feasts, the degrees of his enjoyment thereat depending upon contingencies. Country churches in those times contributed but small stipends to their pastors, some excusing themselves with the authority that at its first institution, and admitted to have been done then at its very best, preaching of the gospel was furnished without money and without price. Mr. Bullington perhaps had never said so in words, yet he honestly suspected that somewhere or other there might be a flaw in this argument. Still he felt contented to think that the sums received from his four churches, with the occasional mite dropped in from a fifth Sunday, were at least as much as he could have earned had his powers been exerted in other professional or in agricultural endeavors. Specially consoling and grateful was the supplementary help of fees, ranging from one dollar to five, obtained

MR. BULLINGTON'S WEDDING COUNTENANCE.

from liberal happy bridegrooms; so much so that he was a noted encourager of marriages among his own flocks, not only early but repeated, whenever death had made them possible. At wedding feasts, notably when the enclosure in the license was at maximum or approximate to it, and when he was full up to the brim of good things, his struggles to be merry like the rest were both commendable and interesting. If his face on such occasions could have corresponded with his huge body, those efforts would have been entirely, even immensely, satisfactory. As it was, when his sides were shaking, that countenance, as if restrained by a sense of duty behind expression of hilarity not becoming his sacred office, took on a most painful sternness that seemed to fix a just equilibrium.

For two or three years last past he had been counting upon being called to the Mays' and the Joyners' on some fine evenings at candle-light, where he would feel sure—they being the richest and most liberal among all his people—that handsome things would be done for him who should tie the knots as fond as indissoluble. Only once had he en-

countered face to face his rival, Mr. Swinger, and the latter admitted afterwards that he had had the worst of it. Now that Mr. Swinger, or any other Methodist preacher, would come within the verge of Horeb on a mission which, next to his public ministrations, it had ever been his fondest pleasure to serve, had not entered his mind, liable as it was to gloomy apprehensions. Therefore, when the report arose about Ellen Joyner and Henry Doster, a sprout, as it were, from the trunk of Mr. Swinger, he tried to scout it as an evil, malicious, idle tale. Yet he could not but be anxious, and, while meditating on his own most prudent line of action, news came that both the girls were going to the camp-meeting, now at hand.

"Thar, now!" he exclaimed to his wife; for of these occasions he ever had a dread, not unmingled with horror. "However, mighty nigh everybody, special young people, *will* go to that whirlypool. A body must try and hope for the best."

But a deep groan told that this reflection had brought no relief.

V.

To an old-time Georgian it is very pleasing now to recall the camp-meetings of the long ago, particularly those in the county wherein the scenes recorded in this story are laid. Four miles south of Gateston, and nearly one mile distant from the public thoroughfare, ground of about ten acres, parallelogram in shape, had been selected by the Methodists for this purpose shortly after the first settlement of that region. Here the level land on three sides ended, and at a few rods' distance in their front declined several feet, becoming somewhat precipitous shortly after leaving the camp at a spot where was a spring of abundant cool water. A large wooden shed, called "The Stand," without floor or weather-boarding, capable of covering, say, four thousand persons, stood near the centre. Rudely constructed tents of unplaned boards, also without floors, were on three sides, and on the only rising ground of the last was one

floored and otherwise more elaborate, known as "The Preachers' Tent;" for the clergy, married and single, during the camp, which lasted four days, not often longer, were domiciled together, but took their meals promiscuously among the tent-holders.

Observing the wagons and ox-carts during a couple of days before, laden with household goods of every kind, moving in one direction, a stranger might be led to suspect that a large number of the population were emigrating to foreign parts. By Friday night, where three days ago naught of animate nature was to be seen except the birds and gray squirrels in the surrounding forest, was a village of several hundreds of inhabitants ready for the entertainment of relatives, friends, acquaintances, and strangers of almost every degree. On either side of the passage, extending from the front to the eating-place in the rear of each tent, were the sleeping-chambers. In front was a shed to defend from the sun's rays the men who sat there and smoked cigars and chatted, while the women, except in the evenings, remained within. Behind the tent was another shed for the cook and

her utensils. If she slept anywhere, I suspect it must have been under the dining-table. Further yet in the rear were rail pens holding pigs, lambs, and domestic fowls. Vehicles of burden travelled back and forth continually for supplies for the ever-threatening void. Hundreds of wagon-loads of wheat and oat straw were brought daily to be spread afresh upon the ground inside. Beyond the carriageways, some near the edge, some deeper within the woods, were booths whereat one could purchase cigars, confections of various kinds, and perhaps, in a quiet way, a bottle or a flask with something which could not be licensed, but which claimed to be excellently good, considering everything. At night the grounds were lit with bonfires kindled from pine knots upon wood scaffolds thickly covered with earth. Public services were held four times a day, at eight and eleven in the forenoon, three in the afternoon, and candle-light. All were expected to rise from bed for morning prayers, which were offered by one of the preachers or other pious person, and to retire at bedtime, the signal for which occasions being announced by a long tin trumpet.

After the services for the whites were over, reasonable time was allowed to the negroes beneath the trees in the rear of the stand, who, then as now, preferred to do their own worship among themselves.

The numbers eating at any one of these tables in many rounds of seatings were very large. People from all parts of the county, from several adjoining — cotton factors and merchants from Augusta and Savannah, from Milledgeville and Macon, some with pious, the greater number with other intents—resorted there. Housewives vied among one another in putting forth abundance and variety of hospitable entertainment. As for Gateston, particularly on Saturday and Sunday, not a fourth of its population would be left at home, those not having tents, and many of other religious denominations, unwilling to endure the solitude, repairing, some with their wives and young children, to the general rendezvous.

On the east side—called by humbler folk "Quality Row," because taken by the leading families—were the Ingrams, whereat the Mays and Joyners sojourned, not only the

girls, but the young men also. Tom Doster, although invited there, was busy with saving his crop of fodder, and did not appear until Sunday, and that with expectation of returning home in the afternoon.

Among the clergy were several possessed of a high order of eloquence, and others less gifted in this regard, but hoping to make up by abundant strength of lungs habituated to sounding on loftiest keys platitudes of warning, mainly upon the conditions of the infernal world. With four sermons a day, most persons, except the notably devout, as well inside as outside the denomination, the young especially, elected which they would attend. It was in vain that, in order to prevent such discrimination, announcements were withheld, and it could not be known who was to preach at any particular hour until after the first prayer and the second hymn, for from nearly every tent door the pulpit could be observed, or, when not, the speaker could be guessed from the numbers seen hurrying to the stand.

Mr. Swinger, devoted with all his heart to his calling, always feeling prepared with a sermon of any length requisite upon any text

of Scripture, yet, with becoming consideration for visiting brethren, had requested that he be not called upon during the meeting, proposing, however, to "do the ex'ortin'," as he styled it, after the sermon of Henry Doster, which had been appointed for Sunday night.

"Young man like Henry, you know, brothin, it'll mayby sorter encourage him up in the back to know his old father, as I calls myself, is behind thar a-ready and a-waitin' to prize him out if he git stuck in his first camp-meetin' splurgin'. He's a powerful modest boy, but if he can keep his head clear before so many people, I sha'n't be oneasy; for the thing's in him, if he can fetch her out. Let me back him up in his first off-start. He know, Henry Dawster do, he can 'pend on old Allen Swinger till everything turn blue."

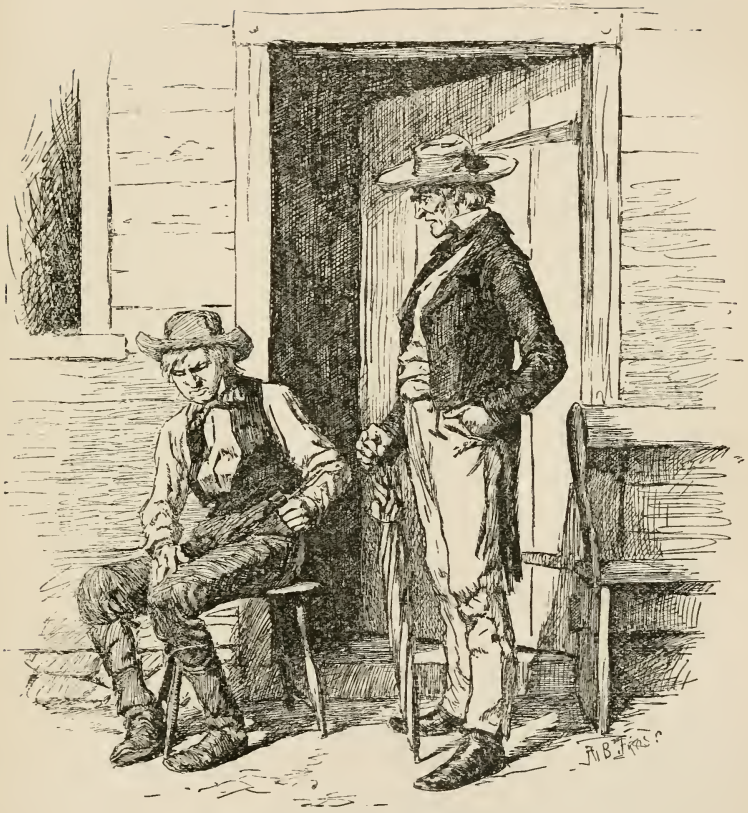
I should remark here that although he had not sought from his young friend the confidence which he doubted not his having good reasons for withholding, yet he had been intensely interested in the rumor connecting him with Ellen Joyner, and he had been as deeply resentful as so pious a man could be

at what he had heard of Hiram's fierce hostility, as evinced by utterances not only most disrespectful, but threatening, towards Henry. Other things had contributed to put him rather out of his accustomed humor by this time. A much smaller number of mourners than with some confidence he had counted on had responded to most persuasive and urgent appeals to come up to the altar. Never before, it seemed to him, had sinners been more obdurately unconcerned about their spiritual condition. More talk than usual, he felt sure in his mind, had been about politics, crops, money-making in general, county and neighborhood news, than at any camp-meeting in he would not like to say how long. Lastly, there was a matter of family trouble on his mind. Jerry Pound, son of his own dear, widowed sister, a great, lubberly, careless fellow, his mother had besought her brother to try yet again to do something with, as it did seem to her that he cared no more for his soul's salvation than if he never had a soul to be saved. Mr. Swinger during the two past days had held some talk with the youngster what times he had been able, in spite of his

dodging, to catch him within hearing, and had become sufficiently disgusted with the little impression made by his remonstrances. That very evening he had said to Jerry, loud enough to be overheard by several young persons of both sexes who were sitting or standing near: "Jerry Pound, your hide's as tough as the jography books tells about them rhinoserouses that it ain't worth a man's while to shoot a rifle at 'em; and your back is hard same as a logger-head turkle that you has to put a coal of fire on him before he'll move when he don't want to. But never you mind."

