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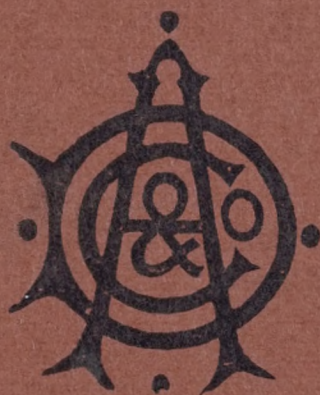
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THE CHRONICLES OF MR. BILL WILLIAMS

BY RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON

Author of "WIDOW GUTHRIE," "THE PRIMES AND THEIR NEIGHBORS," ETC.



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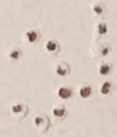
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1892

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Dedicated

TO MEMORIES OF THE OLD TIMES:

THE GRIM AND RUDE
BUT HEARTY OLD TIMES
IN GEORGIA.

PREFACE.

By friends and many acquaintances the author has been often advised to re-publish *Dukesborough Tales* in a form more convenient than that in which it was first issued. Acting upon this counsel, he has carefully revised and now submits six stories selected from the original sixteen. These relate mainly to incidents in the career of Mr. Bill Williams and his nearest associates.

The writer first employed the *nom de plume* of Philemon Perch, who was supposed to be a witness of many of the scenes and in some a participant. His original preface and dedication are presented in this volume.

In *Dukesborough* the author has preserved his memoirs of Powelton, a small village in Hancock County, Georgia, near which is his birthplace.

R. M. J.

BALTIMORE, May 5, 1892.

PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION.

THESE sketches, which I have ventured to call TALES—drawn partly from memories of incidents of old times, but mostly from imagination—were written for the sake of my own entertainment, in the evenings when I had nothing else to do. And now I am going to let them be published in a little book, having been persuaded, perhaps too easily, that they may amuse others, enough, at least, to have me excused both for the writing and the publishing. I know very well that such words as these, which are meant for a Preface, may be regarded rather as an apology. Let it be so; and if it be thought not sufficient even as such, it is as much, I insist, as ought to be expected from a man of my age.

P. P.

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CONFIDENTIAL

THE GOOSEPOND SCHOOL.

“ You call this education, do you not?
Why, 'tis the forc'd march of a herd of bullocks
Before a shouting drover.”

CHAPTER I.

THE incidents which I propose to relate in these sketches, and those which may follow hereafter, occurred, for the greatest part, either at or in the neighborhood of Dukesborough, once a small village in middle Georgia. For many years it has been enduring patiently the decay inevitable to things of no more stable foundation. It had not been laid off in its beginning according to any definite plan. It seemed indeed to have become a village quite unexpectedly to itself and to everybody else, notwithstanding that, instead of being in a hurry, it took its own time for it, and that amounted to some years. The Dukes first established a blacksmith shop. This enterprise succeeded beyond all expectation. A small store was ventured. It prospered. After some years other persons moved in, and, buying a little ground, built on both sides of the road (a winding road it was), until there were several families, a school, and a church. Then the Dukes grew ambitious and had the place called Dukesborough. It grew on little by little until this family had all gone, some to the coun-

ties farther west, and some to the grave. Somehow it could not stand all this. Decline set in very soon, and now its looks are sad, even forlorn.

It would be useless to speculate upon the causes of its fall. The places of human habitation are like those who inhabit them. Some persons die in infancy, some in childhood, some in youth, some at middle-age, some at three score and ten, and some linger yet longer. But the last, in their own times, die as surely. Methuselah, comparatively speaking, was what might be called a very old man; but then *he* died. The account in Genesis of those first generations of men is, after all, a melancholy one to me. The three last words closing the short history of every one are very sad—"And he died."

So it is with the places wherein mortals dwell. Some of them become villages, some towns, and some cities; but all—villages, towns, and cities—have their times to fall, just as infants, youths, men, and old men have their times to die. People may say what they please about the situation not being well chosen, and about the disagreeableness of having the names of their residences all absorbed by the Dukes, whom few persons used to like. All this might be very true. But my position about Dukesborough is, that it had lived out its life. It had run its race, like all other things, places, and persons that have lived out their lives and run their races; and when that was done, Dukesborough *had* to fall. It had not lived very long, and it had run but slowly, if, indeed, it can be said to have run at all. But it reached its journey's end. When it did, it had to fall, and it fell. So Babylon, so Nineveh. These proud cities, it is highly probable, had no more idea of their own ruin than Dukesborough had immediately after its first store was built. But we know their history, and it ought to be a warning.

Ah well! It is not often, of late years, that I pass the place where it used to stand. But whenever I do, I feel somewhat as I feel when I go near the neglected grave of an old acquaintance. In the latter case, I say to myself sometimes, And here is the last of him. He was once a stout, hearty, good-humored fellow. It is sad to think of him as having dropped everything, and being covered up here where the earth above him is now like the rest all around the spot, and the grave, but for my recollection of the place where it was dug, would be indistinguishable even to me who saw him when he was put here. But so it was. It could not be helped, and here he is for good. So of Dukesborough. When I pass along the road on the sides of which it is left now, I can but linger a little and muse upon its destiny. Here was once a smart village; no great things, of course, but still a right lively little village. It might have stood longer and the rest of the world have suffered little or no harm. But it is no use to think about it, because the thing is over and Dukesborough is—what it is. Besides myself, there may be two or three persons yet living who can tell with some approximation to accuracy what it used to be. When we are dead, whoever may wish to gather any very interesting relic of Dukesborough must do as they do upon the supposed sites of the cities of more ancient times—they must dig for it.

These reflections, somewhat grave, I admit, may seem to be unfitly preliminary to the narratives which are to follow them. But I trust they will be pardoned in an old man who could not forbear to make them when calling to mind the forsaken places of his boyhood, albeit the scenes which he describes have less of the serious in them than of the sportive. If I can smile, and sometimes I do smile, at the recital of some things that were done, and words that were said, by some of my earliest contemporaries, yet

I must be allowed a sigh also when I remember that the doings and the sayings of nearly all of them are ended for this world.

CHAPTER II.

“Books!” There is nothing terrible in this simple word. On the contrary, it is a most harmless word. It suggests quiet and contemplation; and though it be true that books do often produce agitations in the minds of men and in the state of society, sometimes even effecting great revolutions therein, yet the simple enunciation of the word, even in an elevated tone, would never be adequate, it would seem, to the production of any considerable excitement. As little would it seem, in looking upon it from any point of view in which one could place one’s self, to be capable of allaying excitement, however considerable. I never could tell exactly why it was that, as often as I have read of the custom in England of reading the Riot Act upon occasions of popular tumult, and begun to muse upon the strangeness of such a proceeding, and its apparent inadequacy for the purposes on hand, my mind has recurred to the incidents about to be narrated. For there was one point of view, or rather a point of hearing, from which one could observe this quieting result by the utterance of the first word in this chapter twice a day for five days in the week. It was the word of command with which Mr. Israel Meadows was wont to announce to the pupils of the Goosepond schoolhouse the opening, morning and afternoon.

The Goosepond was situated a few miles from Dukesborough, on the edge of an old field, with original oak and hickory woods on three sides, and on the other a dense

pine thicket. Through this thicket ran a path which led from a neighboring planter's residence where Mr. Meadows boarded. The schoolhouse, a rude hut built of logs, was about one hundred and twenty yards from this thicket, at the point where the path emerged from it.

One cold, frosty morning, near the close of November, about twenty-five boys and girls were assembled as usual waiting for the master. Some were studying their lessons, and some were playing; the boys at ball, the girls at jumping the rope. But all of them (with one exception), those studying and those playing, were watching the mouth of the path at which the master was expected. Those studying showed great anxiety. The players seemed to think the game worth the candle; though the rope-jumpers jumped with their faces toward the thicket; and whenever a boy threw his ball, he first gave a look in the same direction. The students walked to and fro in front of the door, all studying aloud, bobbing up and down, exhibiting the intensest anxiety to transfer into their heads the secrets of knowledge that were in the books. There was one boy in particular, whose eagerness for the acquisition of learning seemed to amount to violent passion. He was a raw-boned lad of about fifteen years, with very light coarse hair and a freckled face, sufficiently tall for his years. His figure was a little bent from being used to hard work. He had beautiful eyes, very blue, and habitually sad. He wore a roundabout and trousers of home-made walnut-dyed stuff of wool and cotton, a sealskin cap, and red brogan-shoes without socks. He had come up the last. This was not unusual; for he resided three miles and a half from the schoolhouse, and walked the way forth and back every day. He came up shivering and studying, performing both of these apparently inconsistent operations with great violence.

“Hello, Brinkly!” shouted half a dozen boys, “got in in time this morning, eh? Good. You are safe for to-day on that score, old fellow.”

“Why, Brinkly, my boy, you are entirelee too soon. He won’t be here for a quarter of an hour yit. Come and help us out with the bull-pen. Now only jes’ look at him. Got that eternal jography, and actilly studyin’ when he is nigh and in and about friz. Put the book down, Brinkly Glisson, and go and warm yourself a bit, and come and take Bill Jones’s place. It’s his day to make the fire. Come along, we’ve got the ins.”

These words were addressed to him by the “one exception” before alluded to, a large, well-grown, square-shouldered boy, eighteen years old, named Allen Thigpen. Allen was universally envied in the school, partly because he was too big to be afraid of any schoolmaster. But it was the boast of Allen Thigpen that he had yet to see the man that he was afraid of.

Brinkly paid no attention to Allen’s invitation, but came on up shivering and studying, studying and shivering. Just as he passed Allen, he was mumbling, “A-an em-em-pire is a co-untry go-overned by a-an em-per-or.”

Now, ordinarily the announcement of this proposition would be incapable of exciting any uncommon amount of risibility. It contains a simple truth expressed in simple language. Yet so it was that Allen laughed, and, as if he understood that the proposition had been submitted to him for ratification or denial, answered:

“Well, Brinkly, supposin’ it is. Who in the dickence said it weren’t? Did you, Sam?”

“Did I do what?” answered Sam Pate, in the act of throwing the ball.

“Did you say that a empire weren’t—what Brinkly said it was?”

"I didn't hear what Brinkly said it was, and I don't know nothin' about it, and I hain't said nothin' about it, and I don't keer nothin' about it." And away went the ball. But Sam had thrown too suddenly after looking toward the mouth of Mr. Meadows' path, and he missed his man.

Brinkly scarcely noticed the interruption, but walked to and fro and studied and shivered. He bowed to the book, he dug into it. He grated his teeth, not in anger, but in his fierce desire to get what was in it. He tried to fasten it in his brain whether or not by slightly changing the hard words, and making them, as it were, his own to command.

"An yem-pire," said he, fiercely, but not over-loudly, "is a ke-untry ge-uvernd by a ye-emperor."

"And what is a ye-emperor, Brinkly?" asked Allen.

"Oh, Allen, Allen, please go away from me! I almost had it when you bothered me. You know Mr. Meadows will beat me if I don't get it, because you know he loves to beat me. Do let me alone. It is just beginning to come to me now." And he went on shivering and studying, and shivering and announcing, among other things, that "an yempire was a ke-untry ge-uverned by an ye-emperor," emphasizing every one of the polysyllables in its turn; sometimes stating the proposition very cautiously, and rather interrogatively, as if half inclined to doubt it; at others asserting it with a vehemence which showed that it was at last his settled conviction that it was true, and that he ought to be satisfied and even thankful.

"Poor fellow," muttered Allen, stopping from his ball-play, and looking toward Brinkly as the latter moved on. "That boy don't know hisself; and, what's more, Israel Meadows don't." Allen then walked to where a rosy-cheeked little fellow of eight or nine years was sitting on a stump with a spelling-book in his lap and a pin in his right

hand with which he dotted every fourth word, after reciting the following:

“Betsy Wiggins; Heneritter Bangs; Mandy Grizzle; Mine!” (Dot.)—“Betsy Wiggins; Heneritter Bangs; Mandy Grizzle; Mine!” (Dot.)

“I-yi, my little Mr. Asa,” said Allen; “and supposin’ that Betsy Wiggins misses her word, or Heneritter Bangs hern, or Mandy Grizzle hern, then who’s goin’ to spell *them*, I want to know? And what’ll you give me?” continued Allen, placing his rough hand with ironical fondness upon the child’s head—“what’ll you give me not to tell Mr. Meadows that you’ve been gitting your own words?”

“Oh, Allen, please, please don’t!”

“What’ll you give me, I tell you?”

“Twenty chestnuts!” and the little fellow dived into his pockets and counted twenty into Allen’s hand.

“Got any more?” Allen asked, cracking one with his teeth.

“Oh, Allen, will you take all? Please don’t take all!”

“Out with ’em, you little word-gitter. Out with the last one of ’em. A boy that gits his own words in that kind o’ style ain’t liable, and oughtn’t to *be* liable, to eat chestnuts.”

Asa disgorged to the last. Allen ate one or two, looking quizzically into his face, and then handed the rest back to him.

“Take your chestnuts, Asa Boatright, and eat ’em—that is, if you’ve got the stomach to eat ’em. If I ever live to git to be as afeard of a human as you and Abel Kitchens and Brinkly Glisson are afeard of Iserl Meadows, drot my hide if I don’t believe I would commit sooicide on myself—yes, on myself by cuttin’ my own throat!”

“Yes,” replied Asa Boatright, “you can talk so because you are a big boy, and you know he is afraid of you. If

you was as little as me, you would be as afraid as me. If ever I get a man—” The little fellow, however, checked himself, took his pin again, and mumbling, “Betsy Wiggins; Heneritter Bangs; Mandy Grizzle; MINE!” resumed his interesting and ingenious occupation of dotting every fourth word.

Brinkly had overheard Allen’s taunt. Closing his book after a moment’s pause, he walked straight to him and said:

“Allen Thigpen, I am no more afraid of him than you are; nor than I am of you. Do you think that’s what makes me stand what I do? If you do, you are much mistaken. I’m trying all the time to keep down on mother’s account. I’ve told her of some of his treatment, but not all; and she gets to crying, and says this is my only chance for an ejication, and it does seem like it would break her heart if I was to lose it, that I have been trying to get the lessons, and to keep from fighting him when he beats me. And I believe I would get ’em if I had a chance. But the fact is, I can’t read well enough to study the jography, and my ’pinion is he put me in it too soon just to get the extra price for jography. And I can’t get it, and I haven’t learned anything since I have been put in it; and I am not going to stand it much longer; and, Allen Thigpen, I’m not going to pay you chestnuts nor nothing else not to tell him I said so neither.”

“Hooraw!” shouted Allen. “Give me your hand, Brinkly.” Then, continuing in a lower tone, he said, “By jingo! I thought it was in you. I seen you many a time, when, says I to myself, it wouldn’t take much to make Brinkly Glisson fight you, old fellow, or leastways try it. You’ve stood enough already, Brinkly Glisson, and too much, too. My blood has biled many a time when he’s been a-beatin’ you. I tell you, don’t you stand it no

longer. Ef he beats you again, pitch into him. Try to ride him from the ingoin'. He can maul you, I expect, but—look at this," and Allen raised his fist, about the size of a mallet.

Brinkly looked at the big fist and brawny arm, and smiled dismally.

"Books!" shouted a shrill voice, and Mr. Israel Meadows emerged from the thicket with a handful of hickory switches. In an instant there was a rushing of boys and girls into the house—all except Allen, who took his time. Asa Boatright was the last of the others to get in. He had changed his position from the stump, and was walking, book in hand, apparently all absorbed in its contents, though his eye was on the schoolmaster, whose notice he was endeavoring to attract. He bowed and digged and dived, until, just as the master drew near, he weariedly looked up, and, seeing him unexpectedly, gave one more profound dive into the book and darted into the house.

It was a rule at the Goosepond that the scholars should all be at their seats when Mr. Meadows arrived. His wont was to shout "*Books*" from the mouth of the path, then to walk with great rapidity to the house. Woe to the boy or girl who was ever too late, unless it happened to be Allen Thigpen. He had been heard to say:

"Ding any sich rule, and I ain't goin' to break my neck for Iserl Meadows nor nobody else." If he got in behind the master, which often happened, that gentleman was kind enough not to notice it—an illustration of an exception to the good discipline of country schoolmasters common in the times in which Mr. Meadows lived and flourished. On this occasion, when Mr. Meadows saw Allen, calculating that the gait at which he himself was walking would take him into the house first, he halted a little, stooped, and,

having untied one of his shoe-strings, tied it again. While this operation was going on, Allen went in. Mr. Meadows, rising immediately, struck into a brisk walk, almost a run, as if to apologize for his delay, and then entered upon the scene of his daily triumphs.

But, before we begin the day's work, let us inquire who this person was, and whence he came.

CHAPTER III.

MR. ISRAEL MEADOWS was a man thirty-five or forty years of age, five feet ten inches in height, with a lean figure, dark complexion, very black and shaggy hair and eyebrows, and a grim expression of countenance. The occupation of training the youthful mind and leading it to the fountains of wisdom, as delightful and interesting as it is, was not, in fact, Mr. Meadows' choice, when, on arriving at manhood's estate, he looked around him for a career in which he might the most surely develop and advance his being in this life. Indeed, those who had been the witnesses of his youth and young manhood, and of the opportunities which he had been favored withal for getting instruction for himself, were no little surprised when they heard that in the county of Hancock their old acquaintance was in the actual prosecution of the profession of schoolmaster. About a couple of days' journey from the Goosepond was the spot which had the honor of giving him birth. In a cottage on one of the roads leading to the city of Augusta there had lived a couple who cultivated a farm, and traded with the wagoners of those days by bartering, for money and groceries, corn, fodder, potatoes, and such-like commodities. It was a matter never fully

accountable how it was that Mr. Timothy Meadows, during all seasons, had corn to sell. Drought or drench affected his crib alike. When a wagoner wished to buy corn, Timothy Meadows generally had a little to spare. People used to intimate sometimes that it was curious that some folks could always have corn to sell, while other folks could not. Such observations were made in reference to no individual in particular; but were generally made by one farmer to another, when, perchance, they had just ridden by Mr. Meadows' house while a wagoner's team was feeding at his camp. To this respectable couple there had been born only one offspring, a daughter. Miss Clary Meadows had lived to the age of twenty-four, and had never, within the knowledge of any of the neighbors, had the first beau. If to the fact that her father's always having corn to sell, without his neighbors knowing exactly how he came by it, had to a considerable extent discouraged visiting between their families and his, be added the further one, that Miss Clary was bony, and in no respect possessed of charms likely to captivate a young gentleman who had thoughts upon marriage, it ought not to be very surprising that she had, thus far, failed to secure a husband. Nevertheless, Miss Meadows was eminently affable when in the society of such gentlemen of the wagoners as paid her the compliment to call upon her in the house. So that no person, however suspicious, would have concluded from her manner on such occasions that her prolonged state of single blessedness was owing to any prejudice against the opposite sex.

Time, however, brings roses, as the German proverb has it, and to the Meadows family he at last brought a rosebud in the shape of a thriving grandson. As it does not become us to pry into delicate family matters, we will not presume to lift the veil which the persons most concerned

chose to throw over the earlier part of this grandson's history; suffice it to say that the same mystery hung about it as about the inexplicable inexhaustibility of Timothy Meadows' corn-crib, and that the latter—from motives, doubtless, which did him honor—bestowed upon the newcomer his own family name, preceded by the patriarchal appellation of Israel.

There were many interesting occurrences in the early life of Israel which it would be foreign to the purposes of this history to relate. It is enough to say that he grew up under the eye and training of his grandfather, and soon showed that some of the traits of that gentleman's character were in no danger of being lost to society by a failure of reproduction.

In process of time, Mr. and Mrs. Meadows were gathered to their fathers, and Miss Clary had become the proprietress of the cottage and the farm. Israel inherited the luck of the Meadowses to be always able to sell corn to the wagoners, and for many years had enjoyed it without serious molestation. But, unluckily, the secret of this unusual prosperity, which lay hidden in such profundity during the lifetime of his grandfather, transpired about six months back.

One Saturday night, a company of the neighbors on patrol found a negro man issuing from the gate of Miss Meadows' yard with an empty meal-bag. Having apprehended him, he confessed that he had just carried the bag full of corn to Israel from his master's corn-crib. The company immediately aroused the latter gentleman, informed him what the negro had told, and, although he did most stoutly deny any and all manner of connection with the matter, they informed him that they should not leave the premises until they could get a search-warrant from a neighboring magistrate, by which they could iden-

tify the corn. This was a ruse to bring him to terms. Seeing his uneasiness, they pushed on, and in a careless manner proposed that if he would leave the neighborhood by the next Monday morning they would forbear to prosecute him for this as well as many similar offenses, his guilt of which, they intimated, they had abundant proof to establish. He was caught. He reflected for a few moments, and then, still asserting his innocence, but declaring that he did not wish to reside in a community where he was suspected of crime, he expressed his resolution to comply with their demand. He left the next day. Leaving his mother, he set out to try his fortune elsewhere, intending, by the time that the homestead could be disposed of, to remove with her to the west. But, determining not to be idle in the meantime, after wandering about for several days in search of employment, it suddenly occurred to him one night, after a day's travel, that he would endeavor to get a school for the remainder of the year.

Now, his education had been somewhat neglected. Indeed, he had never been to school a day in his whole life. At home, under the tuition of his mother, he had been taught reading and writing, and his grandfather had imparted to him some knowledge of arithmetic.

But Mr. Israel Meadows, although not a man of great learning, was a great way removed from being a fool. He had a considerable amount of the wisdom of this world which comes to a man from other sources besides books. He was like many other men in one respect. He was not to be restrained from taking office by the consciousness of attainments inadequate to the discharge of its duties. This is a species of delicacy which, of all others, is attended by fewest practical results. Generally, the most it does is to make its owner confess with modesty his unfitness for the office, with a "he had hoped some worthier

and better man had been chosen," and then—take it. Israel wisely reflected that with a majority of mankind the only thing necessary to establish for one's self a reputation of fitness for office is to run for it and get into it. A wise reflection indeed; acting on which, many men have seemed to become great in Georgia, and, I doubt not, elsewhere, with no other capital than the adroitness or the accident which placed them in office. He reflected further, and as wisely as before, that the office of a schoolmaster in a country school was as little likely as any he could think of to furnish an exception to the general rule. Thus, in less than six weeks from the eventful Saturday night, with a list of school articles which he had picked up in his travels, he had applied for and had obtained and had opened the Goosepond school, and was professing to teach the children spelling, reading, and writing at the rate of a dollar a month, and arithmetic and geography at the advanced rate of a dollar and a half.

Such were some of Mr. Meadows' antecedents.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the custom of the pupils in the Goosepond, as in most of the other country schools of those times, to study aloud. Whether the teachers thought that the mind could not act unless the tongue was going, or that the tongue going was the only evidence that the mind was acting, it never did appear. Such had been the custom, and Mr. Meadows did not aspire to be an innovator. It was his rule, however, that there should be perfect silence on his arrival, in order to give him an opportunity of saying or doing anything he might wish. This morning there did

not seem to be anything heavy on his mind which required to be lifted off. He, however, looked at Brinkly Glisson with an expression of some disappointment. He had beaten him the morning before for not having gotten there in time, though the boy's excuse was that he had gone a mile out of his way on an errand for his mother. He looked at him as if he had expected to have had some business with him, which now unexpectedly had to be postponed. He then looked around over the school, and said: "Go to studyin'."

He had been in the habit of speaking but to command, and of commanding but to be obeyed. Instantaneously was heard, then and there, that unintelligible tumult, the almost invariable incident of the country schools of that generation. There were spellers and readers, geographers and arithmeticians, all engaged in their several pursuits, in the most inexplicable confusion. Sometimes the spellers would have the heels of the others, and sometimes the readers. The geographers were always third, and the arithmeticians always behind. It was very plain to be seen that these last never would catch the others. The faster they added or subtracted, the oftener they had to rub out and commence anew. It was always but a short time before they found this to be the case, and so they generally concluded to adopt the maxim of the philosopher, of being slow in making haste. The geographers were a little faster and a little louder. But the spellers and readers had it, I tell you. Each speller and each reader went through the whole gamut of sounds, from low up to high, and from high down to low again; sometimes by regular ascension and descension, one note at a time, sounding what musicians call the diatonic intervals; at other times, going up and coming down upon the perfect fifths only. It was refreshing to see the passionate eagerness which these

urchins manifested for the acquisition of knowledge! To have heard them for the first time, one might possibly have been reminded of the Apostles' preaching at Pentecost, when were spoken the languages of the Parthians and Medes, Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia; in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia; in Egypt and in the parts of Syria about Cyrene; and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. Sometimes these jarring tongues subsided a little, when half a dozen or so would stop to blow; but in the next moment the chorus would swell again in a new and livelier *accrescendo*. When this process had gone on for half an hour, Mr. Meadows lifted up his voice and shouted, "SILENCE!" and all was still.

Now were to commence the recitations, during which stillness like that of death was required. For as great a help to study as this jargon was, Mr. Meadows found that it did not contribute any aid to the doing of *his* work.

He now performed an interesting feat. He put his hand behind the lapel of his coat-collar, and then, after withdrawing it, and holding it up, his thumb and forefinger joined together, he said:

"There is too much fuss here. I'm going to drop this pin, and I shall whip every single one of you little boys that don't hear it when it falls. Thar!"

"I heerd it, Mr. Meadows! I heerd it, Mr. Meadows!" exclaimed, simultaneously, five or six little fellows.

"Come up here, you little rascals. You are a liar!" said he to each one. "I never drapped it; I never had nary one to drap. It just shows what liars you are. Set down and wait awhile, I'll show you how to tell *me* lies."

The little liars slunk to their seats, and the recitations commenced. Memory was the only faculty of mind that got development at this school. Whoever could say ex-

actly what the book said was adjudged to know his lesson. About half of the pupils on this morning were successful. The other half were found to be delinquent. Among these was Asa Boatright. That calculating young gentleman knew *his* words and felt safe. The class had spelled around three or four times, when lo! the contingency which Allen Thigpen had suggested did come to pass. Betsy Wiggins missed her word; Heneritter Bangs (in the language of Allen) hern, and Mandy Grizzle hern; and thus responsibilities were suddenly cast upon Asa which he was wholly unprepared to meet, and which, from the look of mighty reproach that he gave each of these young ladies as she handed over her word, he evidently thought it the height of injustice that he should have been called upon to meet. Mr. Meadows, closing the book, tossed it to Asa, who, catching it as it was falling at his feet, turned, and his eyes swimming with tears, went back to his seat. As he passed Allen Thigpen, the latter whispered:

“What did I tell you? You heerd the pin drap too!”

Now, Allen was in no plight to have given this taunt to Asa. He had not given five minutes' study to his arithmetic during the whole morning. But Mr. Meadows made a rule (this one with himself, though all the pupils knew it better than any rule he had) never to allow Allen to miss a lesson; and as he had kindly taken this responsibility upon himself, Allen was wont to give himself no trouble about the matter.

Brinkly Glisson was the last to recite. Brinkly was no great hand at pronunciation. He had been reading but a short time when Mr. Meadows advanced him into geography, with the purpose, as Brinkly afterward came to believe, of getting the half-dollar extra tuition. This morning he thought he knew his lesson; and he did, as he understood it. When called to recite, he went up with a counte-

nance expressive of mild happiness, handed the book to Mr. Meadows, and, putting his hands in his pockets, awaited the questions. And now it was an interesting sight to see Mr. Meadows smile as Brinkly talked of is-lands and promonitaries, thismuses and hemispherics. The lad misunderstood that smile, and his heart was glad for the unexpected reception of a little complacency from the master. But he was not long in error.

"Is-lands, eh? Thismuses, eh? Take this book and see if you can find any is-lands and promonitaries, and then bring them to me. I want to see them things, I do. Find 'em, if you please."

Brinkly took the book, and it would have melted the heart of any other man to see the deep despair of his heart as he looked on it and was spelling over to himself the words as he came to them.

"Mr. Meadows," he said, in pleading tones, "I thought it was is-land. Here it is, I-s-is-l-a-n-d-land: is-land;" and he looked into his face beseechingly.

"Is-land, eh? *Is-land!* Now, thismuses and promonitaries and hemispherics—"

"Mr. Meadows, I did not know how to pronounce them words. I asked you how to pronounce 'em, and you wouldn't tell me; and I asked Allen, and he told me the way I said them."

"I believe that to be a lie." Brinkly's face reddened, and his breathing was fast and hard. He looked at the master as but once or twice before during the term, but made no answer. At that moment Allen leaned carelessly on his desk, his elbows resting on it, and his chin on his hands, and said dryly:

"Yes, I did tell him so."

The man reddened a little. After a moment's pause, however, he said:

“How often have I got to tell you not to ask anybody but me how to pronounce words? That’ll do, sir; set down, sir.”

Brinkly went back to his seat, and, looking gloomily toward the door a minute or two, he opened his book, but studied it no more.

CHAPTER V.

MR. MEADOWS now set about what was the most agreeable portion of the duties of his new vocation, the punishment of offenders. The lawyers tell us that, of all the departments of the law, the *vindictory* is the most important. This element of the Goosepond establishment had been cultivated so much that it had grown beyond all reasonable proportion to the others. As for the *declaratory* and the *directory*, they seemed to be considered, when clearly understood, as impediments to a fair showing and proper development of the vindictory, insomuch that the last was often by their means disappointed of its victim. Sometimes, when his urchins would not “miss,” or violate some of his numerous laws, Mr. Meadows used, in the plenitude of his power, to put the vindictory first—punish an offender, *declare* what the latter had done to be an offense and then *direct* him that he had better not do so any more. Mr. Meadows, indeed, seemed to owe a grudge to society. Whether this was because society had not given him a father as it had done to almost everybody else, or because it had interfered in the peaceful occupation which had descended from his grandfather (as if to avenge itself on him for violating one of its express commands that such as he should inherit from nobody), did not appear.

But he owed it, and he delighted in paying it off in his peculiar way; this was by beating the children of his school, every one of whom had a father. Eminently combative by nature, it was both safest and most satisfactory to wage his warfare on this general scale. So, on this fine morning, by way of taking up another instalment of this immense debt, which like most other debts seemed as if it never would get fully paid, he took down his bundle of rods from two pegs in one of the logs on which he had placed them, selected one fit for his purpose, and taking his position in the middle of the space between the fireplace and the rows of desks, he sat down in his chair. A moderate smile overspread his countenance as he said:

“Them spellin’ classes and readin’ classes, and them others that’s got to be whipped, all but Sam Pate and Asa Boatright, come to the circus.”

Five or six boys and as many girls, from eight to thirteen years old, came up, and, sitting down on the front bench which extended all along the length of the two rows of desks, pulled off their shoes and stockings. The boys then rolled up their pants, and the girls lifted the skirts of their frocks to their knees, and, having made a ring around the master as he sat in his chair, all began a brisk trot. They had described two or three revolutions, and he was straightening his switch, when Asa Boatright ran up, and, crying piteously, said:

“Please, sir, Mr. Meadows—oh pray do, sir, Mr. Meadows—let me go into the circus!”

Mr. Meadows rose and was about to strike; but another thought seemed to occur to him. He looked at him amusedly for a moment, and pointed to his seat. Asa took it. Mr. Meadows resumed his chair, and proceeded to tap the legs, both male and female, as they trotted around him. This was done at first very gently, and almost lov-

ingly. But as the sport warmed in interest, the blows increased in rapidity and violence. The children began to cry out, and then he struck the harder; for it was a rule (oh! he was a mighty man for rules, this same Mr. Meadows) that whoever cried the loudest should be hit the hardest. He kept up this interesting exercise until he had given them about twenty-five lashes apiece. He then ceased. They stopped instantly, walked around him once, then, seating themselves upon the bench, they resumed their shoes and stockings, and went to their seats. One girl, thirteen years old, Henrietta Bangs, had begged him to let her keep on her stockings; but he was too firm a disciplinarian to allow it. When the circus was over she put on her shoes, and, taking up her stockings and putting them under her apron, she went to her seat and sobbed as if her heart were broken.

Allen Thigpen looked at her for a moment, and then he turned his eyes slowly around and looked at Brinkly Glisson. He sat with his hands in his pockets and his lips compressed. Allen knew what struggle was going on, but he could not tell how it would end. Mr. Meadows rested three minutes.

It has possibly occurred to those who may be reading this little history that it was a strange thing in Asa Boatright, who so well knew all the ways of Mr. Meadows, that he should have expressed so decisive a wish to take part in this last described exhibition—an exhibition which, however entertaining to Mr. Meadows as it doubtless was, and might be perchance to other persons placed in the attitude of spectators merely, could not be in the highest degree agreeable to one in the attitude which Master Asa must have foreseen that he would be made to assume had Mr. Meadows vouchsafed to yield to his request. But Asa Boatright was not a fool, nor was he a person who had

no care for his physical well-being. In other words, Asa Boatright knew what he was about.

“Sam Pate and Asa Boatright!” exclaimed Mr. Meadows, after his rest. “Come out here and go to horsin’.”

The two nags came out. Master Pate inclined himself forward, and Master Boatright leaped with some agility upon his back. The former, gathering the latter's legs under his arms, and drawing as tightly as possible his pants across his middle, began galloping gayly around the area before the fireplace. Mr. Meadows, after taking a fresh hickory, began to apply it with force and precision to that part of Master Boatright's little body which in his present attitude was most exposed. Every application of this kind caused that young gentleman to scream, and even to make spasmodic efforts to kick, which Master Pate, being for the occasion a horse, was to understand as an expression on the part of his rider that he should get on faster, and so Master Pate must frisk and prance and otherwise imitate a horse as well as possible in the circumstances. Now, the circumstances being that as soon as Master Boatright should have ridden long enough to become incapacitated from riding a real horse with comfort, they were to reverse positions, Master Boatright becoming horse and himself rider, they were hardly sufficient to make him entirely forget his identity in the personation of that quadruped. He did his best, though, in the circumstances, and not only frisked and pranced, but neighed several times. When Asa was placed in the condition hinted at above, he was allowed to dismount. Sam having mounted on his back, it was stirring to the feelings to see the latter kick and the former prance. This was always the best part of the show. A rule of this exercise was that, when the rider should dismount and become horse, he was to act well his part or be made to resume the part of rider—a prospect

not at all agreeable, each one decidedly preferring to be horse. Sam was about three years older and fifteen pounds heavier than Asa. Now, while Asa had every motive which as sensible a horse as he was could have to do his best, yet he was so sore, and Sam, with the early prospect of butting his brains out, was so heavy, that he had great difficulties. He exhibited the most laudable desire and made the most faithful efforts to prance, but he could not keep his feet. Finding that he could do no great things at prancing, he endeavored to make up by neighing. When Sam would cry out and kick, Asa would neigh. He would occasionally run against the wall and neigh as if he were delighted. He would lift up one foot and neigh. He would put it down, lift up the other and neigh. Then when he attempted to lift up both feet at once, he would fall down and neigh. Again would he neigh even in the act of rising, apparently resolved to convince the world that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, he was as plucky a little horse as had ever trotted. Never before had Asa acted his part so well in the horsin' at the Goosepond. Never had horse, with such odds on his back, neighed so lustily. Sam screamed and kicked. Asa pranced and neighed, until at last, as he stumbled violently against the bench, Sam let go his hold upon his neck, in order to avoid breaking his own, and fell sprawling on his belly under a desk. This sudden removal of the burden from Asa's back made his efforts to recover from his false step successful beyond all calculation, and he fell backward, head-foremost, upon the floor. Mr. Meadows, contrary to his wont, roared with laughter. He dropped his switch, and ordered them to their seats. They obeyed, and sat down with that graduated declension of body in which experience had taught them to be prudent.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER the close of the last performance, Mr. Meadows seemed to need another resting spell. He always liked to be as fresh as possible for the next scene. The most interesting, the most exciting, and in some respects the most delightful exercise was yet to follow. This was the punishment of Brinkly Glisson.

Now, Brinkly was one of the best boys in the world. He was the only son of a poor widow, who, at much sacrifice, had sent him to school. He had pitched and tended the crop of a few acres around the house, and she had procured the promise of a neighbor to help her in gathering it when ripe. Brinkly was the apple of her eye, the idol of her heart. He was to her as we always think of him of whom it was said, "He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." And Brinkly had rewarded her love and care with all the feelings of his honest, affectionate heart. He was more anxious to learn for her sake than his own. He soon came to read tolerably well, and was advanced to geography. How proud was the widow when she bought the new geography and atlas with the proceeds of four pairs of socks which she had knit with her own hands. What a world of knowledge, she thought, there must be in a book with five times as many pages as a spelling-book, and in those great red, blue, and pink pictures, covering a whole page a foot square, and all this knowledge to become the property of Brinkly! But Brinkly soon found that geography was above his present capacity, and so told Mr. Meadows. That gentleman received the communication with displeasure; said that what was the matter with him was laziness, and that

laziness, of all the qualities which a boy had, was the one which he knew best what to do with. He then took to beating him. Brinkly, after the first beating, which was a light one, went home and told his mother of it, and intimated his intention not to take another. The widow was sorely distressed, and knew not what to do. On the one hand was her grief to know her son was unjustly beaten, and his spirit cowed; for she knew that he studied all the time he had, and, though uneducated herself, she was not like many other parents of her day who thought that the best means to develop the mind was to beat the body. But on the other hand would be his failing to obtain an education if he should leave the school, there being then no other in the neighborhood. This, thought the poor woman, was the worst horn of the dilemma; and so she wept, and begged him, as he loved her, to submit. He should have the more time for study; she would chop the wood and feed the stock; he should have all the time at home to himself; he could get it, she knew he could; it would come to him after awhile.