It was not that Jerry was not a hard-working youth; but, ever since he had grown too big to be whipped for doing such things slyly, he was in the habit of playing marbles openly on Sundays, and going with others to the creek a-swimming, and by his mother was suspected even of occasional swearing.

On the whole, therefore, the state of mind in which Mr. Swinger found himself all that afternoon was far from confident or cheerful. Yet he was not a man to be put back by such considerations from the prosecution of his duty. Indeed, they conspired to make him



ALLEN SWINGER AND JERRY POUND.

more eager to put forth his word of exhortation. He said afterward:

"Fact of the business, I were sorter mad, and I *had* to let out. Then, spite of it all, I couldn't be conwinced in my very bones but what so much good preachin' and ex'ortin', and so much hard wrastlin' in praar, wasn't a-goin' to be let frazzle out jes so to the little end o' nothin'. I had heerd older people than me say the darkest time o' night is jes before day, and I determ'ed to govern myself accordin'."

Thus far Henry Doster had seen little of the Ogeechee girls, except when in the great congregation, or at the Ingram tent doorway when happening to be walking past. People said that it looked well that at such a solemn time he postponed for a more exalted society that of Ellen Joyner, whom they were sure that, preacher as he was, he was dying to be with. Once—Saturday afternoon it was—he did stop in for a few minutes only, but even then he talked more with Harriet than her. At the time of this visit Will May was not present, being at the tent near by, where Miss Mary Anderson, whose family dwelt across the river, was staying. Hiram was on hand,

and sticky as a leech, some said. He barely nodded to the visitor on his entrance, and, when the latter left, was so absorbed in the Milledgeville *Recorder*, a weekly newspaper then four days old, that he did not notice him.

As soon as Tom reached the camp on Sunday, leaving his horse at the public lot, he repaired to the Ingrams', where he expressed himself sorry to decline the invitation to dinner, being under promise to one of his neighbors, a humble man on the opposite row. Mrs. Ingram declared that she was just as mad as she could be; but she was appeased when he said that, having decided to remain until after the night service, he would sup there.

"And don't he look splendid?" she said to Harriet, when he had gone out to sit with the men under the front shed. "I declare, when a man like Tom Doster, who has been working hard all the week, comes out on a Sunday in his nice broadcloth and the other nice things he's got to put on, I— But bless your heart! child, I've got too much business on my hands to be running on about Tom Doster;

"'AND DON'T HE LOOK SPLENDID ?'"

and indeed, handsome as he is, I think Henry— However, many birds of many kinds, and I've got to miss Brother Duncan's sermon, and look after Simon and that pig in the pit. Mr. Ingram will have a duck-fit if it isn't barbecued just right."

Merrily she kissed her beautiful cousin, and retreated to those regions in the rear, out of which to this day it remains a mystery to me, and to all except such housewives as she was, what breakfasts and dinners and suppers, and handings round on waiters between times, were evolved. When a man far away from such scenes, both in space and in years, begins to talk about them, he is prone to indulge too fondly. He cannot at least but love to muse, amid other recollections, on those long, so long ago camp-meeting days, and more on those camp-meeting nights. Religiously inclined, earnestly so, indeed, but not taking part in the exciting scenes which so many with varying purposes gathered there to witness, when the bugle would sound the call for silence and repose, when even all mourners' wailings would be hushed, it was a pleasant thing to take a rustic chair, and,

leaning against a post of the tent, sit and listen to the night music then rising in the woods, and dream and dream and dream of hopes and destinies for this life and the life eternal.

VI.

Tom had never heard his cousin preach, and, having found out somehow that he was to do so that night, remained, intending to return after the sermon, although he was to ride more than a dozen miles. He supped at the Ingrams', accepting, as if both were the same to him, the superfluous politeness of Will and the stiff reserve of Hiram. When it was time to go to the stand, he offered his arm to the hostess, who, taking it, said:

"You all see what a genuinely polite man can do. Tom, these boys, not since here have they been, has either of them proposed to take me to the stand."

"Why, Cousin Emily," said Will, "you have been so busy with culinary and other domestic affairs that I hardly believe you've been to the stand since the meeting began."

"Makes no odds, sir; you should have offered your services the same. But come on: they are already singing the first hymn.

I wouldn't go now, but Mr. Ingram told me this evening as a great secret, which I hope it is no harm to reveal now, that Henry was to preach to-night. Viney will have to attend to the next table, as I've got to hear Henry, no matter how the supper goes."

As she moved off with her escort, Hiram, almost loud enough for Tom to hear, said to Ellen, "I'll bet my ears he don't go home to-night."

"Why, brother Hiram!" exclaimed Ellen.

"Come; let us be going," said Harriet, taking Will's arm.

This movement in punishment of his rude speech angered Hiram painfully. He spoke not, however, but, giving his arm to Ellen, followed the rest. Tom and Mrs. Ingram got seats about midway. The others seated themselves several benches behind them. The lad Jerry Pound, as if he would be seen in fine company, put himself immediately behind the two couples.

"Hello! Jerry," whispered Will, during the singing of the second hymn; "you here?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. May. Ma and Unk Allen, spite of us being pressed with fodder pullin',

wanted me to come, and I thought I'd as well come and see the crowd and what's goin' on."

"Things haven't been as stirring and lively as usual this camp-meeting, have they?"

"No—no, *sir*. Unk Allen say the very old scratch is to pay in this congregation; but he say he mean to see if he can't head him before the meetin's over."

"Haven't got religion yourself yet, Jerry, it seems?"

"Not quite, sir," he answered, giggling. "Unk Allen been talkin' to me straight up and down when he could come up with me. I been dodgin' him because he talk so brash. He say I'm so fur gone, he's afeared *salt* couldn't save me."

"How would it do to try a little saltpetre, Jerry?"

"Oh, brother Will, do hush!" whispered Harriet. "You see Mr. Doster has risen."

Will at once subsided.

Henry Doster already had gotten some reputation as a speaker, although his efforts had been expended mainly among the humbler churches of the circuit. These not his

cultured tastes nor his love and courtship had availed to make him neglect, even when, more than once, in order to fill an appointment, he had to swim his horse over a creek swollen by rains.

"He have the right sperrit about him," said one day good old Mr. Hood, who for thirty-five years and more had been fighting his way among "them Baptisses that jes swarms about and around Long's Bridge and Buff'ler Creek. He behave like he don't set hisself above the poorest and the iginantest of us all, and my opinions is, if his life's spar'd, he's goin' to weed a wide row in the pulpit."

That night, when he rose and looked out upon the vast audience before him, it was apparent that, besides the sense of solemn responsibility, he labored with much embarrassment. His face, handsome always, now had a beauty almost marvellous. The tinge upon his cheek, destined soon to deepen, already appeared, as, with some trembling of voice, he began. Pious as he was, man-like in all his instincts, he was not conscious of any reference to himself in the meditation that led to his text: "A rich man shall hardly

enter into the kingdom of heaven." Yet, on its announcement, Will May mischievously winked at Hiram, and whispered, "He's aiming at us, Hiram."

"Please be silent!" whispered Harriet again, in pained remonstrance. Hiram answered not, but his grim visage as he looked at the preacher showed that he regarded himself as defied, if not already insulted.

It appeared soon that the speaker was competent to take all the benefit which the Roman master of eloquence had taught may be gathered from embarrassment by an orator, honorable, gifted, and duly inspired with a sense of the importance of his theme. His hair, worn long as was the habit then, trembled as he spoke with tenderness of the estate of poverty, the seeming mysteriousness of its ever-during existence in all communities, notwithstanding our Lord's tender commiseration, the necessity of that continued existence in accordance with the economy of Him who, instead of chiding, had dignified it, lauded, lived in it while in the form of humanity, blessed it in word and work, and warned mankind against its maltreatment,

even its neglect. He had been speaking but a few minutes when it was felt by all that a great light had risen newly in the Church. When he had gotten fairly to the discussion of his subject he poured forth an unbroken stream of eloquence to the end. Not dispraising riches, instead he highly commended efforts to obtain them by industry, frugality, and all fair methods, and for purposes reconcilable with the claims of charity and religion. He held up to scorn the miser, but the spendthrift he denounced with greater severity. Among many things, he said:

"We cannot but feel some compassion for the unhappy miser who, in his insane dread of want, denies to himself even the necessaries of his being. Yet at last is there not something of the remains of lost manhood in thus looking with apprehension, vain as it is, of becoming dependent in old age upon the charity of mankind? Indeed yea. Instead of him, even him, it is the spendthrift who, rioting in the inheritance devolved upon him from the industry of his forefathers, is of all most to be despised. The miser, as if he expected to live forever, works and saves,

saves and works, in terror of dependence at some period remote, when his lovers and friends, few as they may be, will have departed and left him alone. In the case of such a man, along with what is less contempt than pity, we must mingle some respect for the relic of a nobleness that his own hands cannot wholly destroy. But the spendthrift! Counting not upon immortality in his earthly being, and not even upon the entire indestructibility of what others have gathered for his enjoyment, which he sees wasting continually in his profligate hands, he complacently expects its loss to be supplemented by earnings from the sweating labors of others, living or dead, and such a one, of all men, seems to me the least of a man."