Brinkly yielded; but how many a hard struggle he made to continue that submission no one knew but he. Mr. Meadows could see this struggle sometimes. He knew that the boy was not afraid of him. He saw it in his eye every time he beat him, and it was this which imparted such eagerness to continue. He wished to subdue him, and he had not succeeded. Brinkly would never beg nor weep. Mr. Meadows often thought he was on the point of resisting him; but he knew the reason why he did not, and, while he hated him for it, he trusted that it would last. Yet he often doubted whether it would or not; and thus the matter became so intensely exciting that he continually sought for opportunities of bringing it up. He loved to tempt him. He had no doubt but that he could easily

manage him in an even combat; but he did not wish it to come to that. He only gloried in goading him almost to resistance, and then seeing him yield.

Have we not all seen how the showman adapts himself to the different animals of the menagerie? How quickly and sharply he speaks to the lesser animals, which jump over his wand and back, and over and back again, and then crouch in submission as he passes by! But when he goes to the lion, you can scarcely hear his low tones as he commands him to rise and perform his part, and is not certain whether the king of the beasts will do as he is bidden or not. Doubts like these were in the mind of Mr. Meadows whenever he was about to set upon Brinkly Glisson; but, the greater these doubts, the more he enjoyed the trial. After a short rest from the fatigues of the last exercise, during which he curiously and seriously eyed the lad, he rose from his seat, paced slowly across the room once or twice, and taking a hickory switch, the longest of all he had, he stopped in the middle of the floor, and in a low, quiet tone, said:

“Brinkly Glisson, come.”

Allen had been eying Brinkly all the time since the close of the circus. He noted the conflict which was going on in his soul, and he thought he saw that the conflict was going to end.

Slowly and calmly Brinkly rose from his seat, and walked up and stood before Mr. Meadows.

“Why, hi!” thought Allen.

“Off with your coat, sir”—low and gentle, and with a countenance almost smiling. Brinkly stood motionless. But he had done so once or twice before, in similar circumstances, and at length had yielded. “Off with it, sir”—louder and not so gentle. No motion on Brinkly’s part, not even in his eyes, which looked steadily into the mas-

ter's, with a meaning which he nearly, but not quite, understood.

"Ain't you going to pull off that coat, sir?"

"What for?" asked Brinkly.

"What for, sir?"

"Yes, sir; what for?"

"Because I am going to give you this hickory, you impudent scoundrel; and if you don't pull it off this minute, I'll give you sich a beatin' as'll make you feel like you never was whipped before since you was born. Ain't you going to pull it off, sir?"

"Not now, sir?"

Allen wriggled on his seat, and his face shone as the full moon. Mr. Meadows retreated a step, and holding his switch two feet from the larger end, he raised that end to strike.

"Stop one minute, if you please."

Mr. Meadows lowered his arm, and his face smiled a triumph. This was the first time Brinkly had ever begged. He chuckled. Allen looked disappointed.

"Stop, eh? I yi! This end looks heavy, does it? Well, I wouldn't be surprised if it warn't sorter heavy. Will you pull off your coat now, sir?"

"Mr. Meadows, I asked you to stop because I wanted to say a few words to you. You have beat me and beat me, worse than you ought to beat a dog" (Allen's face getting right again); "and God in heaven knows that, in the time that I have come to school to you, I have tried as hard as a boy ever did to please you and get my lessons. I can't understand that jography, and I ain't been readin' long enough to understand it. I have asked you to let me quit. Mother has asked you. You wouldn't do it; but beat me, and beat me, and beat me" (there is no telling whether Allen wants to laugh or cry), "and now, the more

I study it, the more I don't understand it. I would have quit school long ago, but mother was so anxious for me to learn, and made me come. And now I have took off my coat to you the last time." (Ah! now there is a great tear in Allen's eye.) "Listen to me" (as the teacher's hand makes a slight motion); "don't strike me. I know I'm not learnin' anything, and your beatin' ain't going to make me learn any faster. If you are determined to keep me in this jography, and to beat me, just say so, and I'll take my hat and books and go home. I'd like to not come to-day, but I thought I knew my lesson. Now, I say again, don't, for God's sake, don't strike me." And he raised up both his hands, pale and trembling.

It would be impossible to describe the surprise and rage expressed on the face of Mr. Meadows during the delivery and at the close of this little harangue. He looked at the boy a moment. Brinkly's countenance expressed the deepest sadness; but there was nothing it like defiance or threatening. It was simply sad and beseeching. The master hesitated, and looked around upon his school. It would not do to retreat now, he thought. With an imprecation, he raised his switch and struck with all his might.

"My God!" cried the boy; but in an instant sadness and beseeching passed from his face. The long-pent-up resentment of his soul gushed forth, and the fury of a demon glared from his eyes. He was preparing to spring upon Mr. Meadows, when the latter, by a sudden rush, caught him and thrust him backward over the front bench. They both tumbled on the floor, between the rows of desks, Mr. Meadows uppermost.

"It's come," said Allen quietly, as he rose and looked down upon the combatants; "it's been a long time a-comin', and by good rights ought to a come long ago; but it's come now."

Mr. Meadows attempted to disengage himself and rise ; but Brinkly would rise with him. After several attempts at this, Brinkly managed to get upon one knee, and, by a violent jerk, to bring his assailant down upon the floor, where they were, in the phraseology of the wrestling-ring, cross and pile. Mr. Meadows shouted to two or three of the boys to hold Brinkly until he could rise. They rose to obey, but Allen, without saying a word, put out his hand before them, and, motioning them to their seats, they resumed them. And now the contest set in for good, Mr. Meadows struggling to recover his advantage, and Brinkly to improve what he had gained. The former's right arm was thrown across the latter's neck, his right hand wound in and pulling violently his hair, while his left hand pressed against his breast. Brinkly's left leg was across Mr. Meadows' middle, and with his right against a stationary desk, his right arm bent and lying under him like a lizard's, and his left in Mr. Meadows' shirt-collar, he struggled to get uppermost ; but whenever he attempted to raise his head, that hand wound in his hair would instantly bring it back to the floor. When Mr. Meadows attempted to disengage himself from underneath Brinkly's leg, that member, assisted by its brother from the desk, against which it was pressed, held it like the boa holds the bullock. Oh, Mr. Meadows, Mr. Meadows! you don't know the boy that grapples with you. You have never known anything at all about him. You blow, Mr. Meadows! See! Brinkly blows not half so hard. Remember, you walk a mile to and from the school, and Brinkly seven, often running the first half. Besides, there is something in Brinkly's soul which will not let him tire now. The remembrance of long-continued wrongs, that cannot longer be borne ; the long-subdued but now inextinguishable desire of revenge ; every hostile feeling except fear—all these are now domi-

nant in that simple heart, and they have made of him a man, and if you hope to conquer you must fight as you never have fought before, and never may have to fight again.

Your right hand pulls less vigorously at the hair of Brinkly's ascending head. Look there! Brinkly's leg has moved an inch further across you! Wring and twist, Mr. Meadows, for right under that leg, if anywhere for you, is now the post of honor. Can't you draw out your left leg and plant it against the desk behind you, as Brinkly does with his right? Alas! no. Brinkly has now made a hook of *his* left, and his heel is pressing close into the cavity behind your knee. Ah! that was an unlucky move for you then, when you let Brinkly's hair go, and thrust both of your hands at his eyes. You must have done that in a passion. But see there, now! he has released his grasp at your shirt-collar, and thrown his left arm over you. Good-morning to you now, Mr. Meadows!

In the instant that Mr. Meadows had released his hold upon his hair, Brinkly, though he was being gouged terribly, released his hold upon his collar, threw his arm over his neck, and pushing with all his might with his right leg against the desk, and making a corresponding pull with his left, he succeeded in getting fully upon him; then, springing up quick as lightning, as Mr. Meadows, panting, his eyes gleaming with the fury of an enraged tiger, was attempting to rise, he dealt him a blow in the face with his fist which sent him back bleeding like a butchered beast. Once more the master attempted to rise, and those who saw it will never forget that piteous spectacle of rage, and shame, and pain, and fear. Once more Brinkly struck him back. How that boy's face shone out with those *gaudia certaminis* which the brave always feel when in the midst of an inevitable and righteous combat! Springing

upon his adversary again, and seizing his arms and pinioning them under his knees, he wound his hands in his shaggy hair, and raising his head, thrust it down several times with all his might against the floor.

“Spare me! for God’s sake, spare me!” cried Mr. Meadows, in tones never before heard from him in that house.

Brinkly stopped. “Spare you!” he said, now panting himself. “Yes! you who never spared anything that you could hurt! Poor coward! You loved to beat other people, and gloried in seeing them suffering, and when they begged you to spare them, you laughed—you did. Oh, how I have heard you laugh, when they asked you to spare them! And now, beat yourself and whipped, you beg like a dog. Yes, and I will spare you,” he continued, rising from him. “It would be a pity to beat any such a poor cowardly human any longer. Now go! and make them poor things there go to horsin’ again, and cut ’em in two again! and then get in the circus ring, and make them others, girls and all—yes, girls and all—hold up their clothes and trot around you, and when they cry like you, and beg you to spare ’em, do you laugh again!”

He rose and turned away from him. Gathering up his books, he went to the peg whereon his hat was hanging, and was in the act of taking it down, when a sudden revulsion of feeling came over him, and he sat down and wept and wept.

The feelings in that poor boy’s breast! The recollection of the wrongs he had suffered; of the motives, so full of pious duty, which had made him endure them; the thought of how mistaken had been the wish of his mother that he should endure them; and then of how terribly they had been avenged: these all meeting at once in his gentle, untaught spirit, overcame it, and broke it into weeping.

Meanwhile, other things were going on. Mr. Meadows, haggard, bruised, bleeding, covered with dirt, slunk off toward the fireplace, sat down in his chair, and buried his face in his hands. The pupils had been in the highest states of alternate alarm and astonishment. They were now all standing about their seats, looking alternately at Brinkly and Mr. Meadows, but at the latter mostly. Their countenances plainly indicated that this was a sight which, in their minds, had never before been vouchsafed to mortal vision. A schoolmaster whipped! beat! choked! his head bumped! and that by one of his pupils! And that schoolmaster Mr. Meadows!—Mr. Meadows, who, ten minutes before, had been in the exercise of sovereign and despotic authority! And then to hear him beg! A schoolmaster!—Mr. Meadows!—to hear him actually beg Brinkly to spare him! They actually began to feel not only pity, but some resentment at what had been done. They were terrified, and to some extent miserable, at the sight of so much power, so much authority, so much royalty dishonored and laid low. Brinkly seemed to them to have been transformed. He was a murderer! a REGICIDE!! Talk of the divine right of kings! There was never more reverence felt for it than the children in country schools felt for the kingly dignity of the schoolmaster of sixty years ago.

CHAPTER VII.

ALLEN THIGPEN was the only one of the pupils who did not lose his wits while the events of the last few minutes were taking place. While the contest was even between the combatants, he stood gazing down upon them with the most intense interest. His body was bent down slightly,

and his arms were extended in a semicircle, as if to exclude the rest of the world from a scene which he considered all his own. When Mr. Meadows called for quarter, Allen folded his arms across his breast, and to a tune which was meant for "Auld Lang Syne," and which sounded, indeed, more like that than any other, he sang as he turned off,

"Jerusalem, my happy home."

When Mr. Meadows had taken his seat, he looked at him for a moment or two as if hesitating what to do. He then walked slowly to him, and delivered the following oration:

"It's come to it at last, jest as I said. I seen it from the fust; you ought to a seen it yourself, but you wouldn't, ur you couldn't, and I don't know which, and it makes no odds which; you didn't. I did, and now it's come, and sich a beatin', Jerusalem! But don't you be too much took back by it. You warn't goin' to keep school here no longer'n to-day, nohow. Now, I had laid off in my mind to have gin you a duckin' this very day; and I'll tell you for why. Not as I've got anything particklar agin you myself; you have not said one word out of the way to me this whole term. But, in the fust place, it's not my opinion, nor hain't been for some time, that you are fitten to be a schoolmarster. Thar's them sums in intrust which I can't work, and which you can't show me how to work, or hain't yit, though I've been cipherin' in it now two months. And thar's Mely Jones, that's in the same, and she hain't learnt 'em neither, and dinged if I believe all the fault's in me and her, and in course it can't be in the book. But that ain't the main thing; it's your imposin' disposition. If this here schoolhouse," he continued, looking around—"if this here schoolhouse hain't seen more unmerciful beatin' than any other schoolhouse in this country, then I

say it's a pity that thar's any sich a thing as ejection. And if the way things has been car'd on in this here schoolhouse sence you've been in it is the onliest way of getting of a ejection, then I say again it's a pity thar's sich a thing. It ain't worth while for me to name over all the ways you've had of tormentin' o' these children. You know 'em; I know 'em; everybody about this here schoolhouse knows 'em. Now, as I said before, I had laid off to a gin you a duckin' this very day, and this mornin' I was going to let Brinkly into it, tell I found that the time I seen was a comin' in him was done come; and I knowed he wouldn't jine in duckin' you on account of his mother. I've been thinking o' this for more'n two weeks, bekase—now listen to me; didn't you say you was from South Calliner?"

Pausing for, but not receiving, an answer, he continued:

"Yes, that's what you said. Well, now, I've heern a man—a travelin' man—who stayed all night at our house on his way to Fluriday, say he knowed you. You ain't from South Calliner; I wish you was, but you ain't; you're from Columby County, and I'm ashamed to say it. He ast me, seein' me a-studyin', who I went to school to and when I told him 'Meadows,' says he, 'What Meadows?' 'Iserl,' says I. 'Iserl Meadows a school-marster?' says he, and he laughed, he did; he laughed fit to kill hisself. Well, he told me whar you was raised, and *who you was*. But you needn't be too bad skeered. I ain't told it to the fust human, and I ain't going to, tell you leave. Now, I had laid off, as I told you, to gin you a duckin', but I hain't the heart to do it, and you in the fix you are now at the present."

Saying which, he puckered his mouth as if for a whistle, and stalked back to his seat.

Mr. Meadows, during the last few sentences of this harangue, had exhibited evidences of a new emotion. When Allen told him what the traveler had said, he looked up with a countenance full of terror, and, beckoning to him imploringly, they went out of the house together a few steps and stopped.

"I never done you any harm," said Mr. Meadows.

"You never did, certin shore," answered Allen, "nor no particklar good. -But that's neither here nor thar; what do you want?"

"Don't tell what you heard tell I git away."

"Didn't I say I wouldn't? But you must leave toller'ble soon. I can't keep it long. I fairly eech to tell it now."

The schoolmaster stood a moment, turning his hat in his hands, as if hesitating what sort of leave to take. He timidly offered Allen his hand.

"I'd ruther not," said Allen, and, for the first time, seemed a little embarrassed. Suddenly the man hauled his hat on his head and walked away. He had just entered the path in the thicket, and, turning unobserved, he paused, and looked back at the schoolhouse. The anger, the impotent rage, the chagrin and shame which were depicted upon his bloodshot face! He paused but for a moment; then, raising both his hands, and shaking them toward the house, without saying a word, he turned again and almost ran along the path.

After he had gone, Allen took Mr. Meadow's chair, and, crossing his legs, said:

"Well, boys and gals, the Goosepond, it seem, are a broke-up school. The schoolmarster have, so to speak, absquatulated. Thar's to be no more horsin' here, and the circus are clean shot up. And the only thing I hates about it is, that it's Brinkly that's done it, and not me. But he

wouldn't give me a chance. No," he continued sorrowfully, and as if speaking to himself, "he wouldn't give me a chance. Nary single word could I ever git him to say to me out of the way. I have misted lessons: 'deed I never said none. I never kept nary single rule in his school, and yit he wouldn't say nothin' to me."

Then rising and going to Brinkly, he put his hand upon his shoulder.

"No, it's jest as it ought to a been; you was the one to do it; and, in the name of all that's jest, Brinkly Glisson, what *is* you been cryin' about? Git up, boy, and go and wash your face. I would rather have done what you've done than to a been the man that fooled the Tory in the Revolutionary War, and stoled his horse in the Life of Marion. Come along and wash that face and hands."

He almost dragged Brinkly to the pail, and poured water while he washed.

The children, recovering from the consternation into which they had been thrown by the combat and its result, began to walk about the house, picking up their books and laying them down again. They would go to the door and look out toward Mr. Meadows' path, as if expecting, and, indeed, half-way hoping, half-way fearing that he would return; and then they would stand around Allen and Brinkly, as the latter was washing and drying himself. But they spoke not a word. Suddenly, Allen, mimicking the tone of Mr. Meadows, cried out:

"Asa Boatright and Sam Pate, go to horsin'!"

In a moment they all burst into shouts of laughter. Asa mounted upon Sam's back, and Sam pranced about and neighed, oh, so gayly! Allen got a switch and made as if he would strike Asa, and that young gentleman, for the first time in the performance of this interesting exercise, screamed with delight instead of pain.

“Let Asa be the schoolmarster,” shouted Allen. “Good-morning, Mr. Boatright,” said he, with mock humility. “Mr. Boatright, may I go out?” asked, timidly, half a dozen boys.

Asa dismounted, and, seizing a hickory, he stood up in the middle of the floor, and the others formed the circus around him. Here they came and went, jumping over his switch, and crying out and stooping to rub their legs, and begging him to stop, “for God’s sake, Mr. Boatright, stop!”

Suddenly an idea struck Mr. Boatright. Disbanding the circus, he cried out:

“You, Is’rl Meadows, come up here, sir. Been a fighten, have you, sir? Come up, sir. Oh, here you are.”

Mr. Boatright fell upon the teacher’s chair, and of all the floggings ever inflicted upon a harmless piece of furniture, that unlucky chair did then and there receive the worst. Mr. Boatright called it names; he dragged it over the floor; he threatened to burn it up; he shook it violently; he knocked it against the wall; one of its rounds falling out, he beat it most unmercifully with that; and at last, exhausted by the exercise and satisfied with his revenge, he indignantly kicked it out-of-doors, amid the screams and shouts of his schoolfellows.

CHAPTER VIII.

“FAR you well!” said Allen, solemnly, to the fallen chair.