Fine was the peroration in which he compared the love of money, even when fairly obtained and neither meanly hoarded nor recklessly squandered, with other loves, as social, domestic, above all, the love of God, in which all true loves meet and by which they are regulated. During this splendid declamation, to some, perhaps to but one, yet certainly to her, his face seemed radiant as

a seraph's. When it was ended he looked around for a moment appealingly, then, bowing low, sat down, and, immediately after his successor had risen, left the pulpit and disappeared. Simultaneously Tom, taking leave of Mrs. Ingram, retired, and, getting his horse, left for home.

The effect of the sermon all through its delivery was signal. Interjectional expressions, first few and constrained, became more frequent and audible in and around the pulpit and the enclosed space in front called the altar. Mr. Swinger's deportment throughout was interesting. At first his face indicated apprehension extremely painful. Soon he lifted his bowed head and looked with beaming face upon the audience, as the youthful orator went every moment higher beyond his most eager hopes. Fearing he might embarrass him by too hearty manifestations of delight, now he would bow his face low, covering it tightly with his hands, and now lift it on high and sternly contemplate the rafters above, or endeavor to peer through the darkness into the forest behind, as if not cognizant of what was going on before him or in-

different to it. Often he crossed his legs and recrossed them, or pressing his knees together held them fast in his arms clasped beneath, as if without such precautionary restraint they would kick, in front or back, the boarding from the pulpit. When the sermon was ended, with a voice heard in the stilly night more than a mile away, he shouted, "Glory be to God!" and it was echoed by hundreds of tongues.

Ellen and Harriet both rose in tears.

"Let's quit this place," said Hiram, rising, low, but his face livid with anger.

"Not yet," answered Ellen, wiping her eyes. "Go if you wish, brother, and Will also, if he's tired. Harriet and I can get back to the tent by ourselves."

"Oh, no," said Will; "let us stay, Hiram, and see them through. Old man Swinger is on his high horse, and we'll have some tall riding."

Hiram resumed his seat and, leaning back, looked with disdain at Mr. Swinger as he rose with both arms wide extended: "Brothin and sisters," he began, "the fact of the business is, I don't feel like ex'ortin' this here

congregation, away up here in this here pulpit. We've been a-invitin' o' these people two days, and this make three nights, and we been polite as if we been a-askin' 'em to a weddin' or a candy-pullin', and up tell now and *down* tell now they been a monst'ous few that they have seem to keer no more for keepin' theirselves out of fire and brimstone nor not as much as when they tryin' to prize out one o' their waggins that's been stallded in a mud-hole. And the long and short of it is, I'm a-goin' to git out o' here and go to *chargin'* on 'em; and" (slightly turning his face rearward), "I want Henry Dawster—Godamighty bless his soul *and* body!—I want him when he rest awhile, and he see me a-wantin' o' help—I want him to foller me and charge on. Time he was a-beginnin' to learn how to charge, well as ockepy the pulpit."

Descending and slowly advancing, in language and tones mingled of disgust, admonition, command, threatening, he roared: "All you everlastin' sinners and worldlyans, them among you that they feel that if you ain't anxious, you some ruther keep out of hell

than go thar, I want you to come into this here altar here, and drap down on your marrer-bones and acknowledge to Godamighty ef not quite all, some of the biggest o' your meanness, and beg him if he can't be kind enough and condescendin' enough to spar' you. Come on," he thundered, as they began to pour in, "come a right along. It ain't yit quite too late, but it's a been a-gittin' late on you, and that rapid. O you money-gitters and you money-lovers, with your broadcloth and your high-heel boots, and them that's too stingy to buy 'em! O you that has land and niggers and horses and mules and cattle and sheep and hogs, and all the 'purtenances to them a-belongin', and a-expectin' all them to foller you to the grave, and wait on you and pomper you thar, and some of you the more you've got, the meaner and stingier you've got, and it's come to that that whut you've got does you no more good than the fift' wheel of a waggin, and so the good-for-nothiner you've got, all of you come along: that's a right: come a right along! It may be a hard p'ints for the old ship o' Zion to take you all aboard with all your

ongodly baggages of sin and wickedness she have to k'yar for some of the torndownishest among you. But come along; she'll take you on, even if you sink her. And them that mayn't feel like a-comin' plum in *to* the altar, let them knuckle down whar they sets, and we'll try to do somethin' for 'em even thar."

By this time he had advanced quite near where our party was seated. The girls, following Mrs. Ingram, who, at Tom Doster's departure, had moved and taken a seat by them, knelt upon the straw, and William May, half reclining, leaned his head upon the bench in front of him. But Hiram rose, and, standing erect, conspicuous among hundreds, confronted the preacher with menacing look. The latter, as he admitted afterwards, felt violently aroused all the native combative temper of his being before this enemy of all goodness, especially of his beloved Henry. He paused a moment, as if revolving how best to meet such audacious defiance of one of whose personal malignant hostility he was well convinced; then, regarding him with scorn, burst forth thus:

"Yes: and you conceited, extravagant, impident young chaps, that I ain't shore but whut you're the triflin'est of the whole lot, that you do nothin' but run about and spend the money your daddies worked for, and died and left you, and a-spendin' it on nobody and on nothin' but your own k'yarcasses, and then mayby a-expectin' to marry them that got prop'ty when whut you got is done squandered and gone—I pass sech as you by as them that's made up their mind to go to the devil whut not; and if so be, why, *go!* and Godamighty, *if* He can, have mercy on your mean, ornary, good-for-nothin' souls!"

Waving his hand with contempt, he took another stride, when an object of nearer interest was presented before him. For several minutes Jerry Pound, not able to back himself through the pressing throngs, had been crawling, or so endeavoring, beneath the benches, and at this moment had risen, perhaps to get more air, climbing by one of the pillars of the arbor, behind which he tried to dodge from his uncle. When the latter espied him he laughed aloud, and with the fiercest glee shouted:

"Oh, you needn't be a-tryin' to dodge behind that thar post, Jerry Pound. Ye're like a rabbit that's ben runned into his holler, and you got to twist him out with a forked stick. To think, my own sister's son, that's made her peace with the good Lord a long ago, and with the egzample of sech a mother, and at sech a time when he see this people's hearts a-workin' up, and him a-tryin' to dodge the onliest uncle he's got, and hide behind the arbor post ruther'n he'll have saved his everlastin' no-'count soul!—I declar' it's jest too bad for a body to put up with for any use under the sun. Ih hi! you dodger! You find you can't dodge to the extent you been a-countin' on. Once't or twice't before I didn't know but whut I had you; but you that slick and slickery that a body, same as a eel, they got to put sand in their hand to git a livin' holt on you. Come along here, sir."

Fastening his teeth together as if to restrain intemperate wrath and objurgation, he caught the fugitive by the arm and dragged him with such force that when he reached the aisle, partially cleared by the people, he

fell prone upon his knees. Then Mr. Swinger, seizing his coat collar with one hand, and with the other the trousers around his middle, and crying, "Cler the way thar for this waggin-load of ini-quitty!" made for the altar. Arrived there, he released Jerry's collar, and let his head come down quick but unhurt upon the abundant oat straw, saying, "Thar! anyhow you shall go through the motions!"

Then high above the cries of mourners and shouters rose the jubilant wail of Mrs. Pound, as, pushing her way within, she lifted her great turkey-tail and fanned her son, wedged among the kneeling multitudes. Mr. Swinger, panting, turned towards the pulpit and cried:

"And now, Henry, my boy, I ain't agzactly broke down, but I'm a tired a-haulin' and a-totin' o' that mess. And yit," softening to the prostrate boy, "there is many a heavier load in this congregation than whut that poor orphan boy is, which he's hard-workin' as the days is long, and 'twer'n' for his playin' marbles of a Sunday and sich, ef he had grace he'd be the ekal of many that think theirselves far above him. But come along,

Henry, and go to chargin' awhile tell my wind come fa'rly back. Whar's Henry?"

One of the preachers whispered that Henry had left the pulpit and the stand immediately after his sermon. The words of disappointment, if any were uttered, were silenced by the lifting of a hymn, during the singing of which many, in answer to Mr. Swinger's charge, and many more in spite of it, came and knelt within and around the altar.

Such was the beginning of a revival long remembered, in which many were added to the Church, among whom, I hardly need mention, was that reprobate Sabbath-breaker, Jerry Pound.

VII.

During the sermon of Henry Doster the attention of all persons, even those of moderate culture, had been fixed by the power which an eloquence unrivalled in their experience must exert. He had transcended all expectation, showing at the same time that he had kept a reserve of strength yet greater. Many times during its delivery the girls most interested in his endeavor shed tears, Harriet as freely as Ellen. Even William May was touched with something like a generous enthusiasm, under the impulse of which, at the close, he said to Harriet:

"I didn't dream that he had such powers. It beat anything I ever heard."

When the charge of Mr. Swinger was over, smilingly he looked at Hiram, whose face was red-hot with resentment.

"Will," said the latter, "if Ellen wants to stay longer in this cursed place, you can see

her to the tent. I want to speak to a person outside."