They had all gathered up their books and slates, and hats and bonnets, and started off for their several homes. Those who went the same way with Brinkly listened with respectful attention as he talked with Allen on the way,

and showed how bitterly he had suffered from the cruelty of this man. They had already lost their resentment at the dishonor of that monarch's royalty, and were evidently regarding Brinkly with the devotion with which mankind always regards rebels who are successful. Each one strove to get the nearest him as he walked. One little fellow, Abel Kitchens by name, after trying several times to slip in by his side, got ahead, and walked backward as he looked at Brinkly and listened. He was so far gone under the old *régime* that he felt no relief from what had happened. Evidently he had not understood anything at all about it. He seemed to be trying to do so, and to make out for certain whether that was Brinkly or not. The voice of those young republicans, had Brinkly been ambitious, would have made him dictator of the Goosepond. Even Allen felt a consideration for Brinkly which was altogether new. He had always expected that in time he would resist the master, but he did not dream of the chivalrous spirit of the lad, nor that the resistance when it should come would be so vehement and triumphant. He had always regarded Brinkly as his inferior; he was now quite satisfied to consider him as no more than his equal. How we all, brave men and cowards, do honor the brave!

But Brinkly was not ambitious or vain; he felt no triumph in his victory. On the contrary, he was sad. He said to Allen that he wished he could have stood it a little longer.

"Name o' God, Brinkly Glisson, what for? It is the astonishenist thing I ever heerd of, for you to be sorry for maulin' a rascal who beat you like a dog, and that for nothin'. What for, I say again?"

"On mother's account."

Allen stopped—they had gotten to the road that turned off to his home.

“You tell your mother that when she knows as much about the villion as I do, she will be proud of you for maulin’ him. Look here, Brinkly, I promised him I wouldn’t tell on him till he had collected his schoolin’ account and was off. But you tell your mother that if she gets hurt with you for thrashin’ him, she will get worse hurt with herself when she knows what I do.”

Saying this, Allen shook hands with him and the others, and went off, merrily singing “Jerusalem, my happy home.” Soon all the rest had diverged by by-roads to their own homes, and Brinkly pursued his way alone.

It was about twelve o’clock when he reached home. The widow’s house was a single log-tenement, with a small shed-room behind. A kitchen, a meat-house, a dairy, a crib with two stalls in the rear—one for the horse, the other for the cow—were the out-buildings. Homely and poor as this little homestead was, it wore an air of much neatness and comfort. The yard looked clean; the floors of both mansion and kitchen were clean, and the little dairy looked as if it knew it was clean, but that was nothing new or strange. Several large rose-bushes stood on either side of the little gate, ranged along the yard-paling. Two rows of pinks and narcissus hedged the walk from the gate to the door, where, on blocks of oak, rested two boxes of geranium.

The widow was in the act of sitting down to her dinner, when, hearing the gate open and shut, she advanced to the door to see who might be there. Slowly and sadly Brinkly advanced to the door.

“Lord have mercy upon my soul and body, Brinkly, what is the matter with you? and what *have* you been a doing, and what *made* you come from the schoolhouse this time o’ day?” was the greeting he met.

“Don’t be scared, mother; it isn’t much that’s the mat-

ter with me. Let us sit down by the fire here, and I'll tell you all about it."

They sat down, and the mother looked upon the son, and the son upon the mother.

"I was afraid it would come to it, mother. God knows how I have tried to keep from doing what I have had to do at last."

"Brinkly, have you been and gone and fought with Mr. Meadows?"

"Yes, mother."

"And so ruined yourself, and me too."

"I hope not, mother."

"Yes, here have I worked and denied myself, day and night I have pinched to give you a ejecation, and this is the way you pay me for it."

"Mother, do listen to me before you cry and fret any more, and I believe you will think I have not done wrong. Please, mother, listen to me," he entreated, as she continued to weep, and rocked herself, in order, as it seemed, to give encouragement and keep time to her weeping. She wept and rocked. Brinkly turned from her and seemed doggedly hopeless.

"Say on what you're going to say—say on what you're going to say. If you've got anything to say, say it."

"I can't tell you anything while you keep crying so. Please don't cry, mother; I don't believe you will blame me when I tell you what I have been through." His manner was so humble and beseeching that his mother sat still, and, in a less fretful tone, again bade him go on.

"Mother, as I said before, God knows that I've tried to keep from it, and could not. You don't know how that man has treated me."

"How has he treated you?" she inquired, looking at her son for the first time since she had been sitting.

“You were so anxious for me to learn, and I was so anxious myself to learn, that I have never told you of hardly any of his treatment. Oh, mother, he has beat me worse than anybody ought to beat the meanest dog. He has called me and you poor, and made fun of us because we were poor. He has called me a scoundrel, a beggar, a fool. When I told him that you wanted me to quit jography, he said you was a fool and had a fool for a son, and that he had no doubt that my father was a fool before me.”

The widow dried her face with her handkerchief, settled herself in her chair, and said:

“When he said them things he told a—what’s not so; I’ll say it if he *is* schoolmarster.” And she looked as if she were aware that the responsibility of that bold observation was large.

“He said,” continued Brinkly, “that I should study it, and if I didn’t git the lessons, he’d beat me as long as he could find a hickory to beat me with. I stood it all because it was my only chance to git any schoolin’. But I told him then—that is, when he called you a fool, and father one, too—that it wasn’t so, and that he ought not to say so. Well, yisterday, you know you sent me by Mr. Norris’s to pay back the meal we borrowed, and I didn’t get to the schoolhouse quite in time. But he wasn’t more than a hundred yards ahead of me, and when he saw me he hurried just to keep me from being in time. When I told him how you had sent me by Mr. Norris’s, he only laughed and called me a liar, and then—look at my shoulder, mother.”

He took off his coat, unbuttoned his shirt, and exposed his shoulder and back, blackened with bruises.

“Oh, my son, my poor son!” was all she could say.

She had not known a tenth of the cruelties and insults

which Brinkly had borne. He had frequently importuned her to let him quit the school. But she supposed that it was because of the difficulties of learning his lessons which got for him an occasional punishment, and such as was incident to the life of every schoolboy, bad and good, idle and industrious. These thoughts combining with her ardent desire that he should get a little learning, even at the risk of receiving some harsh punishment, made her persist in keeping him there. Seeing her anxiety, and to avoid making her unhappy, he had concealed from her the greater part of the wrongs that he had suffered. But when she heard how he had been abused, and saw the stripes and bruises upon his body, she wept sorely.

“ Well, mother, I stood this too, but last night I couldn’t sleep. I thought about all he had said and all he had done to me, and I made up my mind to quit him anyhow. But this morning, before day, I thought for your sake I would try it once more. So I got up and studied my lesson here and all the way to the schoolhouse; and I did know it, mother, or I thought I did, for he wouldn’t tell me how to pronounce the words, but Allen Thigpen did, and I pronounced them just like Allen told me. When I told him that, he called me a liar, and afterward I begged him not to strike me, but to let me go home. But he would strike me, and I fought him.”

“ And you done right. Oh, my son, my poor Brinkly ! Yes, you are poor, the poor son of a poor widow ; but I am proud that you had the sperrit to fight when you are abused and insulted. If I’d known half of what you have had to bear, you should have quit his school long ago ; you should, Brinkly, my darling, that you should. But how could you expect to fight him and not be beat to death ? Why didn’t you run away from him and come to me ? He wouldn’t have beat you so where I was.” And

she looked as if she felt herself to be quite sufficient for the protection of her young.

“Mother, I didn’t want to run; I *couldn’t* run from such a man as he is. Once I thought I would take my hat and books and come away; but I could not do that without running, and I *couldn’t* run; *you* wouldn’t want me to run, would you, mother?”

The widow looked puzzled.

“No; but he is so much bigger than you, that it wouldn’t a looked exactly like you was a coward; and then he has hurt you so bad. My poor Brinkly, you don’t know how your face is scratched.”

“I hurt him worse than he hurt me, mother.”

“What?”

“I hurt him worse than he hurt me; I got the best of it.”

“Glory!” shouted Mrs. Glisson.

“In fact, I whipped him.”

“Glory! glory!”

“When I had him down—”

“Brinkly, did you have him down, my son?”

“Yes, and he begged me to spare him.”

“Glory be to—glory be to—but you didn’t do it, did you?”

“Yes, mother, as soon as he give up and begged me to stop, I let him alone.”

“I wouldn’t a done it, certin shore!”

“Yes, you would, mother; if you had seen how he was hurt, and how bad he looked, you would a spared him, I know you would.”

“Well, maybe I might; I suppose it was right, as he was a man grown, and schoolmarster to boot. Maybe it was best—maybe it was best—maybe I might a done it too, but it ain’t quite certin.”

She had risen from the chair and was pacing the floor. This new view of Brinkly's relation to his tyrant was one on which she required time for reflection. She evidently felt, however, that as Brinkly had so often been at the bottom in the combat, now when he had risen to the top there was no great harm in staying there a little longer. "But maybe it was best; I reckon now he won't be quite so brash with his other scholars."

"He will never have another chance."

"What?"

"Allen has found out all about him, and where he came from, and says he's a man of bad character. He begged Allen not to say anything about it until he got his money and could git away. So he is quit, and the school is broke up."

"Glory! glory! hallelujah!" shouted again and sung the mother.

Let her shout and sing. Sing away and shout, thou bereaved, at this one little triumph of thine only beloved! Infinite Justice! pardon her for singing and shouting now, when her only child, though poor and an orphan, though bruised and torn, seems to her overflowing eyes grand and beautiful, as if he were a royal hero's son, and the inheritor of his crown.

Among the comments upon the career of Mr. Israel Meadows and his overthrow, those of William Williams, one of our near neighbors, were the most pronounced. The wonder with him was, that as much of a man as Allen Thigpen seemed to be had not put the end to such atrocities, at least those which were inflicted upon the girls. If it had been William Williams, he—well, the fact was, he would not like to say what he would or would not have done, particularly if one or more of them had been any-

thing to him. Shortly afterward a school nearer to us was opened, and, conscious of the need of something more of arithmetic for the sake of an ambitious scheme that for some time past had been lying pleasantly upon his breast, he decided to attend it for a quarter or two. His experience there, and in other scenes, will be related in the succeeding tales in this collection.

HOW MR. BILL WILLIAMS TOOK THE RESPONSIBILITY.

“ Our honor teacheth us
That we be bold in every enterprise.”

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Josiah Lorriby came into our neighborhood to keep a school, I was too young to go to it alone, and so William Williams, whose way lay by our house, proffered to take charge of me. With much gratitude this was accepted, and I was delivered over into his keeping.

William Williams was so near being a man that the little boys used to call him “ Mr. Bill.” I never can forget the stout homespun dress-coat which he used to wear, with the big pockets opening horizontally across the outer side of the skirts. Many a time, when I was fatigued by walking, or the road was wet with rains, have I ridden upon his back, my hands resting upon his shoulders and my feet standing in those capacious pockets. Persons who have never tried that way of traveling have no just idea, I will venture to say, how sweet it is. Mr. Bill had promised to take care of me, and he kept his word.

About one mile and a half distant stood the schoolhouse. It was built of logs and covered with clapboards. It had one door, and opposite to that a window. It stood in the corner of one of our fields (having formerly been used as

a fodder-house), on the brow of a hill, at the foot of which, overshadowed by oak trees, was a noble spring of fresh water. Our way led us by this spring. Just as we reached it, Mr. Bill pointed to the summit and said:

“Yonder it is, squire.”

Mr. Bill frequently called me squire, partly from mere facetiousness, and partly from his respect for my father, who was a judge of the county court.

We ascended the hill, and Mr. Bill led me into the presence of the genius of the place.

Mr. Josiah Lorriby was a remarkable man. He was below the middle height, but squarely built. His body was good enough, but his other parts were defective. He had a low, flat head, with very short brown hair and very long ears. His arms were reasonably long, but his hands and legs were disproportionately short. He was sitting on a split-bottom chair, on one side of the fireplace. Under him, with his head peering out between the rounds, sitting on his hind legs and standing on his fore legs, was a small yellow dog, without tail or ears. This dog's name was Rum. On the side of the hearth, in another split-bottom, sat a tall, raw-boned woman with the reddest eyes I have ever seen. This was Mrs. Mehetabel, Mr. Lorriby's wife. She had ridden to the school on a small, aged mare, perfectly white and totally blind. Her name was Kate.

When I had surveyed these four personages—this satyr of a man, this tailless dog, this red-eyed woman, and this blind old mare—a sense of fear and helplessness came over me, such as I had never felt before, and have never felt since. I looked at Mr. Bill Williams, but he was observing somebody else, and did not notice me. My eyes passed from one to another of the objects of my dread; but they became finally fastened upon the dog. His eyes also had wandered, but only with vague curiosity, around upon all

the pupils, until they became fixed upon me. We gazed at each other several moments. Though he sat still, and I sat still, it seemed to me that we were drawing continually nearer to each other. Suddenly I lifted up my voice and screamed with all my might. It was so sudden and sharp that everybody except the woman started. She indifferently pointed to the dog. Her husband arose, came to me, and in soothing tones asked what was the matter.

"I am scared!" I answered, as loud as I could speak.

"Scared of what, my little man? of the dog?"

"I am scared of ALL of you."

He laughed with good-humor, bade me not be afraid, called up Rum, talked to us both, enjoined upon us to be friends, and prophesied that we would be in less than no time. The little creature became cordial at once, reared his fore-feet upon his master, took them down, reared them upon me, and, in the absence of a tail to wag, twisted his hinder parts in violent assurance that if I should say the word we were friends already. Such kindness, and so unexpected, dissolved my apprehensions. I was in a condition to accept terms far less liberal. Everybody laughed, and Rum, who could do nothing better in that line, ran about and barked as joyously as any dog with a tail could have done. In the afternoon, when school was dismissed, I invited him to go home with me; but he, waiting as I suppose for a more intimate acquaintance, declined.

CHAPTER II.

It was delightful to consider how auspicious a beginning I had made. Other little boys profited by it. Mr. Lorriby had no desire to lose any of his scholars, and we

all were disposed to take as much advantage as possible of his apprehension, however unfounded, that on account of our excessive timidity our parents might remove us from the school. We knew that we were to lose nothing by being on friendly terms with Rum. The dread of the teacher's wife soon passed away. She had but little to say and less to do. Nobody had any notion of any reason that she had for coming to the school. At first she occasionally heard a spelling-class recite. After a little time she began to come much less often, and in a few weeks her visits had decreased to one in several days. Mrs. Lorriby seemed a very proud woman, for she not only had little to say to anybody, but, although she resided only a mile and a half from the schoolhouse, she never walked, but invariably rode old Kate. These were small things, yet we noticed them.

Mr. Lorriby was not of the sort of schoolmasters whom men used to denominate by the title of *knock down and drag out*. He was not such a man as Israel Meadows. But, although he was good-hearted enough, he was politic. Being a new-comer, he determined to manage his business with due regard to the tastes, the wishes, and the prejudices of the community in which he labored. He preferred a mild reign; but it was said he could easily accommodate himself to those who required a vigorous policy. He soon learned that the latter was the favorite here. People soon complained that there was little or no whipping. Some, who had read the fable of the frogs who desired a sovereign, were heard to declare that Josiah Lorriby seemed no better than "Old King Log." One patron spoke of taking his children home, putting the boy at the plow and the girl at the spinning-wheel.

Parents in those days loved their children, as well as now; but they had some strange ways of showing their

love. The strangest of all was the evident satisfaction which the former felt when the latter were whipped at school. While they had a notion that education was a thing desirable, it was believed that the impartation of it needed to be conducted in mysterious ways. The school-house of that day was, in a manner, a cave of Trophonius, into which urchins of both sexes entered amid certain incomprehensible ceremonies, and were everlastingly subject and used to be whirled about, body and soul, in vortices of confusion. I might pursue the analogy and say that, like the votaries of Trophonius, they were not wont to smile until long after this violent rotatory indoctrination; but rather to weep and lament, unless they were brave like Apollonius, or big like Allen Thigpen, and so could bully the priest to dispense with corporal rotation. According to these notions, the principles of books, if expected to stick, must be beaten with rods into the back. Through this ordeal of ceremonies had the risen generation gone, and through the same they honestly believed that the present generation ought to go and must go. No exception was made in favor of genius. Its back was to be kept as sore as stupidity's; for, being yoked with the latter, it must take the blows, the oaths, and the imprecations. I can account for these things in no other way than by supposing that the old set of persons had come out of the old system with minds so bewildered as to be ever afterward incapable of thinking upon it in a reasonable manner. They had been beaten so constantly and so mysteriously at school that they seemed to entertain a grateful affection for it ever afterward. It was, therefore, with feelings of satisfaction, sometimes not unmixed with innocent gayety, that they were wont to listen to their children when they complained of the thrashings they daily received, some of which would be wholly unaccountable. Indeed, the latter

sort seemed to be considered, of all others, the most salutary. When the punishment was graduated by the offense, it was supporting too great a likeness to the affairs of everyday life, and therefore wanting in solemn impressiveness. But when a schoolmaster for no accountable reason whipped a boy, and so set his mind in a state of bewilderment as to what could be the matter, and led him into vague speculations upon what was to become of him in this world, to say nothing of the next—ah! then it was that the experienced felt a happiness that was gently ecstatic. They recurred in their minds to their own school-time, and they concluded that, as these things had not killed them, they must have done them good. So some of our good mothers in Israel, on occasions of great religious excitement, as they bend over a shrieking sinner, smile in serene happiness as they fan his throbbing temples, and fondly encourage him to shriek on. Thinking of the pit from which they were digged, and of the rock upon which they now are standing, they shout and sing and fan, and, fanning ever, continue to sing and shout.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Mr. Lorriby had sounded the depths of public sentiment, he became a new man. One Monday morning he announced that he was going to turn over a new leaf, and he went straightway to turning it over. Before night several boys, from small to medium, had been flogged. He had not begun on the girls, except in one instance. In that I well remember the surprise I felt at the manner in which her case was disposed of. Her name was Susan Potter. She was about twelve years old, and well grown. When she was called up, inquiry was made by the master

if any boy present was willing to take upon himself the punishment which must otherwise fall upon her. After a moment's silence, Seaborn Byne, a boy of fourteen, rose and presented himself. He was good-tempered and fat, and his pants and round jacket fitted him closely. He advanced with the air of a man who was going to do what was right, with no thought of consequences. Miss Potter unconcernedly went to her seat.

But Seaborn soon evinced that he was dissatisfied with a bargain that was so wholly without consideration. I believed then, and I believe to this day, that but for his being so good a mark he would have received fewer stripes. But his round fat body and legs stood so temptingly before the rod, and the latter fell upon good flesh so entirely through its whole length, that it was really hard to stop. He roared with pain so unexpectedly severe, and violently rubbed each spot of recent infliction. When it was over, he came to his seat and looked at Susan Potter. She seemed to feel like laughing. He got no sympathy except from a source which he despised; that was his younger brother, Joel. Joel was weeping in secret.