He left at once, and, passing out, made for the preachers' tent, and inquired for Henry Doster. He was answered that Henry on his return from the stand had thrown on his overcoat and walked out, saying that he would stroll for a while in the woods at the rear. Hiram walked back and forth for some time; then returned to the tent. The girls had retired. Never had he felt so wrathful. He believed fully that it had been preconcerted between Henry Doster and Mr. Swinger that this movement, covert in one, audaciously open in the other, was to be made upon him. In vain Will May, who said he suspected nothing of the kind, advised him to let the matter drop.

"Hiram," he said, "I'm afraid you are going to do something imprudent. Henry Doster alluded no more to you than to me, or to any other young man of our habits. He is too much of a gentleman to have meant anything personal of any individual in a pulpit discourse. As for old man Swinger, you worried him by rising when you did, and

getting as it were in his path with threatening look. He can't stand a dare, being plucky to the backbone. Let's drop it and go to bed."

But Hiram sat before the tent for hours and brooded.

On the next morning Henry Doster came there to hold prayers and to breakfast. All met his courteous salutation with heartiness except Hiram, who, not appearing at prayers and coming to the breakfast-table after the blessing was asked, did not notice the reverend guest.

"Mr. Swinger came down heavy on sinners in general last night, Mr. Ingram," said a young man who sat near the host.

"Oh, yes," answered Mr. Ingram; "the old gentleman has his ways; but if there are any better men, I don't know where to go to find them."

"Some of his remarks," said Hiram, "were grossly insulting to me, at whom they were openly pointed. But he has not the education nor the breeding to behave otherwise. In this case I have no doubt he was put up to it by some one else."

Mr. Ingram frowned. Henry paused in his eating, his face pale and his eyes dilating. Ellen hastily retired from the table. Harriet, her cheeks slightly reddening, glanced momentarily at Hiram; then, having caught Henry Doster's eye, put her finger to her lips. Instantly he smiled, and addressed a remark to Mr. Ingram upon a subject so remote from Mr. Swinger that Hiram, anguishing from the contempt thus put upon his words, rose also before his breakfast was finished, and, as Henry was in the act of leaving the tent, said to him, abruptly,

"I wish to have a few words with you in private, sir."

"Certainly, Mr. Joyner. They told me at our tent last night that you had called for me, and it was partly for that I came here this morning. Shall we take a walk?"

"Yes, sir, wherever you say."

"We will go to yonder woods, then," he said, pointing beyond the preachers' tent.

When they had gone, Ellen said to her friend: "Oh, Harriet! Harriet! brother is beside himself. After that insult at the breakfast-table, there's no telling what he'll

say or do when he gets Henry off to himself. I'm almost sorry I didn't tell him everything."

"It would have made matters worse, my dear. Be sure that Tom's counsel is the best, and don't be afraid but that Henry will take care of himself."

"Poor brother has started the issue, as I knew he would; but I did not expect it to come in that way."

"Nor I; yet it is the very best in which it could have come. It's just a piece of splendid luck; that's what it is. Oh, I'm so glad that Tom went home last night! Cheer up, little one. It will all come right, and the sooner for that very walk that Hiram is taking with Henry."

Then she put her arms around Ellen, and almost bore her to their chamber.

"Come straight with me and finish that breakfast, miss," said Mrs. Ingram, entering the room. Ellen obeyed, and neither referred to the occasion of her having left the table. Yet the hostess could not forbear saying to Harriet afterwards: "Somebody will have to put a strait-jacket on Hiram if his

foolishness is not stopped. I've never seen Mr. Ingram so angry. He declares that but for Ellen and his mother he would have ordered him from the table and the tent. But *did* ever a man show the gentleman more beautifully than Henry Doster? I don't blame Ellen for being so in love with him; she just couldn't help it."

"He did indeed. Hiram is either worse or he has less sense than I thought. But he'll see that his conduct will have expedited what he hopes to prevent."

"How?"

"Never mind now. You'll see before long."

"I wish I hadn't invited him to this tent."

"*I* am glad you did, and thankful that he came."

The woods in the rear of the preachers' tent, to the extent of twenty acres or so, by immemorial usage were regarded as not to be entered during the camp except by the clergy or others accompanied by one or more of them. Hither these were wont to resort, sometimes in twos and threes, sometimes singly, in the intervals of their service at the stand, for the

sake of exercise and meditation. Thither these young men wended.

"The fall will soon be upon us, you notice, Mr. Joyner," said the preacher, pointing to the browning and yellowing of the forest leaves, as they were entering.

"My object," answered the other, "was not to discuss the seasons with you, sir, but—"

"I did not so understand your request for an interview," was the quick reply; "but I suggest that we postpone reference to the matter you have on your mind until we reach a spot where we may consider it without incurring risk of being observed."

"As you please, sir."

Nothing more was said by either until they had proceeded a distance of a couple of hundred yards, to a spot where was a dense growth of dogwood and crab-apple. Here Henry halted, and seating himself upon the trunk of a tree that had fallen, he looked up mildly and said:

"Well, sir, as your business seems urgent, too much so to be put off until I can get through with some rather pressing engagements, I am now at your service."

His calmness, so different from what he had expected, irritated Hiram yet more. He said, bluntly, as he well knew how:

"I've been intending for some time to tell you, sir, that I wanted you to stop your visits to my house and your attentions to my sister."

"Why have you not done so, Mr. Joyner, before now, when you find me so preoccupied?"

"Because I have not had a suitable opportunity, sir. I intended to wait until the camp-meeting was over, and would have done so but for your thrusting forward last night that old ruffian to insult and outrage me, and I determined then to wait no longer. I sought you last night, but was not able to find you."

"So they informed me at our tent on my return from a walk. To whom do you allude in your use of the word 'ruffian'?"

"I allude, as in spite of your pretended ignorance you know very well, to old Mr. Swinger."

"I did indeed suspect that you were referring to that gentleman, startled as I was that a man young as you would speak thus of one so much your elder, whom you must know to

be held in much respect, indeed in much reverence, wherever he is known."

At that moment a slight noise among the leaves was heard, and a gray squirrel came tripping along and made for a large poplar-tree near by, in a fork of which was a nest. Arrived there, the pretty thing turned suddenly, ran up an adjacent oak, and, halting on one of the lower branches, commenced chattering earnestly, as if in admonition to the two men below. Henry Doster looked up as, brandishing its full-spread tail, it continued to pour forth.

"Your attention, sir!" said Hiram, in commanding tone.

"I crave pardon, sir," Henry answered, pleasantly bowing. "It was doubtless a mere vagary of my thoughts to imagine for a moment if that little beast were trying to express its regret for the words with which you just now characterized so excellent a man as the Reverend Mr. Swinger. As a matter of fact I aver most positively that I did not know beforehand a word that he was going to say in his exhortation last night, if that was the occasion of his fancied offence to yourself; in-

deed," he added, smiling, "I doubt if *he* knew, as he usually speaks on such occasions according to the inspiration that he feels prompted by. However, passing that by for the time, and referring to your first remark, wherein you notify me of your wishes regarding *your* house, as you style it, and some attentions that I have had the honor to pay to your sister, I will answer that my impression all along has been that the mansion in which you reside along with your mother and her belonged to them jointly with yourself, and having been treated by them, on the few occasions when I have been there, with much courteousness, I am not quite sure that I shall observe that portion of your demand; but I think—yes, I rather think that, at least for some time, I will."

"*I* rather think you will, sir."

"Perhaps you do. It concerns me little whether you do or not. As to the other portion, I must say to you frankly that I shall pay no sort of attention to it whenever I may happen to meet Miss Joyner, unless I find that her will in that behalf coincides with yours."

"In the name of *God!*" said Hiram, laboring hard to repress the loudness of his voice, "what *is* a man to do in such a case?"

After meditating a moment Henry answered: "What would you do, pray, sir, if the object of your present ire, instead of myself, were my relative, Mr. Thomas Doster?" Then he again looked up at the squirrel, which had run up to a higher limb, and was continuing its warnings.

With deep scorn Hiram replied: "But for Mr. Thomas Doster's leaving the camp after your Fourth of July oration I should have made through him the demand just put to you in person. It is not relevant to consider what I might do were he in your case, notwithstanding I will say that his vicarious visits and attentions to my family are disgusting to me; infinitely less so, however, if for his own personal ends, would they be than his cousin's. No one could regret more than I do, on all accounts, that I have not to deal with that gentleman, who, as I have always believed, has some sense of honor and responsibility, instead of his preaching cousin, who seeks to thrust himself into my family, and

that, as I verily believe, by maligning a man whom everybody who knows my sister, and whom she herself until lately, have been expecting that she would marry. If you were not a preacher—even as it is I can hardly refrain from putting on the black cloth you wear to screen your person from violence such marks as would disgrace you in her eyes and all others'. And I now warn you, sir, that unless you cease your—"

"Hold, sir—hold for a brief moment, I pray you," interrupted Henry, still sitting, as Hiram stood writhing with passion. "Mr. Hiram Joyner, I do not know how much I ought to feel gratified by your words in praise of my cousin. If they had been more cordial they would have approximated nearer his deserts. But, sir, it is not true that I have ever sought, and I claim to be a man incapable of seeking, to win the hand of any woman, or any other object that I may deem necessary to my well-being, by the employment of such arts as you mention. Having answered this much to the insulting charge which your manliness, it seems, was not enough to withhold you from bringing without proof, I have

now to add that my profession, or, the better to suit your taste, the sort of clothes I wear, will help, I trust, to defend me against many a real danger, but I assure you that I neither rely upon them as much as a jot now, nor shall I hereafter in any possible conflict with *you.* For the sake of others of your family I restrain the words that would rise to my lips in further answer to your charges and your threatenings, except to say that I brand the former as grossly false, and that I despise the latter as vain menaces of a childish braggadocio."

He then rose and looked with calm defiance upon his adversary.

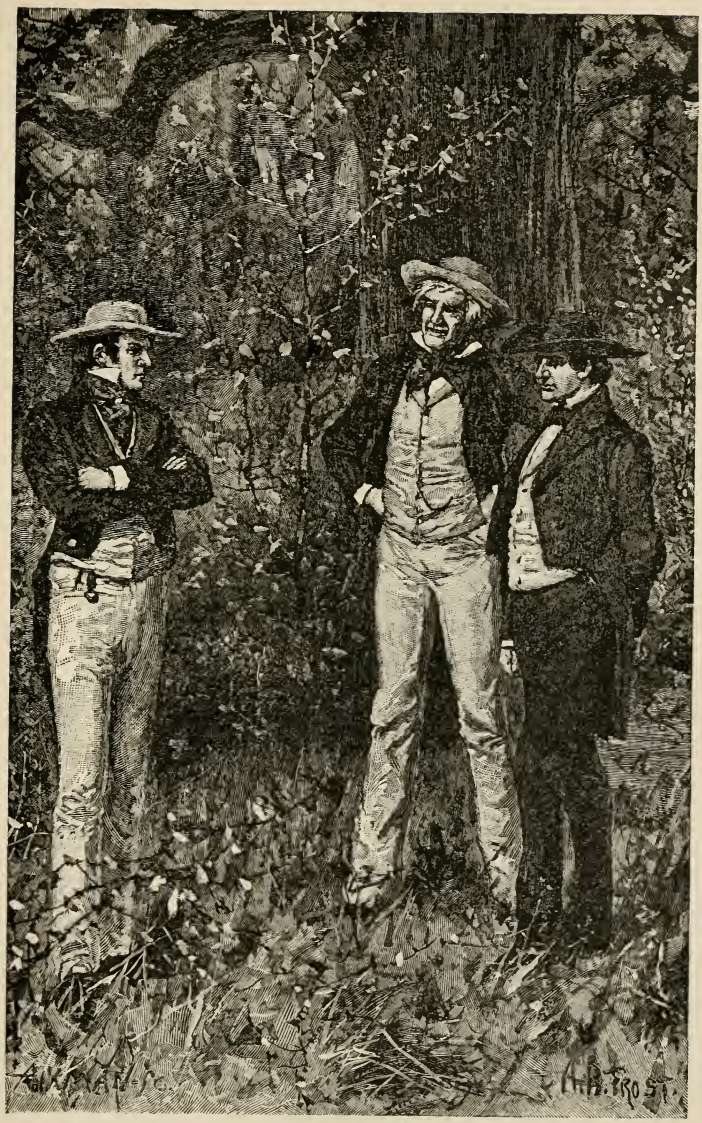
"God!" exclaimed Hiram, overpowered by rage. Taking a step backward, and closing his fingers tightly, he raised his hand on high. Henry sprang forward and seized his arm. At that moment, like the bull of Marathon or him of Bashan, Mr. Swinger rushed from behind the poplar, and as he put himself between the combatants, elbowing them apart, said, in merry tones:

"No, you won't; not quite you won't; not if old Allen Swinger know hisself."

VIII.

No man could have foreseen what would have been the issue of the contest. At least so could not Mr. Swinger; otherwise his deportment, as they were presently assured, would have been different. The young men could not but separate under the repulsion of those stalwart arms. He looked at Hiram with angry disdain, as the latter recoiled with some sense of shame for having given way to his passion so far beyond what he had intended.

"Hime Jyner"—flattening his lips against his teeth—"want to know how come I here? Well, I tell you. I see you and Henry Dawster a-movin' to these woods, and I knowed from some o' your talk in the neighborhood I heered about you was up to some sort o' devil-*ment*, and so I circled around, I did, and I took my stand behind that poplar thar. Oh, you can come down now, you little varmint"—looking up at the squirrel, that had not yet



"'HIME JYNER, WANT TO KNOW HOW COME I HERE?'"

ceased its complainings; "you like to told on me, though I weren't after your young 'uns. Go 'long home!"

The squirrel took him at his word, descended, tripped joyously to the poplar, and was soon hidden within its nest.

"And now," Mr. Swinger resumed, "you want to know how come I to part you two? Well, I'll up and tell you that, too. It were jes because I were 'spicioned Henry Dawster a bein' ruther light weight, and not used to sech, you might of ben too much for him. Understand? If I hadn't ben jubous on them p'ints in my mind I'd a stood back and a let him lam you till you hollered and out with some o' your meanness. The good Lord know I ain't for fightin' when it can be holp; but when it can't, then I'm for pitchin' in; and when I *am* in, I'm for fannin' out the concern, even if I *does* have a rewivle on my hands. And let me tell you, Hime Jyner, if it have ben *me*, 'stid o' this yearlin' of a boy, no sooner'n you out with your oudacious sass, I'd a whirled in on you and I'd a frazzled you out to that you'd a ben thankful to be let take it all back. I'm not a-denyin' I were meanin'

some o' my words last night for you along o' t'other ongodly chaps, that *you* special got right in the path o' my chargin' and looked that impident that I were jes ableeged to give you a passin' wipe; but when you say I were put up by this boy here—when you say *that*, you tell a—"

"There, there, Brother Swinger!" exclaimed Henry, "do not—I beg you do not utter the word. Mr. Joyner doubtless believed to be true what he said."

"Well"—reluctantly lowering the arm he had raised—"I'll do as you say, Henry. Mayby he did. But it go to show whut fool notions some people have, that they think so much more o' theirself than t'other people know they're worth that they'll go off half-cocked, and nothin' but a flash in the pan at that. Now, Hime Jyner, your father, Zekil Jyner, were a man I thought a heap of, 'spite o' his bein' sech a streenious Babtis'. But yit he were a man o' them kind that he'd a never denied a bein' o' that, nor whatsonever else he might think it were his juty; and he were not a man to jes find fau't and make a hullaballoo with people that he have no more

occasion than you has with me or Henry Dawster, ary one, without you jes natchuilly thinks people belongs to you to order 'em about as you please—hanh?"

"If he is through, sir," said Hiram, sullenly, still looking only at Henry, "I withdraw the charge which Mr. Swinger—though with his usual extreme rudeness—has convinced me to have been without just foundation. It is possible that I was overhasty in referring in such terms to your profession; but the demand I made regarding your deportment towards my family I repeat, and I shall trust to be able to enforce it. As for Mr. Swinger, he is too old a man for me even to think of resenting his coarse insults."

He then turned and walked rapidly away.

"Old or young," answered Mr. Swinger, loud enough to be heard but for the swaying shrubbery and the sound of the trampled leaves, "he could fan *you* out so bad you'd have to be took up and took home in pieces. In my day I *wanted* no better fun than to handle sech as you, two at a time. Sher, boy! sher!"

Henry had sat down again and covered

his face with his hands. Looking fondly upon him, the old man said:

"Come, my son, take down them hands and liven up. Thar's nothin' to cry about, nor not even to be sorry about, exceptin' it's for not lickin' that bar into some sort o' shape; which, I hadn't been afeered you was too light weight for the above, I'd a let you a done it. It ain't of'n a Meth'dis' preacher *have* to fight; but when he do it's a positive needcessity for him to whup the fight, or he'll git that cowed that he can't preach the blessed gospel effecuil like it *got* to be preached to make headway with the gen'ration o' sinners we has to deal with in this gen'ration o' people. The good Lord don't want them he have choosed for to preach his word to go about a-makin' a *practice* o' fightin', and pickin' up fights with Tom, Dick, and Harry; but nother do he want 'em to be a-backin' down when people tries to run over 'em. So git up and look peert. You got to preach agin to-night."

The young man looked up with imploring remonstrance.

"Yes, *sir!*" the elder answered, unrelentingly. "It's done fixed, same as the law o'

the Mede and Persian. This very night of our Lord some more o' your sweat and whut else stuff you got in you got to come out. Another reason I some ruther you wouldn't hitch with Hime Jyner, and look all tousled and bunged up when you ris in the pulpit. Come, git up, and march back, and don't you open your mouth nary one time about whut have took place here this mornin'. It'll do you more good than harm, and in more ways than one. But I hain't got time to talk about that now."

Taking him by the arm, he raised him up, and they repaired to their tent. They were not surprised to hear during the day that Hiram and Ellen had left the camp and gone home. With what little reflection he had time to give to the matter, Henry rather thought he would have thus advised. With every successive effort he rose higher in men's opinions. The camp was continued only two days longer than the usual time, when, owing to the great strain on tent-holders, it was broken up, and the services carried on for another week in town. In this while Henry saw Ellen not at all, though after the return

to town he met Harriet daily at the Ingrams'. The rencontre in the woods became known only to those immediately interested in it, and its extent to not all of them until some time afterwards. Second only to that he felt in the great revival was Mr. Swinger's interest in the fortunes of his dear *protégé*, and in their private interviews he spoke of them in cheerful hope.