"Shet up your mouth," whispered Seaborn threateningly, and Joel shut up, Joel did.

Then I distinctly heard Seaborn mutter the following words:

"Ef I ever takes another for her, or any of 'em, may I be dinged, and then dug up and dinged over again."

I have no doubt that he kept his oath, for I continued to know Seaborn Byne until he was an old man, and I never knew a person who persistently held that vicarious system of school punishment in deeper disgust. What his ideas were about being "dinged," and about that operation being repeated, I did not know; but I supposed it was something that, if possible, would better be avoided.

Such doings as these made a great change in the feelings of us little ones. Yet I continued to run the crying schedule. It failed at last, and I went under.

Mr. Lorriby laid it upon me remorselessly. I had never dreamed that he would give me such a flogging—I, who considered myself, as everybody else considered me, a favorite. Now the charm was gone—the charm of security. It made me very sad. I lost my love for the teacher. I even grew cold toward Rum, and Rum in his turn grew cold toward me. Not that we got into open hostilities. For, saving an occasional fretfulness, Rum was a good fellow, and personally I had liked him. But then he was from principle a thorough Lorriby, and therefore our intimacy must stop, and did stop.

In a short time Mr. Lorriby had gone as nearly all round the school as it was prudent to go. Every boy but two had received his portion, some once, some several times. These two were Mr. Bill Williams, and another big boy named Jeremiah Hobbes. Every girl also had been flogged, or had had a boy flogged for her, except Betsy Ann Acry, the belle of the school. She was a light-haired, blue-eyed, plump, delicious-looking girl, fourteen years old. Now for Betsy Ann, as it was known to everybody about the school-house, Mr. Bill Williams had a partiality which, though not avowed, was decided. He had never courted her in set words, but he had observed her from day to day, and noticed her ripening into womanhood with constantly increasing admiration. He was scarcely a match for her even if they both had been in condition to marry. He knew this very well. But considerations of this sort seldom do a young man any good. More often than otherwise they make him worse. At least such was their effect upon Mr. Bill. The greater the distance between him and Betsy Ann, the more he yearned to cross it. He sat in school

where he could always see her, and oh, how he eyed her! Often have I noticed him leaning the side of his head upon his arms, extended on the desk in front of him, and looking at her with a countenance which, it seemed to me, ought to make some impression. Betsy Ann received it all as if it were no more than she was entitled to, but showed no sign whether she set any value upon the possession or not. Mr. Bill hoped she did; the rest of us believed she did not.

Mr. Bill had another ambition, which was, if possible, even higher than the winning of Miss Acry. Having almost extravagant notions of the greatness of Dukesborough, and the distinction of being a resident within it, he had long desired to go there as a clerk in a store. He had made repeated applications to be taken in by Messrs. Bland & Jones, and it was in obedience to a hint from these gentlemen that he had determined to take a term of finishing off at the school of Mr. Lorriby. This project was never out of his mind, even in moments of his fondest imaginings about Betsy Ann. It would have been not easy to say which he loved the best. The clerkship seemed to become nearer and nearer after each Saturday's visit to town, until at last he had a distinct offer of the place. The salary was small, but he waived that consideration in view of the exaltation of the office and the greatness of living in Dukesborough. He accepted, to enter upon his duties in four weeks, when the quarter session of the school would expire.

The dignified ways of Mr. Bill after this made considerable impression upon all the school. Even Betsy Ann condescended to turn her head oftener in the direction where he happened to be, and he was inclined to indulge in the hope that the possession of one dear object would draw the other along with it. At least he felt that, if he should lose the latter, the former would be the highest consolation

that he could ask. The news of the distinguished honor that had been conferred upon him reached the heads of the school early on the Monday following the eventful Saturday when the business was done. I say heads, for of late Mrs. Mehetable and old Kate came almost every day. Mrs. Lorriby received the announcement without emotion. Mr. Lorriby, on the other hand, in spite of the prospect of losing a scholar, was almost extravagant in his congratulations.

“It was a honor to the whole school,” he said. “I feel it myself. Sich it war under all the circumstances. It was obleeged to be, and as it war, I feels it myself.”

Seaborn Byne heard this speech. Immediately afterward he turned to me and whispered the following comment:

“He be dinged! the desateful old son-of-a-gun!”

CHAPTER IV.

IT was the unanimous opinion among Mr. Lorriby's pupils that he was grossly inconsistent with himself: that he ought to have begun with the rigid policy at first, or have held to the mild. Seaborn Byne was not exactly the head, but he was certainly the orator, of a revolutionary party. Not on his own account; for he had never yet, except as the voluntary substitute of Miss Susan Potter, felt upon his own body the effects of the change of discipline. Nor did he seem to have any apprehensions on that score. He even went so far as to say to Mr. Bill Williams, who had playfully suggested the bare idea of such a thing, that ef old Joe Lorriby raised his old pole on him, he would put his lizzard (as Seaborn facetiously called his knife) into

his paunch. He always carried a very big knife, with which he would frequently stab imaginary Lorribys in the persons of saplings and pumpkins, and even the air itself. This threat had made his brother Joel extremely unhappy. His little heart was bowed down with the never-resting fear that Seaborn was destined to commit the crime of murder upon the body of Mr. Lorriby. On the other hand, Seaborn was constantly vexed by the sight of the scores of floggings which Joel received. Poor Joel had somehow in the beginning of his studies gotten upon the wrong road, and, as nobody ever brought him back to the starting-point, he was destined, it seemed, to wander about lost evermore. The more floggings he got, the more hopeless and wild were his efforts at extrication. It was unfortunate for him that his brother took any interest in his condition. Seaborn had great contempt for him, yet his brother's heart would not allow itself to feel no concern. That concern manifested itself in endeavoring to teach Joel himself out of school, and in flogging him by way of preventing Joel's having to submit to that disgrace at the hands of the master. So eager was Seaborn in this brotherly design, and so indocile was Joel, that for every flogging which the latter received from the master he got from two to three from Seaborn.

However, the inflictions which Seaborn made, strictly speaking, could not be called floggings. Joel, among his other infirmities, had that of being unable to take care of his spelling-books. He had torn to pieces so many that his mother had obtained a paddle and pasted on both sides of it as many words as could be crowded there. Mrs. Byne, who was a woman of decision, had been heard to say that she meant to head him at this destructive business, and now she believed that she had done it. But this instrument was made to subserve a double purpose with Joel.

It was at once the object, and in his brother's hands the stimulus, of his little ambition. Among all these evils, floggings from Mr. Lorriby and paddlings from Seaborn, and the abiding apprehension that the former was destined to be murdered by the latter, Joel Byne's was a case to be pitied.

"It *ar* a disgrace," said Mr. Bill to me one morning as we were going to school, "and I wish Mr. Larrabee knowed it. Between him and Sebe, that little innocent individiel is bent on bein' useded up bodaciously. Whippin's from Mr. Larrabee and paddlin's from Sebe! That ar the ontimeliest paddle that ever *I* seen. He have to try to larn his paddle, and when he can't larn it, Sebe he take his paddle, fling down Joel, and paddle him *with* his paddle. In all my experence, I has not seed jest sich a case."

The road on which the Bynes came to school met ours a few rods from the spring. We were now there, and Mr. Bill had scarcely finished this speech when we heard behind us the screams of a child.

"Thar it is agin," said Mr. Bill. "At it good and soon. It do beat everything in this blessed and ontimely world. If it don't, ding me!"

We looked behind us. Here came Joel at full speed, screaming with all his might, hatless, his paddle in one hand and his dinner-bucket, without cover, hanging from the other. Twenty yards behind him ran Seaborn, who had been delayed by having to stop in order to pick up Joel's hat and the bucket-cover. Just before reaching the spring, the fugitive was overtaken and knocked down. Seaborn then getting upon him and fastening his arms with his own knees, seized the paddle and exclaimed:

"Now, you rascal! spell that word agin, sir. Ef you don't, I'll paddle you into a pancake. Spell '*Crucifix*,' sir."

Joel attempted to obey.

"S agin, you little devil! *S-i, si!* Ding my skin ef you sha'n't larn it, or I'll paddle you as long as thar's poplars to make paddles outen."

And he turned Joel over and made him ready.

"Look a-here, Sebe!" interposed Mr. Bill; "fun's fun, but too much is too much."

Now what these words were preliminary to, there was no opportunity of ascertaining; for just then Mr. Josiah Lorriby, who had diverged from his own way in order to drink at the spring, presented himself.

"What air you about thar, Sebion Byne?"

Seaborn arose, and though he considered his conduct not only justifiable, but praiseworthy, he looked a little crestfallen.

"Ah, indeed! You're the assistant teacher, air you? Interfering with *my* business, and *my* rights, and *my* duties, and *my*—hem! Let us all go to the schoolhouse now. Mr. Byne will manage business hereafter. I—as for me, I ain't nowhar now. Come, Mr. Byne, let's go to school."

Mr. Lorriby and Seaborn went on, side by side. Mr. Bill looked as if he were highly gratified.

"Ef he don't git it now, he never will."

Alas for Joel! Delivered from Seaborn, he was yet more miserable than before, and he forgot his own griefs in his pity for the impending fate of Mr. Lorriby, and his apprehension for the ultimate consequence of this day's work to his brother. He pulled me a little behind Mr. Bill, and tremblingly whispered:

"Poor Mr. Lorriby! Do you reckon they'll hang Seaby, Phil?"

"What for?" I asked.

"For killin' Mr. Larrabee."

I answered that I hoped not.

“ Oh, Phil! Seaby have sich a big knife! An’ he have stob more saplin’s! and more punkins! and more water-millions! and more mushmillions! And he have even stob our old big yaller cat! And he have call every one of ’em *Larrabee*. And it’s my ’pinion that ef it warn’t for my paddle, he would a stob me befo’ now. You see, Phil, paddlin’ me sorter cools and swages him down a leetle bit, and I always feels some better arfter he’s been of a-paddlin’ o’ me, because then I know that he hain’t stob me, nor hain’t a gwine to do it that day. Oh, Seaby ar a tremendous boy, and he ar *goin’* to stob Mr. Larrabee this blessed day, and then get hung.”

As we neared the house we saw old Kate at the usual stand, and we knew that Mrs. Lorriby was at hand. She met her husband at the door, and they had some whispering together, of which the case of Seaborn was evidently the subject. Joel begged me to stay with him outside until the horrible thing was over. We stopped and peeped in between the logs. We had not to wait long. Mr. Lorriby, his mate standing by his side, at once began to lay on, and Seaborn to roar. The laying-on and the roaring continued until the master was satisfied. When all was over, I looked into Joel’s face. It was radiant with smiles. I never have seen greater happiness upon the countenance of childhood. Happy little fellow! Seaborn would not be hung. That illusion was gone. He hugged his paddle to his breast, and, with a gait approaching the triumphant, walked into the house.

CHAPTER V.

HAVING broken the ice upon Seaborn, Mr. Lorriby went into the sport of flogging him whenever he felt like it. Seaborn’s revolutionary sentiments grew deeper and stronger

constantly. But he was now, of course, hopeless of accomplishing any results for himself, and he knew that the only chance was to enlist Jeremiah Hobbes, or Mr. Bill Williams, and make him leader in the enterprise. Very soon, however, one of these chances was lost. Hobbes received and accepted an offer to become an overseer on a plantation, and Seaborn's hope was now fixed upon Mr. Bill alone. That also was destined soon to be lost by the latter's prospective clerkship. Besides, Mr. Bill never having received and being not likely to receive any provocation from Mr. Lorriby, the prospect of making anything out of him was gloomy enough. In vain Seaborn raised innuendoes concerning his pluck. In vain he tried other expedients, even secretly drawing on Mr. Bill's slate a picture of a very little man flogging a very big boy, and writing as well as he could the name of Mr. Lorriby near the former and that of Mr. Bill near the latter. Seaborn could not disguise himself; and Mr. Bill, when he saw the pictures, informed the artist that if he did not mind what he was about he would get a worse beating than ever Joe Larrabee gave him. Seaborn had but one hope left, but that involved some little delicacy, and could be managed only by its own circumstances. It might do, and it might not do. If he had been accustomed to asking special divine interpositions, he would have prayed that, if anything was to be made out of this, it might be before Mr. Bill should leave. Sure enough, it did come. Just one week before the quarter was out it came. But I must premise the narration of this great event with a few words.

Between Mrs. Lorriby and Miss Betsy Ann Acry the relations were not very agreeable. Among other things which were the cause of this were the unwarrantable liberties which Miss Acry sometimes took with Kate, Mrs. Lorriby's mare. Betsy Ann, in spite of all dangers (not the least of

which was that of breaking her own neck), would treat herself to an occasional ride whenever circumstances allowed. One day at play-time, when Mrs. Lorriby was out upon one of her walks, Betsy Ann hopped upon the mare, and bantered me for a race to the spring and back. I accepted. We set out. I beat old Kate on the return, because she stumbled and fell. A great laugh was raised, but we were detected by Mrs. Lorriby. Passing me, she went up to Betsy Ann, and thus spoke:

“Betsy Ann Acree, libities is libities, and horses is horses, which is, as I mean to say, mars is mars. I have ast you not to ride this mar, and which she was give to me by my parrent father, and which she have not been rid, no, not by Josiah Lorribee hissself, and which I have said I do not desires she shall be sp’ilt in her gaits, and which I wants and desires you will not git upon the back of that mar nary ’nother time.”

Betsy Ann had heretofore escaped correction for any of her shortcomings, although they were not few. She was fond of mischief, and no more afraid of Mr. Lorriby than Mr. Bill Williams was. Indeed, she considered herself to be a woman, and she had been heard to say that a whipping was something which she would take from nobody. Mr. Lorriby smiled at her mischievous tricks, but Mrs. Lorriby frowned. These ladies came in time to dislike each other more and more. The younger, when in her frolics, frequently noticed the elder give her husband a look which was expressive of much meaning. Seaborn had also noticed this, and the worse Miss Acry grew the oftener Mrs. Lorriby came to the school. Seaborn had pondered so much that he at last made a profound discovery. He had come to believe fully, and in this he was right, that the purpose of the female Lorriby in coming at all was to protect the male. A bright thought! He

communicated it to Miss Acry, and slyly hinted several times that he believed she was afraid of Old Red Eye, as he denominated the master's wife. Miss Acry indignantly repelled every such insinuation, and became only the bolder in what she said and what she did. Seaborn knew that the Lorribys were well aware of Mr. Bill's preference for the girl, and he intensely enjoyed her temerity. But it was hard to satisfy him that she was not afraid of Old Red Eye. If Old Red Eye had not been there, Betsy Ann would have done so and so. The reason why she did not do so and so, was because Old Red Eye was about. Alas for human nature!—male and female. Betsy Ann went on and on, until she was brought to a halt. The occasion was thus:

There was in the school a boy of about my own size, and a year or two older, whose name was Martin Granger. He was a pitiful-looking creature—whined when he spoke, and was frequently in quarrels, not only with the boys, but with the girls. He was suspected of playing the part of spy and informer to the Lorribys, both of whom treated him with more consideration than any other pupil, except Mr. Bill Williams. Betsy Ann cordially disliked him, and she honored myself by calling me her favorite in the whole school.

Now Martin and I got ourselves very unexpectedly into a fight. I had divided my molasses with him at dinner-time for weeks and weeks. A few of the pupils, whose parents could afford to have that luxury, were accustomed to carry it to school in phials. I usually ate my part after boring a hole in my biscuit and then filling it up. I have often wished since I have been grown that I could relish that preparation as I relished it when a boy. In all my observations I have never known a person of any description who was as fond of molasses as Martin was. It did me good to see him eat it. He never brought any

himself, but he used to hint, in his whining way, that the time was not distant when his father would have a whole kegful, and when he should bring it to school in his mother's big snuff-bottle. Although I was not sanguine of the realization of this prospect, yet I had not on that account become tired of furnishing him. I only grew weary of his presence while at my dinner, and I availed myself of a trifling dispute one day to shut down upon him. I not only did not invite him to partake of my molasses, but I rejected his spontaneous proposition to that effect. He had been dividing it with me so long that I believe he thought my right to cut him off now was estopped. He watched me as I bored my holes and poured in and ate, and even wasted the precious fluid. I could not consume it all. When I had finished eating, I put water into the phial and made what we called "beverage." I would drink a little, and then shake it and hold it up before me. The golden bubbles shone gloriously in the sunlight. I had not said a word to Martin during these interesting operations, nor even looked toward him. But I knew that his eyes were upon me and the phial. Just as I swallowed the last drop, his full heart could bear no more, and he uttered a cry of pain. I turned to him and asked him what was the matter. The question seemed to be considered as adding insult to injustice.

"Corn deternally trive your devilish hide," he answered, and gave me the full benefit of his clinched fist upon my stomach. He was afterward heard to say that "thar was the place whar he wanted to hit fust." We closed, scratched, pulled hair, and otherwise struggled until we were separated. Martin went immediately to Mr. Lorriby, gave his version of the brawl, and, just as the school was to be dismissed for the day, I was called up and flogged without inquiry and without explanation.

Betsy Ann had seen the fight. When I came to my seat, crying bitterly, her indignation could not contain itself.

“Mr. Larribee,” she said, her cheeks growing redder, “you have whipped that boy for nothing.”

With all her pluck she had never gone so far as this. Mr. Lorriby turned pale and looked at his wife. Her red eyes glistened with fire. He understood it, and said to Betsy Ann, in a hesitating tone:

“You had better keep your advice to yourself.”

“I did not give you any advice. I just said you whipped that boy for nothing, and I said the truth.”

“Ain’t that advice, madam?”

“I am no madam, I thank you, sir; and if that’s advice—”

“Shet up your mouth, Betsy Ann Acry.”

“Yes, SIR,” said Betsy Ann, very loud, and she fastened her pretty pouting lips together, elevated her head, and seemed amusedly awaiting further orders.

The female Lorriby here rose, went to her husband, and whispered earnestly to him. He hesitated, and then resolved.

“Come here to me, Betsy Ann Acry.”

She went up as gayly as if she expected a present.

“I am going to whip Betsy Ann Acry. Ef any boy here wants to take it for her, he can now step forrards.”

Betsy Ann patted her foot, and looked neither to the right nor to the left, nor yet behind her.

When a substitute was invited to appear, the house was still as a graveyard. I rubbed my legs apologetically, and looked up at Seaborn, who sat by me.

“No, sir; if I do may I be dinged, and then dug up and—” I did not listen to the remainder; and as no one else seemed disposed to volunteer, and as the difficulty

was brought about upon my own account, and as Betsy Ann liked me and I liked Betsy Ann, I made a desperate resolution, and rose and presented myself. Betsy Ann appeared to be disgusted.

“I don’t think I would whip that child any more to-day, if I was in your place, especially for other folk’s doings.”

“That’s jest as you say.”

“Well, I say go back to your seat, Phil.”

I obeyed, and felt relieved and proud of myself. Mr. Lorriby began to straighten his switch. Then I and all the other pupils looked at Mr. Bill Williams.

CHAPTER VI.

OH! what an argument was going on in Mr. Bill’s breast. Vain had been all efforts heretofore made to bring him in any way into collision with the Lorribys. He had even kept himself out of all combinations to get a little holiday by an innocent ducking, and useless had been all appeals heretofore to his sympathies; for he was like the rest who had been through the ordeal of the schools, and had grown to believe that it did more good than harm. If it had been anybody but Betsy Ann Acry, he would have been unmoved. But it *was* Betsy Ann, and he had been often heard to say that, if she should have to be whipped, he should take upon himself the responsibility of seeing that that must not be done. And now that contingency had come. How was this responsibility to be discharged? Mr. Bill wished that the female Lorriby had stayed away that day. He did not know exactly why he wished it, but he wished it. To add to his other difficulties, Betsy Ann

had never given any token of her reciprocation of his regard; for, now that the novelty of the future clerkship had worn away, she had returned to her old habit of never seeming to notice that there was such a person as himself. But the idea of a switch falling upon her, whose person from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet was so precious to him, outweighed every other consideration, and he made up his mind to be as good as his word. Just as the male Lorriby (the female by his side) was about to raise the switch—

“Stop a minute, Mr. Larrabee!” he exclaimed, advancing in a highly excited manner.

The teacher lowered his arm and retreated one step, looking a little irresolute. His wife advanced a step, and, looking straight at Mr. Bill, her robust frame rose at least an inch higher.

“Mr. Larrabee! I—ah—don’t exactly consider myself—ah—as a scholar here now; because—ah—I expect to move to Dukesborough in a few days, and keep store thar for Mr. Bland & Jones.”

To his astonishment, this announcement, so impressive heretofore, failed of effect now, when, of all times, it was desired. Mr. Lorriby, in answer to a sign from his wife, had recovered his lost ground, and looked placidly upon him, but answered nothing.

“I say,” repeated Mr. Bill distinctly, as if he supposed he had not been heard—“I say, I expect in a few days to move to Dukesborough; to live thar; to keep store thar for Mr. Bland & Jones.”

“Well, William, I think I have heard that before. I want to hear you talk about it some time when it ain’t school time, and when we ain’t so busy as we air now at the present.”

“Well, but—” persisted Mr. Bill.

“Well, but?” inquired Mr. Lorriby.

“Yes, sir,” answered the former, insistingly.

“Well, but what? Is this case got anything to do with it? Is *she* got anything to do with it?”

“In cose it have not,” answered Mr. Bill sadly.

“Well, what makes you tell us of it now, at the present?” What a big word was that *us*, then, to Josiah Lorriby.

“Mr. Larrabee,” urged Bill, in as persuasive accents as he could employ; “no, sir, Mr. Larrabee, it have not got anything to do with it; but yit—”

“Well, yit what, William?”

“Well, Mr. Larrabee, I thought as I was a-goin’ to quit school soon, and as I was a-goin’ to move to Dukesborough—as I was a-goin’ right outen your school intoo Dukesborough as it war, to keep store thar, maybe you mout, as a favor, do me a favor before I left.”

“Well! may I be dinged, and then dug up and dinged over again!” This was said in a suppressed whisper by a person at my side. “Beggin’! beggin’! ding his white-livered hide—beg-gin’!”

“Why, William,” replied Mr. Lorriby, “ef it war convenient, and the favor war not too much, it mout be that I mout grant it.”

“I thought you would, Mr. Larrabee. The favor ain’t a big one—leastways, it ain’t a big one to you. It would be a mighty—” But Mr. Bill thought he could hardly trust himself to say how big it would be to himself.

“Well, what is it, William?”

“Mr. Larrabee!—sir, Mr. Larrabee, I ast it as a favor of you, not to whip Betsy Ann—which is Miss Betsy Ann Acry.”

“Thar now!” groaned Seaborn, bowing his head.

The male Lorriby looked upon the female. She an-

swered his glance by one which implied a conditional affirmative.

“Ef Betsy Ann Acry will behave herself, and keep her impudence to herself, I will let her off this time.”

All eyes turned to Betsy Ann. I never saw her look so fine as she raised up her head, tossed her yellow ringlets back, and said in a tone increasing in loudness from beginning to end:

“But Betsy Ann Acry won't DO IT.”

“Hello again thar!” whispered Seaborn, and raised his head. His dying hopes of a big row were revived. This was the last opportunity, and he was as eager as if the last dollar he ever expected to make had been pledged upon the event. His legs wide apart, his hands upon his knees, his lips far separate, his teeth firmly closed, he gazed upon that scene.

Lorriby the male was considerably disconcerted, and would have compromised; but Lorriby the female in an instant resumed her hostile attitude, and this time her great eyes looked like two balls of fire. She concentrated their gaze upon Betsy Ann with a ferocity which was appalling. Betsy Ann tried to meet them, and did for one moment; but in another she found she could not hold out longer; so she buried her face in her hands and sobbed. Mr. Bill could endure no more. Both arms fairly flew out at full length.

“The fact ar,” he cried, “that I am goin' to *take the responsibility!* Conshequences may be conshequences, but I shall take the responsibility.” His countenance was that of a man who had made up his mind. It had come at last, and we were happy.

The female Lorriby turned her eyes from Betsy Ann and fixed them steadily on Mr. Bill. She advanced another step forward, raised her arms and put her hands on

her sides. The male placed himself immediately behind his mate's right arm, while Rum, who seemed to understand what was going on, came up, and, standing on his mistress's left, looked curiously up at Mr. Bill.

Seaborn Byne noticed this last movement. "Well, ef that don't beat creation! You in it too, is you?" he muttered through his teeth. "Well, never do you mind. Ef I don't fix you and put you whar you'll never know no more but what you've got a tail, may I be dinged, and then," etc.

Seaborn had been counted upon for a more important work than the mere neutralizing of Rum's forces; still, I knew that Mr. Bill wanted and needed no assistance. We were all ready, however—that is, I should say, all but Martin. He had no griefs, and therefore no desires.

Such was the height of Mr. Bill's excitement that he did not even seem to notice the hostile demonstrations of these numerous and various foes.

"Mr. Larrabee," he said firmly, "I am goin' to take the responsibility. I ast you as a favor to do me a favor before I left. I ain't much used to askin' of favors; but sich it war now. It seem as ef that favor cannot be granted. Sense I have been here they ain't been no difficulties betwixt you and me, nor betwixt me and Miss Larrabee; and no nothin' of the sort, not even betwixt me and Rum. That dog have sometimes snap at my legs; but I have bore it for peace, and wanted no fuss. Sich, therefore, it was why I ast the favor *as* a favor. But it can't be hoped, and so I takes the responsibility. Mr. Larrabee, sir, and you, Miss Larrabee, I am goin' from this school right intoo Dukesborough, straight intoo Mr. Bland's store, to clerk thar. Sich bein' all the circumstances, I hates to do what I tell you I'm a-goin' to do. But it can't be hoped, it seem, and I am goin' to do it."

“Oh yes, ding your old hides of you!” I heard at my side.

“Mr. Larrabee, and you, Miss Larrabee,” continued the speaker, “I does not desires that Betsy Ann Acry shall be whipped. I goes on to say that, as sich and sich the circumstances, Betsy Ann Acry *can't* be whipped whar I am ef I can keep it from bein' done.”

“You heerd that, didn't you?” asked Seaborn, low, but cruelly triumphant; and Seaborn looked at Rum, as if considering how he should begin the battle with him.

Mrs. Lorriby seldom spoke. Whenever she did, it was to the point.

“Yes, but, Weelliam Weelliams, you can't keep it from bein' done.” She straightened herself yet taller, and, raising her hands yet higher upon her sides, changed the angle of elbows from obtuse to acute.

“Yes, but I kin,” persisted Mr. Bill. “Mr. Larrabee! Mr. Larrabee!”

This gentleman had lowered his head, and was peering at Mr. Bill through the triangular opening formed by his mate's side and arm. The reason why Mr. Bill addressed him twice was because he had missed him when he threw the first address over her shoulder. The last was sent through the triangle.

“Mr. Larrabee! I say it kin be done, and I'm goin' to do it. Sir, little as I counted on sich a case, yit still it ar so. Let the conshequenches be what they be, both now and some futur day. Sir, that whippin' that you was agoin' to give to Betsy Ann Acry cannot fall upon her shoulders, and—and before my face. Instid of sich, sir, you may jest—instid of whippin' of her, sir, you may—instid of her, you may give it, sir—notwithstandin' and nevertheless—you may give it to ME.” Then he, letting fall his arms, took off his coat, laid it on a bench and

turned his shoulder to the master with the meekness of one who, having been made the involuntary companion of a traveler for one mile, had made up his mind to accompany him twain.

CHAPTER VII.

IF the pupils had been familiar with the histories of the base men of all the ages, they could have found not one with whom to compare Mr. Bill Williams. If they had known what it was to be a traitor, they might have admitted that he was more like this, the most despicable of all characters, than any other. But they would have argued that he was baser than all other traitors, because he had betrayed, not only others, but himself. Mr. Bill Williams, the big boy, the future resident of Dukesborough, the expectant clerk, the vindicator of outraged girlhood in the person of the girl he loved, the pledge-taker of responsibilities—that he should have taken the pains, just before he was going away, to degrade himself by proposing to take upon his own shoulders the rod that had never before descended but upon the backs and legs of children! Poor Seaborn Byne! If I ever saw expressed in a human being's countenance disgust, anger, and abject hopelessness, I saw them as I turned to look at him. He spoke not one word, not even in whispers, but he looked as if he could never more place confidence in mortal flesh.

When Mr. Bill had concluded his ultimatum, the female Lorriby's arms came down, and the male Lorriby's head went up. They sent each other smiles. Both were smart enough to be satisfied. The latter was more than satisfied.

"I am proud this day of William Williams. It air so, and I can but say I am proud of him. William Williams

were now in a position to stand up and shine in his new sphere of action. If he went to Dukesborough to keep store thar, he mout now go sayin' that as he had been a good scholar, so he mout expect to be a good clerk, and fit to be trusted, yea, with thousands upon thousands, ef sich mout be the case. But as it was so, and as he have been to us all as it war, and no difficulties, and no nuthin' of the sort, and he war goin', and it mout be soon, yea, it mout be to-morrow, from this school straight intoo a store, I cannot, nor I cannot. No, far be it. This were a skene too solemn and too lovely for sich. I cannot, nor I cannot. William Williams may now take his seat."

He obeyed. I was glad that he did not look at Betsy Ann as she turned to go to hers. But she looked at him. I noticed her, and, little as I was, I saw also that if he ever had had any chance of winning her, it was gone. It was now late in the afternoon, and we were dismissed. Without saying a word to any one, Mr. Bill took his arithmetic and slate (for ciphering, as it was called then, was his only study). We knew what it meant, for we felt, as well as he, that this was his last day at school. As my getting to school depended upon his continuance, I did not doubt that it was my last also.

On the way home, but not until separating from all the other boys, he showed some disposition to boast.

"You all little fellows was monstrous badly skeerd this evening, squire."

"Wasn't you scared too?" I asked.

"Skeerd? I'd like to see the schoolmarster that could skeer me. /skeerd of Joe Larrabee?"

"I did not think you were scared of him."

"Skeerd of who, then? Miss Larrabee? She mout be redder-eyed than what she ar, and then not skeer me. Why, look here, squire, how would I look goin' intoo

Dukesborough, intoo Mr. Bland & Jones's store, right from bein' skeerd of Miss Larrabee; to be runnin' right intoo Mr. Bland & Jones's store, and Mehetibilly Larrabee right arter me, or old Joe nuther? It wur well for him that he never struck Betsy Ann Acry."

"But wasn't you goin' to take her whippin' for her?"

"Looke here, squire, I didn't take it, did I?"

"No, but you said you was ready to take it."

"Poor little fellow!" he said, compassionately. "Squire, you are yit young in the ways of this sorrowful and ontimely world. Joe Larrabee knows me, and I knows Joe Larrabee, and, as the fellar said, that ar sufficient."

We were now at our gate. Mr. Bill took me out of his pockets, set me down softly, bade me good-evening, and passed on; and thus ended his pupilage and mine at the school of Josiah Lorriby.

INVESTIGATIONS CONCERNING MR. JONAS LIVELY.

“ I well believe
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,
And so far will I trust thee.”—*Shakspeare.*

“ Man is but half without woman.”—*Bailey.*

CHAPTER I.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Bill Williams had moved into Dukesborough, this exaltation did not interfere with the cordial relations established between him and myself at the Lorriby school. He used to come out occasionally on visits to his mother, and seldom returned without calling at our house. This occurred most usually upon the Sundays when the monthly meetings were held in the church at Dukesborough. On such days he and I usually rode home together, I upon my pony and he upon a large brown mare which his mother had sent to him in the forenoon.

Ever since those remote times, I have associated in my memory Mr. Bill with that mare, and one or another of her many colts. According to the best of my recollection, she was for years and years never without a colt. Her normal condition seemed to be always to be followed by a colt. Sometimes it was a horse-colt and sometimes a mule; for the planters in those times raised at home nearly all their

domestic animals. What a lively little fellow this colt always was; and what an anxious parent was old Molly Sparks, as Mr. Bill called the dam! How that colt would run about and get mixed up with the horses in the grove around the church; and how the old mare would whicker all during the service! I knew that whicker among a hundred. Mr. Bill used always to tie her to a swinging limb; for her anxiety would sometimes cause her to break the frail bridle which usually confined her, and run all about the grounds in pursuit of her truant offspring. Mr. Bill used also to sit where he could see her in order to be ready for all difficulties. I have often been amused to notice how he would be annoyed by her cries and prancings, and how he would pretend to be listening intently to the sermon when his whole attention I knew to be on old Molly and the colt. Seldom was there a Sunday that he did not have to leave the church in order to catch old Molly and tie her up again. This was a catastrophe he was ever dreading, because he really disliked to disturb the service; and he had the consideration, when he rose to go, to place his handkerchief to his face, that the congregation might suppose that his nose was bleeding.

While we would be riding home, the conduct of that colt, if anything, would be worse than at the church. His fond parent would exert every effort to keep him by her side, but he would get mixed up with the horses more than before. Twenty times would he be lost. Sometimes he would be at an immense distance behind; then he would pretend, as it seemed, to be anxiously looking for his mother, and would run violently against every horse, whether under the saddle or in harness. Old Molly would wheel around and try to get back, her whickers ever resounding far and wide. When the colt would have enough of this frolic, or some one of the home-returning horsemen would

give him a cut with his riding-switch, he would get out upon the side of the road, run at full speed past his dam, and get similarly mixed up with the horses in front. If he ever got where she was he would appear to be extravagantly gratified, and would make an immediate and violent effort to have himself suckled. Failing in this, he would let fly his hind-legs at her, and dash off again at full speed in whatever direction his head happened to be turned. Mr. Bill would often say that, of all the fools he ever saw, old Molly and her colt were the biggest. As for my part, the anxiety of the parent seemed to me natural in the circumstances; but I must confess, that in the matter of the quality usually called discretion, while the young of most animals have little of it usually, I have frequently thought that of all others the one who had the least amount was the colt.

I did not intend to speak of such a trifling matter, but was led to it unwarily by the association of ideas. Mr. Bill often accepted our invitations to dinner upon these Sundays, or he would walk over in the afternoon. Although he liked much the society of my parents, yet he was fondest of being with me singly. With all his fondness for talking, there was some constraint upon him, especially in the presence of my father, for whom he had the profoundest respect. So, somehow or other, Mr. Bill and I would get away to ourselves, when he could display his full powers in that line. This was easily practicable, as never or seldom did such a day pass without our having other guests to dinner from among those neighbors who resided at a greater distance from the village than we did. Our table on these Sundays was always extended to two or three times its usual length. My parents, though they were religious, thought there was no harm in detaining some of these neighbors to dinner and during the remainder of the day.

Mr. Bill had evidently realized his expectations of the pleasures and advantages of town life. It seemed to me that he was greatly improved by it. He had evidently laid aside some of his ancient awkwardness and hesitation of manner. He talked more at his ease. Then he gave a more careful and fashionable turn to his hair, and, I thought, combed and brushed it oftener than he had been wont. His trousers, too, were better pulled up, and his shirt-collar was now never or seldom without the necessary button. I was therefore somewhat surprised to hear my father remark more than once that he did not think that town life was exactly the best thing for Mr. Bill, and that he would not be surprised if he would not have done better to keep at home with his mother. But Mr. Bill grew more and more fond of Dukesborough, and he used to relate to me some of the remarkable things that occurred there. About every one of the hundred inhabitants of the place and those who visited it, he knew everything that by any possibility could be ascertained. He used to contend that it was a merchant's business to know everybody, and especially those who tried to conceal their affairs from universal observation. He had not been very long in Dukesborough before he could answer almost any question you could put to him about any of his fellow-citizens.

With one exception.

This was Mr. Jonas Lively.

He was too hard a case for Mr. Bill. Neither he nor any other person, not even Mrs. Hodge, seemed to know much about him. The late Mr. Hodge probably knew more than anybody else; but, if he did, he did not tell it, and now he was dead and gone, and Mr. Lively was left comparatively unknown to the world.

Where Mr. Lively had come from originally people did not know for certain, although he had been heard occa-

sionally to use expressions which induced the belief that he might have been a native of the State of North Carolina. It was ascertained that he had done business for some years in Augusta, and some said that he yet owned a little property there. This much was certain, that he went there or somewhere else once every winter, and, after remaining about a month, returned, as was supposed, with two new vests and pairs of trousers. At the time that I began to take an interest in him in sympathy with Mr. Bill, he had been residing at Dukesborough for about three years; not exactly at Dukesborough either, but something less than a mile outside, where he boarded with the Hodges, occupying a small building in one corner of the yard, which they called "the Office," and in which, before he came, the family used to take their meals. He might have had his chamber in the main house where the others stayed, but for one thing; for besides the two main rooms there were a couple of low-roofed shed-rooms in front, one of which was occupied by Susan Temple, a very poor relation of Mr. Hodge. There were no children, and Mr. Lively might have had the other shed-room across the piazza, but for the fact that it was devoted to another purpose. Mr. Hodge—

But one at a time. Let me stick to Mr. Lively for the present, and tell what little was known about him.