"Go on, my boy, with your juties, and attend to *them* the best you know how. Not only the good Lord, but everybody else, have respects of a man that stand up to his juty. When this meetin' is over, then we can see how it suit to move. Hime Jyner settin' at you ain't goin' to do you any harm, special when it's found out how you stood up to him. *That* part got to come out certain if the rest do. Whatever you do, don't let Tom know yit how it all were. Tom's fiery hisself. It's best for him not to know all about it, so he can keep goin' thar, and keep you posted how the land lays. You better not go anigh the Jyners' yit awhile. They ain't no doubt Hime's told his people all about it—bull-headed feller that he is—and

your a goin' to the Mays' and *not* thar, it'll show Missis Jyner that you has respects of her feelin's, and it'll make Ellen madder with Hime and more determ'ed to lean on you, and it'll fetch things to a head quicker. The old lady come of fightin' stock, Babtis' as they was, and she ain't goin' to think less o' you for standin' squar' up to Hime, her own son if he do be; and as for the young 'un, it'll sagashuate her stronger. Wimming, Henry Dawster, is a kind o' creeters, I don't keer how skeery they make out theyselves, they want them they goin' to take up with to be feared o' nothin', special them that has two legs. A man got to study wimming to find out all about 'em, like I had to do when I were a-courtin' Hester, and they had me up a tree. Why, sir, in them times a feller, and he were Hester's cousin, and he have prop'ty, and he were a big feller and a fightin' feller, and he wanted Hester for his own self, he did—for she were pretty as a pink—and he made all kind o' game o' me. And I took it, because I were afeard o' mispleasin' any her relation and kinfolks, and a leetle more and he'd a got her. At last, when I

see how things was a gwine, I got desper't', and so one day I meets him in town, and he hadn't hardly more'n said the word *beans* to me before I lit on him, I did, and I wore him out. Now whut you think were the upshot o' sech as that? Well, sir, the very next time I see Hester she were comin' out o' meetin'; for I darsn't not come anigh her ma's house; and when she see me she bowed, she did, and she smile; and the next day, when I went thar all a-trimblin'—for she *were* a beauty, I tell you, boy, and she hold her own now along with any of 'em yit, as people can see for theyself—*but*, when I got thar, *ef* she didn't rise, and, as I understood the motion, she hilt her arms open. *She* always say she didn't. All the same to me. In*to* them arms I flewed, same as a sparrer from a hawk, and thar I ben ever sence, blessed be God! And whut's more, her ma, that feller's own blessed aunt on his father's side, *she* got riconciled to the match, which up to then she ben horstile, same ef I come of Tory people. *No*, sir; that's wimming the world over; and main reason I parted you and Hime, I were feared o' your light weight. But you showed the

sperrit, and, as the feller said, that are sufficient. *No*, sir; that skrimmage will go to fetch the business to a compermise quicker than if it hadn't happened. It would of done it quicker if it have ben the Mays, which they ain't that awful streenious about Babtis' as the Jyners. Yit, my son, you done right in follerin' your instink o' love. I believe in *her* strong as pizen, same as I did thirty year ago. A man got no business a-wantin' to marry any female girl without she seem to him at the very top o' creation, so to speak, and he feel the instink o' love breakin' out all over him in spots big as a sheepskin. No, *sir!*"

Henry smiled, as well at the speculations of Mr. Swinger on his own romantic experiences as at the intimation thus given unintentionally of his partial regret that his young friend's affections had not found a lodgment somewhat further down the river.

IX.

Whether or not Mr. Swinger understood human nature as well as he claimed, results justified his predictions. Ellen prudently refrained from expressions of much feeling at home. She managed to see Tom Doster on the day of her return from the camp-ground, and in the interview both gave and received some salutary advice. Two weeks afterwards, when Mrs. Joyner found out that Henry had been in the neighborhood and had called only at the Mays', she said to Hiram:

"You've made matters worse by your foolish interference. Ellen has seen that Henry Doster is quite able to take care of himself against violent young men like you, and though she don't say so in those words, it's plain to me that, just as I'd be in her place, she thinks more of him than she did before; and it would have looked much more decent, besides being better every way, if the young

man, when he was down here, could have come right on to the house, instead of having to meet the child at the Mays'. The respect he showed for himself as well as us all by keeping away proves to me that he's a gentleman, and if he wasn't a Methodist preacher I don't know that I should feel so much opposed to it. As it is, you've put it where it's worth nobody's while to say anything about it, one way or another."

"I've done my duty," answered Hiram, bluntly. "Ellen, as she always has done in spite of my advice, will do as she pleases, especially when *you* don't try to hinder her; but such things are very far different from anything pa ever anticipated."

Then he went out, in order to let this remark, as he knew it would, rankle in his mother's mind.

Mrs. May also had her words of indignation for Hiram's conduct and admiration for that of Henry.

"Why, William," she said to her son, "Sally Joyner ought to be proud of such a young man for Ellen's beau, and if she wasn't such a Baptist, and so proud of Horeb because

Mr. Joyner started it, she would. Upon my word, when I heard how he had behaved to Hiram in what was the most uncalled-for attack I ever heard of, to say nothing of camp-meeting going on at the time, I declare, Methodist preacher as he is, I couldn't but wish— However, I won't say that; but you two boys, William May and Hiram Joyner—how *have* you two boys abused your opportunities! I've no patience with either of you!"

Will laughed as he turned away, for already Mary Anderson, whose father's land and negroes were just across the river, was beginning to seem in his eyes about the equal of anybody.

In all this while the mind of the pastor of Horeb had been anxiously exercised, in spite of several quite unexpected immersions, which there was no denying were owing to the late Methodist revival. He tried to be reasonably thankful that some little good had come out of such a whirlypool, as he was wont to characterize the camp-meetings, but he must brood over the possible loss of at least one favorite lamb. Outside of his

own home, except when in the pulpit or when engaged otherwheres in religious (particularly denominational) discussion, he was far from being a wordy person, and he seldom meddled, except when appeal was made to him, in family matters among his congregations. One evening Hiram Joyner came over to his house, and after merely saluting Mrs. Bullington, asked her husband for a private conversation. After the visitor had gone, the groans and other interjectional things from Mr. Bullington, being more than common, awakened some curiosity in his wife.

"Whut in the world Hiom Jyner want 'ith you, Mr. Bull'n'ton, make you look so ser'ous? I don't know when that boy ben to this house before."

"I ought to look ser'ous, 'oman, if I don't. Hiom Jyner ser'ous too, and well he mout be. I didn't know tell now the intrust he take in Horub, which Zekol Jyner thought and believed he were foundin' on a rock when he built her, and him nor nobody else ever expected sech a thing in this whole ontimely world as to see a Meth'dis' comin' down here and breakin' of her up by marryin' in*to* a fam-

bly that nother wants him nor hisn Them reports about them girls was jes the fact-truth, and Hiom Jyner say that if somethin' ain't done, and that soon, both them famblies is broke off from Horub. For you know well enough, to my sorrer, that them Mays they hain't never been the good, ginuine Babtis' like the Jyners, and when that preacher, that he's Tom Dorrister's cousin, and Tom a-helpin' him—*my* Lord! And when *he* have took Ellen away, Hiom say they cert'n to git Tom and Harriet in time, and I can't tell the time I felt like I ben a-feelin' for this last hour. When I ben a-countin' on Tom Dorrister for one o' the very acuil deacons when he got a little more age and expeunce on his shoulders, and as for the helpin' support the parstor accordin' to his prop'ty, he ben the one most 'pennance was to be put of all of 'em. I wouldn't of *believed* it of Tom Dorrister. And not only so, but I always, tell this news, counted on the jindin' o' ther banns whensonever they got married that everybody never had ary sech a thought but Ellen and Willom May, and Hiom Jyner and Har'i't. And I'll jes tell you how it'll be. The old

man Swinger'll be the one to do the marr'in' o' that Dorrister preacher and Ellen, and then *he'll* hop up and put Tom and Har'i't through, a bein' of Tom's cousin, and in course a want-in' back his fee he paid ole Br'er Swinger, and *I* sha'n't be even invited to nary one o' their weddin's. Ain't I got cause to feel ser'ous, 'oman?"

"Oh, Mr. Bull'n'ton," began his affectionate wife, with comforting intent, "if it's the lots and lotteries of them young people—"

"Don't talk to me about your lots and lotteries, female!" he bawled. "Your lots and your lotteries don't do any good to *my* mind, the fix *my* mind's in."

The good wife subsided, and could sympathize only in silence with the multitudinous complainings of her lord before sleep that night came, imparting temporary relief.

The next morning, after awakening, the first words that Mrs. Bullington overheard, sounding as if they came up from the bottom of an extremely deep grave, were, "Woices: the time have come when *woices* got to be raised and let out in sech a quan—*darous*—come off!"

About an hour after his breakfast Mr. Bullington rode to the Joyners'. Dismounting solemnly, solemnly hitching his horse, he walked as if his legs barely were able to take his gigantic form into the piazza.

"Brother Bullington," quickly said Mrs. Joyner, even before taking his heavy hand, "you are not well. I saw it the minute I laid eyes on you. Take that rocking-chair, unless you are afraid to sit out in the open air, and I'll have Nancy bring a dipper of cool water from the well."

He let himself down upon the rocker, and waved his hand with some defiance to the open air, as if the harm it could do, added to that already poured from other sources, was merely contemptible. And when able to speak, though in much feebleness, he answered: "How do *you* do, Sister Jyner? No, Sister Jyner, I ain't afeared o' the ar. The ar can't hurt me. You said somethin' about water, if I heerd you correct, Sister Jyner, and I'll acknowledge my mind were a-runnin' *on* water the minute you spoke. No, no—oh no!" And he raised a hand in mournful, firm deprecation as the lady started into the house

"'DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT YOUR LOTS AND LOTTERIES, FEMALE!'"

to call for the beverage. "My mind, I say, have been a-runnin' *on* water more here lately than I 'member it have run thar, special sence I were old enough to be conwicted o' the value, not so much for the drinkin' of it, leastways for the present. Fact is, I never doubted nor wished to deny the good Lord made water for man and beast to drink; *one* thing. But the *mainest* thing, if I understand the Scriptur', water, when it were made, it were made for people to git down in*to* it, and have theirselves dipped in*to* it, or ruther, as the Scriptur' say, *baptized* in*to* it, by them He have app'inted the authority to wash away their sins. And I well 'members how that used to be the idees that Br'er Zekol Jyner had on them same subjects, and I couldn't begin to tell the times, me and him, that we always went together in our mind, same ef we been two black-eye peas. But, a-last! him a bein' now dead and goned, and me left here and a-tryin' to peg away best I can by myself—no, no, Sister Jyner, I don't want no water to *drink*, a yit, a not a-denyin' I won't take a gourd after a while. Whar's Ellen?"