Mr. Lively was about fifty-one or -two years of age. Mr. Bill used to insist that he would never see fifty-five again, and that he would not be surprised if he was sixty. I have no idea but that this was an over-estimate. The truth is that, as I have often remarked, young men like Mr. Bill are prone to assign too great age to elderly men, especially when, like Mr. Lively, they are unmarried. But let that go.

Mr. Lively was quite stout in body, but of moderate-

sized legs. He had a brown complexion, brown hair, and black eyebrows. His eyes were a mild green, with some tinge of red in the whites. His nose was Roman, or would have been if it had been longer; for just as it began to hook and to become Roman it stopped short, as if upon reflection it thought it wrong to ape ancient and especially foreign manners. He always wore a long black frock-coat, either gray or black trousers and vest, and a very stout, low-crowned furred hat. He carried a hickory walking-stick with a hooked handle.

He never seemed to have any regular business. True, he was known sometimes to buy a bale of cotton, or it might be two or three, and afterward have them hauled to Augusta by some neighbor's wagon, when the latter would be carrying his own to market. Then he occasionally bought a poor horse out of a wagon, and kept it at the Hodges' for a couple of months, and got him fat and sold him again at a smart profit. He was a capital doctor of horses, and was suspected of being somewhat proud of his skill in that line, as he would cheerfully render his services when called upon, and always refused any compensation. But when he traded, he traded. If he bought, he put down squarely into the seller's hands; if he sold, the money had to be put squarely into his. Such transactions were rare, however; he certainly made but little in that way. But then he spent less. Besides five dollars a month for board and lodging, he furnishing his own room, if he was out any more nobody knew what it was for.

He was a remarkably silent man. Although he came into Dukesborough often, he had but little to say to anybody and stayed but a short time. The remainder of the day he spent at home, partly in walking about the place and partly in reading while sitting in his chamber, or on the piazza between the two little shed-rooms in the front part

of the house. He seldom went to church; yet upon Sundays he read the Bible and other religious books almost the livelong day.

In the lifetime of Mr. Hodge he was supposed to know considerable about Mr. Lively. The latter certainly used to talk with him with more freedom than with any other person. Mrs. Hodge, a tallish, slenderish lady, never was able to get much out of Mr. Lively, notwithstanding that she was a woman who was remarkably fond of obtaining as much information as possible about other persons. She used to give it as her opinion that there was nothing *in* Mr. Lively, and in his absence she talked and laughed freely at his odd ways and looks. But her husband at such times would mildly rebuke her. After he died the opinion became general that no person was likely to succeed him in Mr. Lively's confidence, and there was a good deal of dissatisfaction upon the subject.

Mr. Bill Williams felt this dissatisfaction to an uncommon degree. Being now a citizen of Dukesborough, he felt himself bound to be thoroughly identified with all its interests. Any man that thus kept himself apart from society, and refused to allow everybody to know all about himself and his business, was, in his opinion, a suspicious character, and ought to be watched. What seemed to concern him more than anything else, was a question frequently mooted as to whether Mr. Lively's hair was his own or a wig. Such a thing as the latter had never been seen in the town, and therefore the citizens were not familiar with it; but doubts were raised from the peculiar way in which Mr. Lively's hung from his head, and Mr. Bill wanted to see them settled—not that this would have fully satisfied him, but he would have felt something better. He desired to know all about Mr. Lively, it is true; yet, if he had been allowed to investigate him fully, he certainly

would have begun with his head. "The fact of it is," he maintained, "that it ain't right. It ain't right to the Dukesborough people, and it ain't right to the transhent people. Transhent people comes here goin' through, and stops all night at Spouter's tavern. They asts about the place and the people; and who knows but what some of 'em mout wish to buy prop'ty and come and settle here? In cose, I in ginerly does most o' the talkin' to sich folks, and lets 'em know about the place and the people. I don't like to be obleeged to tell 'em that we has one suspicious character in the neighborhood, and which he is so suspicious that he don't never pull off his hat, and that people don't know whether the very har on his head is hisn or not. I tell you it ain't right. I made up my mind the first good chance I git to ast Mr. Lively a few civil questions about hisself."

It was not very long after this before an opportunity was presented to him for this purpose. Mr. Lively walked into the store one morning when there was no other person there except him, and inquired for some drugs to give to a sick horse. Mr. Bill carefully but slowly made up the bundle, when the following dialogue took place.

"I'm monstous glad to see you, Mr. Lively; you don't come into the store so monstous powerful oftin. I wish I could see you here more freckwent. Not as I'm so mighty powerful anxious to sell goods, though that's my business, and in course I feels better when trade's brisk; but I jes' natchelly would like to see you. You may not know it, Mr. Lively, but I don't expect you've got a better friend in this here town than what I am."

Mr. Bill somehow couldn't find exactly where the twine was; he looked about for it in several places, especially where it was quite unlikely that it should be. Mr. Lively was silent.

"I has thought," continued Mr. Bill, after finding his twine, "that I would like to talk with you sometimes. The people is always a inquirin' of me where you come from and all sich, and what business you used to follow, jes' like they thought you and me was intimate friends—which I am as good a friend as you've got in the whole town, and which I s'pose you're a friend of mine. I tells 'em you're a monstous fine man in my opinion, and I spose I does know you about as well as anybody else about here. But yit we hain't had no long continyed convisation like I thought we mout have some time, when it mout be covenant, and we mout talk all about old North Calliner whar you come from, and which my father he come from thar too, but which he is now dead and goned. Law! how he did love to talk about that old country! and how he did love the people that come from thar! If my father was here, which now he is dead and goned, he wouldn't let you rest wheresomever he mout see you for talkin' about old North Calliner and them old people over thar."

Mr. Bill handed the parcel to Mr. Lively with as winning a look as it was possible for him to bestow. Mr. Lively seemed slightly interested.

"And your father was from North Carolina?"

"Certinly," answered Mr. Bill, with glee; "right from Tar River. I've heern him and mammy say so nigh and in and about a thousand times, I do believe." And Mr. Bill advanced from behind the counter, came up to Mr. Lively, and looked kindly and neighborly upon him.

"Do you ever think about going there yourself?" inquired the latter.

Mr. Bill did that very thing over and ofting. From a leetle bit of a boy he had thought how he would like to go thar and see them old people. If he lived, he would go thar some day to that very old place, and see them old people.

From the way he spoke, it seemed that his ideas were that the North Carolinians all resided in one particular locality, and that they were all elderly persons. But this was possibly intended as a snare to catch Mr. Lively, by paying, in this indirect manner, respect to his advanced age.

“Oh!” exclaimed Mr. Lively, while he stored away the parcel in his capacious pocket, “you ought to go there, by all means. If you *should* ever go there, you will find as good people as you ever saw in your life. They are a peaceable people, those North Carolinians, and industrious. You hardly ever see a man there that has not got some sort of business; and then, as a general thing, people there attend to their own business, and don’t bother themselves about other people’s.”

Mr. Lively then turned and walked slowly to the door. As he reached it, he turned again and said:

“Oh yes, Mr. Williams, you ought to go there and see that people once before you die; it would do you good. Good-day, Mr. Williams.”

After Mr. Lively had gotten out of the store and taken a few steps, Mr. Bill went to the door, looked at him in silence for a moment or two, and then made the following soliloquy:

“Got no more manners than a hound. I ast him a civil question, and see what I got! But never mind, I’ll find out somethin’ about you yit. Now, ain’t thar a picter of a man! Well you k’yars a walkin’-stick: them legs needs all the help they can git in totin’ the balance of *you* about. And jes’ look at that har: I jes’ know it ain’t all hisn. But never do you mind.”

After this, Mr. Bill seemed to regard it as a point of honor to find Mr. Lively out. Hitherto he had owed it to the public mainly; now there was a debt due to himself.

He had propounded to that person a civil question, and, instead of getting a civil answer, had been as good as laughed at. Mr. Lively might go for the present, but he should be up with him in time.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for Mr. Bill's designs, as well as for the purposes of this narrative, that he was slightly akin to Mrs. Hodge, whom he occasionally visited. However, we have seen that this lady had known heretofore about as little of her guest as other people, and that, at least in the lifetime of Mr. Hodge, her opinion was that there was nothing in him. True, since Mr. Hodge's death she had been more guarded in her expressions. Mrs. Hodge probably reflected that now she was a lone woman in the world, except Susan Temple, who was next to nothing, she ought to be particular. Mr. Bill had sounded his cousin Malviny (as he called her) heretofore, and, of course, could get nothing more than she had to impart. He might give up some things, but they were not of the kind we are considering. He informed me one day that on one subject he had made up his mind to take the responsibility. This expression reminded me of our last day with the Lorribys, and I hesitated whether the fullest reliance could be placed upon such a threat. But I said nothing.

“That thing,” he continued, “are the circumsance of his har: which it is my opinion that it ain't all hisn: which I has never seed a wig, but has heern of 'em; and which it is my opinion that that har is a imposition on the public, and also on Cousin Malviny Hodge, and he a-livin' in her very house—leastways in the office. I mout be mistaken; ef so, I beg his pardon: though he have not got the manners of a hound, no, not even to anser a civil question. Still, I wouldn't wish to hurt a har of his head; no, not even ef it war not all hisn. Yit the public have a

right to know, and—I wants to know myself. And I'm gittin' tired of sich foolin' and bamboozlin', so to speak; and the fact is, that Mr. Lively have *got* to 'splain hisself on the circumsance o' that har."

The next time I met him, he was delighted with some recent and important information. I shall let him speak for himself.

CHAPTER II.

MR. BILL came over to our house one Sunday. I knew from his looks upon entering that he had something to communicate. As soon as dinner was over, and he could decently do so, he proposed to me a walk. My father was much amused at the intimacy between us, and I sometimes noted a smile upon his face when we started out together upon one of our afternoon strolls. As I was rather small for nine, and Mr. Bill rather large for nineteen years old, I suppose it was somewhat ludicrous to observe such a couple sustaining to each other the relation of equality. Mr. Bill treated me as fully his equal, and I had come to feel as much ease in his society as if he had been of my own age. By his residence in town he had acquired some sprightliness of manner and conversation which made him more interesting to me than formerly. This sprightliness was manifested by his forbearing to call me squire persistently, and varying my name with that ease and freedom which town-people learn so soon to employ. This was interesting to me.

When we had gotten out of the yard and into the grove, Mr. Bill began:

"Oh, my friend, friend of my boyhood's sunny hour, I've been nigh and in about a-dyin' to see you, especially sence night afore last—sence I caught old Jonah."

“Have you caught him, Mr. Bill?”

“Caught him! Treed him! Not ezactly treed him neither; but runned him to his holler. I told you I was goin’ to do it.”

Seeing that I did not clearly understand, he smiled with delight at the felicitous manner in which he had begun his narrative. We proceeded a little farther to a place where a huge oak tree had protruded its roots from the ground. There we sat, and he resumed:

“Yes, sir, I runned him right into his holler. And now, squire, I’m goin’ to tell you a big secret; and you are mighty nigh the onliest man, Phillmon Pearch, that I’ve told it, becasse, you see, the circumsances is sich that it won’t do to tell too many people nohow; for Mr. Lively he’s a curis sort o’ man, I’m afeard. And then you know, Philip, you and me has been thick and jes’ like brothers, and I’ll tell to you what I wouldn’t tell to no monstous powerful chance o’ people nohow. And ef it was to git out, people, and specially other people, mout say that I didn’t—ah—do ezactly right. And then thar’s Cousin Malviny Hodge. Somehow Cousin Malviny she ain’t—somehow she ain’t ezactly like she used to be in Daniel Hodge’s lifetime. Wimming is right curis things, squire, specially arfter thar husbands dies. I never should a b’lieved it of her arfter what I’ve heern her say and go on about that old feller. But wimming’s wimming; and they ar going to be so always. But that’s neither here nor thar: you mustn’t let on that I said a word about him.”

I felt flattered by this the first confidential communication I had ever received, and promised secrecy.

“Well, you see, Squire Phil, I ast Mr. Lively as far and civil question as one gentleman could ast another gentleman, becasse I thought that people had a right and was liable to know *somethin’* about a man who live in the neigh-

borhood, and been a-livin' thar for the last three year and never yit told a human anything about hisself, exceptin' it mout be to Daniel Hodge, which he's now dead and goned, and not even Cousin Malviny don't know. Least-ways didn't. I don't know what she mout know now. O wimming, wimming! They won't do, Philip. But let 'em go. I ast Mr. Lively a civil question. One day when he come in the sto' I ast him as polite and civil as I knowed how about gittin' a little bit acquainted along with him, and which I told him I was friendly, and also all about my father comin' from North Calliner, thinkin' maybe, as he came from thar too, he mout have a sorter friendly feelin' to me in a likewise way, ef he didn't keer about bein' so monstous powerful friendly to the people in ginerl, which the most of 'em, you know, like your folks, they mostly come from old Firginny. You see I sorter slyly baited my hook with old North Calliner. But nary bite did I git—no, nary nibble. The old fellow look at me mighty interestin' while I war a-goin' on about the old country, and arfter I got through he smiled calm as a summer evenin' like—so to speak—and then I thought we was goin' to have a good time. Instid o' that, he ast me ef I war ever expectin' to ever go thar, and then said that I ought to go thar by all means and see them old people; and then he sorter hinted agin me for astin' about him bein' from thar becace he was mighty partickler to say that them old people in ginerly was mighty fond o' tendin' to their own business and lettin' t'other people's alone. Which I don't have to be kicked downstairs befo' I can take a hint. And so I draps the subject; which in fact I was obleeged to drap it, becace no sooner he said it he went right straight immediately outen the sto'. But, thinks I to myself, says I, I'll head you yit, Mr. Lively. I'll find out sumthin' about you, ef it be only whether that head o' har is yourn or not."

“Is it a wig?” I asked.

“Phillimon,” said Mr. Bill, in a tone intended to be considered as remonstrative against all improper haste—“Philiminimon Pearch, when a man is goin’ to tell you a interestin’ circumsance about a highly interestin’ character, so to speak, you mustn’t ast him about the last part befo’ he git thoo the first part. If you does, the first part mout not have a far chance to be interestive, and both parts mout, so to speak, git mixed up and confused together. Did you ever read Alonzer and Melissy, Phil?”

I had not.

“Thar it is, you see. Ef you had a read Alonzer and Melissy you would not a ast the question you did. In that novyul they holds back the best for the last, and ef you knowed what it was all goin’ to be, you wouldn’t read the balance o’ the book; and which the man he knowed you wouldn’t and that made him hold it back. And which I war readin’ that same book one day, and Angeline Spouter she told me that nary one of ’em wa’n’t goin’ to git killed, and that they got married at the last, and then I jest wouldn’t read the book no longer.”

I was sorry that I had asked the question.

“No, Philmon, give every part a far chance to be interestin’. I give Jonas Lively a far chance; but the de-ficulty war he wouldn’t give me one, and I tuck it. I’m goin’ to take up Mr. Lively all over. He’s a book, sir—a far book. I’ll come to his har in time.”

Mr. Bill readjusted himself between the roots of the old oak so as to lie in comfort in a position where he could look me fully in the face.

“You see, squire,” he continued, “Cousin Malviny Hodge, she is sort o’ kin to me, and we always calls one another *cousin*. The families has always been friendly and claimed kin, but I don’t b’lieve they ever could tell whar

it started, but it war on Cousin Malviny's side, leastways John Simmonses, her first husband, who his father he also come from North Calliner. I used to go out thar sometimes and stay all night; but I hain't done sich a thing sence Mr. Lively have been thar. One thing, you know, because he sleeps in the office, and the onliest other place for a man to sleep at thar is the t'other shed-room on the t'other side o' the pe-azer from Susan Temple's room, and which about three year ago they made a kind of a sto' outen that. The very idee of callin' that a sto'! It makes Mr. Bland laugh every time I talk about Cousin Malviny's sto'! I jes' brings up the subject sometimes jest to see Mr. Bland laugh and go on. Mr. Bland, you know, Philip, is the leadin' head pardner, and one of the funniest men you ever see. Mr. Jones is a monstous clever man, but he is not a funny man like Mr. Bland, not nigh."

This compliment of Mr. Bill to his employer I considered proper enough, although I could have wished that he had made fewer remarks which appeared to me to be so far outside of the subject. But I knew that he lived in town, and I think I had a sort of notion that such persons had superior rights as well as superior privileges to mere country people. Still I was extremely anxious on the wig question. Mr. Bill had told me strange things about wigs. He assured me that they were scalped from dead men's heads, and I did not like to think about them at night.

"But," continued he, "as I was a-sayin', they ain't been no covenant place for a man to sleep thar sence they had the sto', as they calls it, exceptin' a feller was to sleep with Mr. Lively; and I should say that would be about as uncomfortable and ontimely sleepin' as anybody ever want anywhar to anybody's house and stayed all night. And which I've no idee that Mr. Lively hissself would think it war reasonable that anybody mout be expected to sleep with him,

nor him to sleep with any other man person. When a old bachelor, Philmon, git in the habit o' sleepin' by hisself for about fifty year, I s'pose he sorter git out o' the way of sleepin' with varus people, so to speak, and—ah—he ruther not sleep with other people, and which—ah—well, the fact is, by that time he ain't fitten *too* sleep with anybody. I tell you, Phlimmon Pearch, befo' I would sleep with Jonas Lively, specially arfter knowin' him like I do, I'd set up all night and nod in a cheer—dinged ef I wouldn't!"

Mr. Bill could not have looked more serious and resolute if he had been expecting on the night of that day an invitation from Mr. Lively to share his couch.

"Hadn't been for that," he went on, "I should a been thar sooner than I did. But arfter he seem so willin' and anxious for me to go to North Calliner, I thinks I to myself I'll go out to Cousin Malviny's, and maybe she'll ast me to stay all night, and then she can fix a place for me jes for one night; I sposen she would make a pallet down on the flo' in the hall-room. So Friday evenin' I got leaf from Mr. Jones to go away from the sto' one night. He sleep thar too, you know, and they warn't no danger in my goin' away for jes one night. So Friday evenin' I went out, I did, to supper, and I sorter hinted around that if they was to invite me I mout stay all night, ef providin' that it war entirely covenant; specially as I wanted a little country ar arfter bein' cooped up so long in town—much as I loved town I had not got out o' all consate for country livin' and country ar, and so forth."

He knew all about how to bamboozle Cousin Malviny, and country folks generally.

"Cousin Malviny were monstous glad to see me, she say; and I tell you, squire, Cousin Malviny are right jolly lately. She look better and younger'n any time I seen her sence she married Hodge ten year ago. O wimming, wim-

ming! But that's neither here nor thar; you can't alter 'em, and let 'em go. Cousin Malviny said her house war small but it war stretchy. I laughed, I did, and said I would let it stretch itself one time for my accommidation. Then Cousin Malviny she laughed, she did, and looked at Mr. Lively, and Mr. Lively he come mighty nigh laughin' hisself. As it war, he look like I war monstous welcome to stay ef I felt like it. As for Susan Temple, she look serious. But that gurl always do look serious somehow. I think they sorter puts on that gurl. She do all the work about the house, and always look to me like she thought she have no friends.