"Harriet came by here a little while ago and got Ellen, and they rode together over to Sister Doster's."

"Rode to Sister Dorrister's! *The* good Lord send it were to stay thar!" he said, with solemn heartiness. "That is, of course, I mean when the child git ready to leave the parenchal ruff. But it give me, her bein' away, a some better chance o' empt'in' my mind of *some* o' the load that look like I can't sleep o' nights a-thinkin' on poor Br'er Zekol Jyner, and a leetle more and I'd a lost my appetites for my victuals."

They had a long talk. Rather Mr. Bullington dwelt at great length upon the awful consequences of bringing into that neighborhood, and into houses which delicacy forbade him to particularize, such doctrines as sprinkling, falling from grace, and in all dreadful human probability infant baptism. The truth of the whole business, in Mr. Bullington's opinion, was that such as that ought to come as nigh as anything in this whole world could come to make the deceased, to whom respectful, affectionate allusion had just been made, turn over in his coffin if he

could do nothing else. At length he ended, and after taking the promised gourd, bade his hostess a mournful adieu, and moved away as solemnly as he had come.

Mrs. Joyner, although much more cultivated than her pastor, and less narrowed in opinions, yet reverenced him much; doubtless the more for the sake of the affectionate relations that had existed between him and her late husband. Therefore she was much affected by his words, and when Ellen returned she said:

"Ellen, I know, of course, that I have no right to your confidence or any influence upon you, although you are my own and only daughter, and I *used* to have both. I forgot to ask you how is Sister Doster."

"She's well, ma," answered Ellen, lowly, holding her bonnet strings and looking as if she feared her mother was losing her reason.

"Ah! glad to hear it; but if you have made up your mind to marry that Methodist preacher, I think you owe it to me and to the memory of your father to say nothing of poor dear old Brother Bullington, who, if anything, is worse off about it than I've been

until now—I think you owe it to us all to have some sort of understanding that you are not to be interfered with in your religion; that is, if you haven't already determined in your own mind to give it up."

Ellen removed her bonnet at leisure; re-adjusted the combs in her hair; then, sitting down, answered:

"Ma, Henry Doster has never mentioned Methodism to me a single time that I can remember. Mr. Bullington has been here, I see. I thought they were his horse's tracks I noticed at the gate. And he has set you more against Henry. Did he have to say anything about Tom?"

"Some; not very much."

"What *did* he say, ma?"

"He only said—that is, he only intimated that — perhaps it wouldn't have been so bad if Tom— What are you laughing at, Ellen?"

"Beg pardon, ma; but, seeing what you were going to say, I was comparing it with what Harriet told me of *her* mother saying, no longer ago than yesterday, about Henry Doster, and of her preference for him over

Tom. It *is* right curious. You agreed with Mr. Bullington; now didn't you, ma?"

"Well, if you *must* know, I *did;* and I wish in my heart, if you must have a Doster, that it was Tom, and that to-morrow."

"Well, ma," replied the daughter, after a little sigh, "I've heard you say many and many a time that you married the man of your own choice, although he was not that of your parents, and that you never had cause to repent of it, and now you talk to me as if I had no right to govern myself according to my own feelings. Yet, ma, you know that if Tom Doster and I, no further back than six months ago, had taken a fancy for each other, you would have been against it, and so would Mrs. May have been as between Henry Doster and Harriet, whom now she declares she would receive as a son-in-law readily — yes, thankfully. What are two poor, inexperienced girls to do in such a case?"

Ellen, notwithstanding her inexperience, looked at her mother as if she had the argument on her. But the latter confidently responded: "No, because neither of us had

ever had a thought of your marrying Dosters of any kind. Martha May knows not what she's talking about when she talks that way; but she's no strong Baptist any way and never was, and she's carried away with what people talk about what a great orator that Henry Doster is, and going to be a bishop or some great somebody, when there's Tom Doster joining land right next to her, and the industriousest young man in this whole section of country, and would make that plantation look another sort to what it's been brought, and he's always been a good Baptist, and he's as good-looking *any* day as Henry Doster, and to my taste better. And then what is to become of me when my only daughter is following a Methodist preacher wherever they've a mind to send him when people get tired of him in one place and another, and my only son no more managing than Will May, and so little company or comfort to his mother otherwise? But I suppose I'll have to trust that the good Lord will take care of me somehow in my old age."

Then she wept freely, though without bitterness.

"Ma," said Ellen, in manner as conciliatory as her affectionate spirit could employ, "I am glad you spoke to me so freely and candidly. I have never asked Henry Doster about what are to be my religious privileges, nor as to the relations I am to be allowed to hold with you, the more dear to me because you are a widow, and because brother is not as considerate of you as he ought to be. *He*, as you well know, would no more have approved Tom Doster's than he now approves Henry's suit of me, although he would have swapped me to anybody who could have given to him Harriet in exchange. Let that go. But I tell you now, and you may tell Mr. Bullington if you choose, that I have no idea, at least for the present, of quitting yours and my father's church. Somehow, ma, my parents have seemed to become the dearer, if possible, to my heart since—since I have been indulging another feeling." She blushed deeply, and covered her face. "Of course," recovering, she continued, "nobody can foresee what changes are to come over their lives; but now my expectation is to continue a Baptist, praying always to be as

good a one as pa was and as you are. Can you be satisfied with that, ma?"

"I'll have to be, I suppose."

"Still you'd feel safer if it was Tom;" and she playfully patted her mother's cheek.

Removing the hand, yet not rudely, "You know I cannot tell a falsehood, Ellen."

"Ah me!" sighed the sweet girl, and went up to her chamber.

X.

Mr. Bullington's call was on a Wednesday. On the following Friday evening our two girls went in the Joyner carriage to spend the rest of the week at the Ingrams'. Tom had business in town on the following day, and as that was the stated Conference Saturday for Mr. Bullington's congregation in town, it occurred to Tom to do his pastor a little favor. So riding up to his gate toward sunset, he called him out, and said:

"Brother Bullington, I have to go to town early in the morning on some business, and knowing your horse was busy helping to put in wheat, I thought I'd propose to take you in my gig, if it will suit you and you can make it convenient to start immediately after breakfast."

"Why, Tommy—why, yes, my son," he answered. "It suit me exact. I *am* might'ly pushed to git in my wheat before the dark

nights gives out. I'll be over to your ma's time you git your breakfast, and—"

"Oh, no, I wouldn't have you take all that trouble. I'll ride over here."

"All right, Tommy. 'Light, and tell me the news."

"Sorry I can't stay, Brother Bullington; no special news that I know of. I am glad I can accommodate you. Good-evening."

"Evenin', Tommy."

And Mr. Bullington thought that he felt a little better; for this was the first visit, brief as it was, that Tom had made him since the beginning of the rumors concerning him and Harriet May. Next morning he had just risen from an early breakfast, when, going to the door, he saw Tom's gig coming briskly toward his gate.

"My! my! You *are* bright and yearly this mornin'," was his salutation, as he advanced to meet him.

Considering his prominence as a public man, Mr. Bullington had to a degree remarkable, even in his profession, a faculty of attention, at times of intense listening. Serious, indeed saturnine, in disposition, in the pres-

ence of one or more interlocutors he had a habit of compressing his lips, swelling his jaws, and contracting his brows while regarding with solemnest attention a speaker, whether the latter's remarks were meant to be taken as earnest or sportive. Afterward he would reflect most respectfully, even severely, before giving the answer which subsequent silence might lead him to believe was expected. Joy or grief seemed to make no separate impression upon that countenance, except that the former perhaps was rather more agonizing. He never wept, at least with his eyes, except on occasions of much hilarity, when, as it appeared, he was suffering quick remorse for having been momentarily seduced from his habitually solemn port by manifestations of interest in the frivolities of such a wicked world. On such occasions the corners of his mouth would let down, his lower lip shrink and hide behind its superior, all making it appear that in him, among the various emotions of the human heart, that excited by humor was the most sorrowful.

Tom was in high spirits. Any healthy young man with no uncommon load upon

his conscience ought to have been light of heart driving along the road on such a morning in the fall of the year, the sun, the air, the forest leaves, seeming as if they had been created purposely to gladden mankind. Tom rattled on gayly on this theme and on that. He believed that he said some good things, some excellent things, in fact, for one used to more serious work than merely making merry. Some of them must have been extremely funny, judged by the excruciating grief of his companion. When they had gotten as far as what town people called the Two-mile Branch, and the horse had taken a drink and set out again, Tom said:

"Brother Bullington, I want you to do me a favor. It won't take much time or trouble. Get up there, Bill."

Mr. Bullington turned, and for a while looked savagely into Tom's face, at length answering: "You ought to know, Tommy, if you don't, that I'll do what lay in my power for you, or any of your people."

"I thought so, or I wouldn't have taken the liberty of asking you. Brother Bullington, I want you to marry me."

"The goodness gracious, Tommy!" in due time came the response. "Why, I'll do it. In course I'll do it. When?"

"I'll let you know before long. I thought you'd do me that favor. The truth is, I wouldn't feel exactly right in giving the wedding-fee I've laid up to anybody else than you, whom ma and I and all of us think so much of."

Mr. Bullington would surely have cried now if he had known how. Concentrating his gaze more and more fiercely upon Tom, he writhed and writhed, as Tom, waving his whip now and then, enlarged upon the pleasure it would be to him always hereafter to remember that his own pastor, and his wife's pastor, and the pastor of his parents, and the pastor of his wife's parents, and the pastor of— But here they reached the Gateston Hotel. After alighting, Tom turned the horse over to the hostler, and said:

"Let us go into the hotel parlor for a little while, Brother Bullington. I want to see a couple of gentlemen there for a few minutes, after which you and I can continue our conversation."

Entering, Mr. Bullington looked in slow, menacing astonishment, first at Mr. Swinger, then at Henry Doster.

"Well met," said the former, rising, taking Mr. Bullington's hand, lifting it up, and shaking it cordially. "How do, Br'er Bull'n't'n? Mornin', Tom. Little 'head o' time, but better too soon than too late, special on the arrant you come on this mornin'. Take a seat, Br'er Bull'n't'n, and tell me all about yourself and fambly. Hain't see you, not to shake hands 'long with you, sense that day at the Shoals."

After salutings and seatings all around, Mr. Bullington regarded Mr. Swinger sternly, as if to ward against assault. But the latter soon put him at as much ease as it was possible for him to feel in the company of dangerous heretics, who, plausible without, within were possessed of malignity and subtlety. After declaring over and over again how glad he was to see his brother Bullington, and to notice how well he held his own, and if anything how gladder to be told that Mrs. Bullington and the children were well as common, and after getting from Tom Doster such a promise as there would be no going back on

to help Mr. Bullington in getting in his wheat during the dark nights, he said:

"Henry, I don't think I ever told you how bad Br'er Bull'n't'n got me one day at the Shoals. I no doubt Tom's heerd it."

"Now, now, Br'er Swinger, said Mr. Bullington, "you goin' to tell on your own self that a way?" But they knew that, in spite of such remonstrance, he was quite willing for the story to go on.

"Oh, yes; a good thing's a good thing, Br'er Bull'n't'n, and when they on me, I'm bound to let t'other people git the good of it, even if *I* can't. Well, you see, Henry, it were a one Sadday evenin', I reck'n it ben about, or mighty nigh about, three year ago; ain't it, Br'er Bull'n't'n?"

"Be three year Sadday before the fourt' Sunday o' next mont'."

"That's it. You see *he* ain't forgot. Well, sir, after preachin' that mornin' to about a handful o' people at our poor little Hopewell meetin'-house t'other side of Iggeechee, as I rid by the stow at the Shoals on my way back home, I see Br'er Bull'n't'n and a whole lot o' men thar in the peazer, and I thought I'd

'light and stop and howdy, and swap a few words with 'em all; for Br'er Bull'n't'n know I always liked him, if he *is* sech a rambunctious Babtis'. Him nor none of 'em notice me till they see me comin' up the peazer steps, because for why at that very minute he were firin' away at a ter'ble rate agin we Meth'disses, and his words, jes as I come up, wuz to the effect that if John the Harbiniger had ben a Meth'dis', the Scriptur' would 'a named him that stid o' John the Babtis'; and he up, he did, and as he howdied along with me he say, 'And here's Br'er Swinger, as good a man as they've got, and he can't deny my words.' Well, sir, you better believe! It were a Babtis' crowd, as you know they're awful strong, up and down, on both sides o' the Iggeechee. Yit, I thought, never do not take up the old man's channelge, though I weren't in whut a body might call fightin' fix, a not a expectin' no sech. And then it were somehows, for the onliest time *in* my life, my idees, *and* my thoughts, *and* my argyments, *and* my words, *and* my speeches, *every*thing I had, they all got that jumbled together, and they got that piled up on top

o' one 'nother that I jes had *to* stop, and *to* set down, and see if I couldn't ontangle 'em and gether 'em in hand. And then, right thar, at the very minute I begin to think I see daylight, 'Br'er Swinger!'—you might a heerd him a mile—he bawled out, he did, and he hollered, and say: 'Ah, Br'er Swinger, it were John the Babtis'. No Meth'disses in them days—leastways o' them names. No wonder you speechless; but if you wuz able to talk, and could stand up and talk all day long, I'd jes take a cheer and set down calm, and 'casion'ly fling in a primmary few remarks, and ask you to p'int out the chapter and the veerse whar they tells about the Meth'disses in the Good Book.' And then he shook his big sides, and the t'others they all broke out in*to* a gener'l haw-haw. Well, sir, bless your soul! All of a suddent I got so *mad* that for jes about a second if I didn't feel like haulin' off and lettin' old Br'er Bull'n't'n have it right in the mouth, for flingin' sech a laugh on me, onprepar'd for it as I were. But I know sech as that won't begin to do, because I know Br'er Bull'n't'n have big a fist as me, and it wouldn't do nohow."

Here all broke into heartiest laughter except Mr. Bullington, who, what time he was not wiping his overflowing eyes, sat heaving his vast frame and glaring upon the narrator with a ferocity whose wretchedness was appalling.

"And so finuil," resumed the historian of Ogeechee border warfare, "what you reck'n I done? Why, sir, I whirled in, I did, and I thought I'd try laughin' myself too. But you all know what sort o' laughin' that is when you know people see you feel more like cryin' than anything else; and so the more I tried to laugh, the more the whole kerhoot of 'em laughed shore enough; and at last I got up, and *got* away, and *got* on my horse, and banished off from thar."

It looked as if the agony of Mr. Bullington would soon become unendurable; but at this moment the light tread of ladies' feet was heard in the hall, and presently the landlady of the hotel and Mrs. Ingram entered, followed by Ellen and Harriet. The last two were bonneted and beaming red. After shaking hands with her pastor, Ellen said: "Mr.

Bullington, Tom told you, I suppose, that we couldn't think of anybody else marrying us but you."

"Why, Ell'n—why, my child—why, yes; but I thought—why, whar's— *You* goin' to marry *Tom?* and that not under the parenchal ruff?"

"We'll explain all that afterwards, Brother Bullington," said Tom, as he put into his hands the marriage license, out of which, as he opened it with fumbling hands, dropped two twenty-dollar gold pieces. With difficulty the preacher found his spectacles, and when the coins, so far beyond what he had ever received for such a service, were lodged, one in one pocket of his trousers and the other in another, he performed the rite as well as he could. Then sitting, and putting his hands in his pockets, he looked around in abject despair. Then Mr. Swinger rose, and, as Henry and Harriet took their places, said: "Here come another batch, Br'er Bull'n't'n. Marryin', like everything else, ketchin', you know. Be ready."

When all was spoken except the final prayer, Mr. Swinger turned and said: "Bre'r

Bull'n't'n, this couple is Meth'dis' and Babtis' both, you know, and it take two of us to hitch *them* to the traces; so you got to make the praar."

Mr. Bullington, huge as he was, jumped as one roused from a dreaming sleep. Not having kept up at all with current events, his dazed eyes wandered around the room while he remained seated.

"You hear me?" said Mr. Swinger, in commanding tone. "Take them hands out o' them pockets, and git up out o' that cheer, and ask the good Lord to send His whole *ratternue* of angels down here on this young man and this young 'oman that's jes ben jinded in the banes. Out with 'em, and up with you, and when you're thoo I got another gold piece for you."

That day was remembered by Mr. Bullington as the most eventful in all his experience. About six months afterward, while telling of it to the family of his brother Cummins, near Fenn's Bridge, among other things he said:

"Hadn't ben I were a public man, I'd a

ben that nonplushed and pulled to pieces I'd a forgot how to talk and how to pray up to the 'casion. You see, when it first got out about them young people a keepin' comp'ny, people put it that Tom were after Sister May's daughter, and his cousin for Sister Jyner's. And they not disputed it, so they could git the mothers, and special the brothers, to firin' away at the wrong feller, a hopin' that way they'd other take some sort o' shine to the right'n, or leastways git riconciled to him. And bless your soul! it done it; that is, with the mothers, which they was the mainest ones. Then it were they concluded to strike while the iron were hot, to keep down any more fussin' when it were found out how the land lay shore enough. They wanted Emerly Ingram to let 'em have the thing over at her house; but Emerly were afeard o' hurtin' feelin's, and so they immergrated to the tavern. And I tell you I were nonplushed; but old Br'er Swinger, with all his predijice, say I come out splendid, and *he* never knowed till that mornin' no more'n t'other people which was which among 'em. And when Henry Dorrister hand me that

twenty-dollar gold piece, and I tuck it, a seein' his feelin's would be hurted, and old Br'er Swinger's too, if I didn't take half the fee, I say to myself, here's a Meth'dis' that if he's nothin' else he's liber'l. And if you believe me, Sister Cummins, them female mothers actuil laughed, and as for Sister Jyner, she actuil cried, and both for joy, when they heerd the news. And them boys—well, they see, matter o' course, it were too late to call off and open on another trail. Willom May, he laughed too; for he were already promised to Mary Anderson, that she's now his lawful wife. As for Hiom, he looked monst'ous cowed; and he do yit. Look like he don't feel like puttin' into young wimming's society, nor young men's nuther, but he ruther, when he go about at all—he ruther take it out in roamin' in a flock by hisself. Har'i't, jes as I expected, have took up with the Meth'dis'. Two kind o' wimming I've notussed in my expeunce o' people. One of 'em draws, and the tother lets other people drag them. You, for instance, Sister Cummins, you drawed Br'er Cummins from 'mong the Meth'dis', because he see you wuz right,

while Har'i't, like her cousin Emerly, were drug off. But it some consolation that it were by a young man that if he's nothin' else he's liber'l."

THE END.

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