“Well, be it so. I stays; and we has a little talk, all of us together arfter supper; that is, me and Cousin Malviny and Mr. Lively. Which I told you he had no manners. But never mind that now; give every part a far chance to be interestin'. We has a talk together, and which Mr. Lively are in ginerly a better man to talk to than I thought, leastways at his own home. That is, it's Cousin Malviny's home in cose. Mr. Lively and me talk freely. He ast me freely any question he mout please. Our convisation war mostly in his astin' o' me questions, and me a-answerin' 'em. He seem to look like he thought I did not keer about astin' *him* any more: but which he did see me once lookin' mighty keen at his head o' har. And what do you sposen he done then? He look at me with a kind of a interestin' smile, and said I ought by all means to go some time and see old North Calliner. And somehow, squire, to save my life I couldn't think o' nothin' to answer back to him. I knowed he had caught me, and I tried to quit lookin' at his old head. The fact of it is, ef Mr. Lively say old North Calliner to me many more times, I shall git out o' all consate of the place and all them old people over thar. Cousin Malviny she sorter

smile. She look up to the old man more'n she used to. But you can't alter 'em, and 'tain't worth while to try. But I, thinks I to myself, old fellow, when I come here I owed you ONE; now I owe you TWO. You may go 'long.

“Well, arfter awhile, bedtime hit come, and Mr. Lively he went on out to the office; which, lo and behold! I found that Susan had made down a pallet in Cousin Malviny's room, and I war to take Susan's room. I sorter hated that, and didn't have no sich expectation that the poor gurl she have to sleep on the flo' on my account; and I told Cousin Malviny so, and which I could sleep on a pallet myself in the hall-room. But Cousin Malviny wouldn't hear to it. Susan didn't say yea nor nay. They puts on that gurl, shore's you ar born. But that ain't none o' my business, and so I goes in to the little shed-room. And arfter all I war right glad o' that arrangement, because it give me a better chance for what I wanted to do, and was determed *to* do ef I could. I war bent on findin' out, ef I could find out, ef that head o' har which Mr. Lively had on his head war hisn. That's what I went out thar for. I had ast him a civil question, and he had give me a oncivil answer, and I war bent on it now more'n ever, becace I couldn't even look at his head without gittin' the same oncivil answer and bein' told that I ought to go and see North Calliner and all them old people thar, which I'm beginnin' not to keer whether I ever sees 'em or not, and wish daddy he never come from thar. But I runned him to his holler.”

Mr. Bill then rose from the ground. What he had to say now seemed to require to be told in a standing attitude.

CHAPTER III.

“AND now, Philip, O Philerimon, my honest friend, and companion of the youthful hour, I’m comin’ to the interestin’ part; I’m a-gainin’ on it fast. That man’s a book—a far book. If I war goin’ to write one, I should write it on Jonas Lively and the awful skenes, so to speak, o’ that blessed and ontimely night. But in cose you know, Philipmon, I don’t expect to write no book, becace I hain’t the edyecation nor the time. But now, lo and behold! it war a foggy evenin’ and ’specially at Cousin Malviny’s, whar you knows they lives close onto the creek. Well, no sooner I got to my room than I slyly slips out onto the pe-azer, and out into the yard, and walks quiet and easy as I kin to the backside o’ the office, whar thar war a winder. I war determed to get thar befo’ the old fellar blowed out his candle and got to bed. I had seed befo’ night that a little piece war broke out o’ the winder. I didn’t like ezactly to be a-peepin’ in on the old man, and I should a felt sorter bad ef he had a caught me. But you see, squire, he didn’t leave me no chance. I had ast him a civil question; it war his fault and not mine. My skeerts is cler.”

It was pleasant to see my friend thus able to rid himself of responsibility in a matter in which it was rather plain that blame must attach somewhere.

“So I crope up thar, I did, and found that he had let down the curtin. But I tuk a pin and drawed the curtin up to the hole in the glass, and then tuk my penknife and slit a little hole in the curtin, so I could go one eye on him. I couldn’t go but one eye; but I see a plenty with that—

a plenty for one time. In the first place, Phlim, thar ain't a man in the whole town of Dukesborough exceptin' me that know Mr. Lively is a smoker. I don't b'lieve that Cousin Malviny know it. As soon as I got my eye in the room I see him onlock his trunk, which it war by the head o' his bed, and take out a little tin box, which it have the littlest padlock that ever I see; and then he onlock it with a key accordin', and he tuk out the onliest lookin' pipe! I do b'lieve it war made out o' crockery. It war long, and shaped like a pitcher; and it had a kiver, and the kiver it war yaller and have little holes, it 'pear like, like a pepper-box; and which it have also a crooked stem made out o' somethin' black; and ef it warn't chained to his pipe by a little chain, I'm the biggest liar in and about Dukesborough! Well, sir, he take out his pipe, and then he take outen the trunk another little box, and which it have tobarker in it, all cut up and ready for smokin'. Well, sir, he fill up that pipe, and which I think it hilt nigh and in and about my hand full of tobarker, and then of all the smokes which I ever see a mortal smoke, that war the most tremenjous and ontimeliest! It is perfectly certin that that man never smoke but that one time in the twenty-four hours. I tell you he war *hongry* for his smoke; and when he smoke, he smoke. And the way he do blow! I could farly hear him whistle as he shoot out the smoke. He don't seem to take no consolation in his smokin', as fur as I could see, becace sich everlastin' blowin' made him look like he war monstous tired at the last. Sich vilence can't last, and he got through mighty soon. But he have to get through quick for another reason; and which I ar now goin' to tell you what that other reason is—that is, providin', squire, you keers about hearin' it."

Notwithstanding some capital doubts upon the legality of the means by which Mr. Bill had obtained his informa-

tion, yet I was sufficiently interested to hear further, and I so intimated.

“Yes, I thought,” Mr. Bill continued with a smile, “that maybe you mout wish to hear some more about his carrins on.” But the account thereafter was so circumstantial and prolonged that I feel that I should abridge it. Suffice to say that among other discoveries he made was the fact that Mr. Lively, as suspected, did indeed wear a wig. He concluded his narrative of his nocturnal adventures thus:

“By this time I war toler’ble cool, and I crope back to the house and went to bed. And I thinks I to myself, Mr. Lively, you are one of ’em. You ar a book, Mr. Lively—a far book. We ar even now, Mr. Lively; and which I laid thar a long time a-meditatin’ on this interestin’ and ontimely case. I ast myself, Ar this the lot o’ them which has no wife and gits old in them conditions, and has no har on the top o’ thar head? Is it sich in all the circumsances of sich a awful and ontimely sitovation? Ef so, fair be it from William Williams!”

Mr. Bill delivered this reflection with becoming seriousness. Indeed, he looked a little sad, but whether in contemplation of possible bachelorhood or possible baldness I cannot say.

“The next mornin’ we was all up good and soon. When we went to breakfast I felt sorter mean when I look at the old man, and a little sort o’ skeerd to boot. But he look like he have got a good night’s rest, and I have owed him somethin’, becasse I have ast him a civil question and got a oncivil answer; and so I thinks I, Mr. Lively, you and me’s about even—only I mout have a leetle the advantage. When I told ’em all good-bye, I told the old man that I’m a-thinkin’ more serous than ever I’ll go to old North Calliner one o’ these days and see them old people; and which I tell you he look at me mighty hard. But what

struck me war to see how Cousin Malviny look up to him. But wimming's wimming, Philiminon. You can't alter 'em, and it ain't worth while to try."

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. MELVINA HODGE being destined for a more distinguished part in the Lively Investigations than may have been supposed, I should mention a few of her antecedents. Some years back she was Miss Melvina Perkins, or rather Miss Malviny Perkins, as she preferred to be called. She had been married first to a Mr. Simmons, who, as we have heard Mr. Bill Williams say, was related to his family. Five or six years afterward Mr. Simmons died. However ardently this gentleman may have been beloved in his lifetime, the grief which his departure produced did not seem to be incurable. It yielded to Time, the comforter, and in about another year her name was again changed, and she became Mrs. Malviny Hodge.

Persons familiar with her history used to remark upon the different appearances which this lady exhibited according as she was or was not in the married estate. As Miss Perkins and as the widow Simmons, she was neat in her person and cheerful in her spirits to a degree that might be called quite gay; whereas, in the married relation she was often spoken of as negligent both in her dress and her housekeeping, and was generally regarded as being hard to please, especially by him whose business it was and whose pleasure it ought to have been to please her the most. Mr. Daniel Hodge had frequently noticed her with her first husband, and apparently had not seen very much to admire. The truth was, he had rather pitied Simmons,

or thought he had. But when, about three or four months after the latter's death, he happened to meet his widow, he noted such remarkable changes that he concluded he must have grossly misjudged her. A nearer acquaintance, in which she grew more and more affable, sprightly and generally taking in her ways, tended to raise a suspicion in his mind that, so far as his previous judgment of her was concerned, it was about as good as if during all that time he had been a fool. Mrs. Malviny Simmons had a way of arranging a white cape around her neck and shoulders, which, with her black frock, had a fine effect upon Mr. Hodge. This is a great art. I have noticed it all my life; and, old man as I am, even now I sometimes feel that I am not insensible to the charm of such a contrast in dressing among women, who, having been in great affliction for losses, have grown to indulge some desire to repair them in ways that are innocent.

This new appreciation of Mrs. Simmons increased with a rapidity that astonished Mr. Hodge; the more because he had frequently said that, if he ever should marry, it certainly would not be to a widow. But we all know what such talk as that amounts to. In the case of Mr. Hodge, it was not long before he began to consider with himself whether the best thing he could do for himself might not be to hint his admiration of that white cape and black frock in such a way as might lead to other conversation after awhile; for he had a house of his own, a hundred acres of land, and three or four negroes; and he was about thirty years old. I say he began to consider; he had not fully made up his mind. True, he needed a housekeeper. But he remembered that the housekeeping at Simmons's in his lifetime was not as it ought to have been. His memory on this point, however, became less and less distinct; and, when he thought upon it at all, he was getting into the habit of lay-

ing all the blame upon Simmons. To be sure, Simmons was in his grave, and it wouldn't look right to *talk* much about his defects, either of character or general domestic management. Mr. Hodge was a prudent man about such matters generally, and always wished to do as he would be done by. But he could but reflect that Simmons, though a good-enough fellow in his way, was not only rather a poor manager, but not the sort of a man to inspire a woman, especially such a one as Mrs. Malviny Simmons now evidently appeared to be, to exert her full powers, whether in housekeeping or anything else. In thinking upon the case, Mr. Hodge believed that justice should be done to the living as well as the dead, and that in the married life much depended upon the man. This view of the case gradually grew to be very satisfactory, and even right sweet to take. Not that he would think of doing injustice to Simmons, even in his grave; but facts were facts, and justice was justice, and it was now certainly too late to think about altering the former in the case of Simmons. So poor Simmons had to lie where he was, and be held to responsibilities that probably he had not anticipated.

Mr. Hodge began to consider. He felt that there was no harm in merely speculating upon such things. He knew himself to be prudent, and generally accurate in his judgments. But it was his boast, and always had been, that whenever he was convinced that he was wrong he would give it up like a man. This had actually occurred; not very often, it is true, but sometimes; and he had given it up in such a way as to confirm him more and more in the assurance that he was a person who, though little liable to delusion, was remarkably free from prejudice and obstinacy. Probably the most notable instance of such freedom that his life had hitherto afforded was the readiness with which he gave up the erroneous opinions he had previously

formed of Mrs. Malviny Simmons, and put the blame of what seemed her shortcomings where it belonged.

He was thus considering the possibility of what he might propose to do some of these days, when Mrs. Simmons might reasonably be expected, young as she was, to be taking other views of life besides those which contemplated merely the past. He knew that there was plenty of time for the exercise of mature deliberation. But somehow it happened that he began to meet the lady much more frequently than heretofore. Mr. Simmons having left his wife in very limited circumstances, she resided alternately with one and another of her own and his relations. These people, though kind, yet seemed all to be more than willing that Mr. Hodge should have the benefit of any amount of her society. The consequence was that, having such opportunities, he was enabled the sooner to bring all his thoughts to a head; not that he contemplated immediate action, but was becoming more and more fond of musing upon possibilities. But one day he had looked upon the white cape and the black frock until he was led to express himself in terms that implied admiration. It was intended merely as a hint of what might come some of these days. One word brought on another. It would be impossible to describe how Mrs. Malviny Simmons looked and how she talked. Mr. Hodge was not a man of many words, and it gratified him when she assisted and accelerated his thoughts, and even almost put into his mouth the very words which, though not intending such a thing just then, he had been considering that he might employ some of these days. Things went on with such rapidity that, before Mr. Hodge knew what he was about, he had the cape in his arms, and was assured that it and the person it belonged to were his now and forever, "yea, if it might be for a thousand year."

Surely, thought Mr. Hodge, no man since the days of Adam in the garden had ever made so tremendous an impression upon a woman. He had not dreamed that such as that was in him. However, we don't know ourselves, he reflected; and there *is* a difference in men just as in everything else.

One week from that day Mr. Hodge succeeded to Mr. Simmons, and Mrs. Malviny went to keep house for Mr. Hodge. There was little in the married life of Mr. and Mrs. Hodge that would be very interesting to relate. I before intimated that the lady was most interesting in those seasons when she was unmarried. The beginning was splendid, but the splendor was evanescent. Mr. Hodge was surprised to notice how soon his wife relapsed into the old ways and old looks. He never should have expected to see that woman down at the heels. But the laying aside the black frock and putting on colors seemed to have had a depressing influence upon her tastes. As for the housekeeping, Mr. Hodge had to admit to himself that plain as things were when old Aunt Dilcy, his negro woman, attended to them, they were not as well ordered now. Then he found that, in spite of his conscious superiority to her former husband, he had apparently no greater success in his efforts to please. At this he gradually began to feel somewhat disgusted. He never had thought much about Simmons in his lifetime; now his mind would frequently revert to him, and he began to suspect that Simmons was a cleverer man than he had credit for. It seemed strange and somewhat pitiful generally that he should have died so young.

But he knew as well as anybody that matters could not be altered now, and he determined to do the best he could. He worked away at his farm, and in spite of difficulties made and laid up a little something every year.

No children were born of the marriage; but he did not complain. They had been married several years when, the parents of Susan Temple having died and left her with nothing, the relatives generally thought that Mr. Hodge, who was as near akin to her as any, and who had no children of his own, ought to give her a home. Susan was just grown up, and, though plain, was a very industrious girl. Mr. Hodge suggested to his wife that as the business of housekeeping seemed rather troublesome they might take Susan for that business, giving her board and clothes as compensation. At first Mrs. Hodge came out violently against it. Such, however, had long been her habit of treating all new propositions of her husband. He was, therefore, not surprised; and indeed was not seriously disappointed, as he was acting mostly for the purpose of satisfying his conscience regarding his orphaned relative. He said nothing more upon the subject then; indeed, he had been ever a man of but few words, and since his marriage he had grown more so. Words, he found, were not always the things to employ when he wanted her to do even necessary offices. After all his previous disclaimers to that end, he was suspected by more persons than one of having some obstinacy; and it seemed to grow with the lapse of time. He kept his pocketbook in his pocket, and his own fingers opened and shut it. Mrs. Hodge often maintained to his face that he was hard-headed as a mule and too stingy to live. He appeared to her most obstinate when she would labor in vain to lead him into discussions upon the justice of her causes of complaint against him generally. One day she did a thing which Mr. Hodge had been once as far from foreseeing as any man who ever married another's widow. Mr. Simmons, with all his imperfections, was a man who would sometimes allow to his wife the satisfaction of leading him into a little domestic quarrel, and to make

it interesting would give, or try to give, back as good as he got, so to speak.

However, to return to Mrs. Hodge. One day, when Mr. Hodge was about finishing his dinner, his wife, who had finished hers some time before, having but a poor appetite on that occasion, was complaining in general terms of her own hard lot. He ate away and said nothing. Once he did look up toward her as he reached his hand to break another piece of bread; and as he contemplated his wife's head for a moment, he thought to himself if she would give it a good combing the probability was that she would feel better. But he said nothing. The lady did expect from his looks that he was going for one time to join in the striving which had hitherto been altogether on one side. Finding herself disappointed, she brought forth a sigh quite audible, and evidently hinted a more tender regret for the late Mr. Simmons than she had exhibited even in the first period of her affliction for his loss. She did not exactly *name* Mr. Simmons, but she spoke of what a blessing it was for people to have people to love 'em and be good to 'em; and that some people *used* to have 'em, but they was dead and goned now; and people didn't have 'em in these days—no, not even to talk to 'em. And then she gently declined her head, gave a melancholy sniff with her nose, and looked into her plate as if it were a grave and she were hopelessly endeavoring to hold conversation with its occupant. Mr. Hodge was on his last mouthful. He stopped chewing for a moment and looked at his wife; then he gave a swallow, and thus answered:

“Oh! you speakin' about Simmons. Yes, Simmons war a right good feller; pity he died so young. Ef Simmons had not a died so young, some people might a been better off.”

And then he rose, put on his hat, and walked to Dukes-

borough and back. When he returned, Mrs. Hodge seemed in better humor than she had been for weeks and weeks.

CHAPTER V.

ON the night immediately succeeding this little misunderstanding, Mr. and Mrs. Hodge happened to meet upon a subject on which they agreed. It would be difficult to say in whose mind the idea first occurred of having a little bit of a store in one of the little shed-rooms. It was so convenient, in the first place. Their house was within only a few steps of the road, on the top of the first hill just this side of the creek; and the little shed-rooms were in front, with little windows opening toward the road. On the night aforesaid Mr. Hodge and his wife seemed disposed to be chatty. Mr. Hodge was gratified that the allusions to his predecessor had so soothing an effect. They talked awhile about their having no children, and both agreed that it seemed to be the lot of some families not to have them. And then it occurred to them that it was a pity that the two little shed-rooms could not be put to some use. True, they had been keeping a signboard which promised "Entertainment for man and horse"; but the stand was too near Dukesborough. Besides, Mrs. Hodge had sometimes had her feelings hurt by occasional side-remarks of what few guests they did have, about the height of the charge, which, though reasonable enough generally speaking, seemed exorbitant when compared with the supper, the bed, and the breakfast.

On the night aforesaid, however, it seemed a fortunate accident that the conversation gradually drifted about Dukesborough, its rapid growth, and the probability that in

time it would grow to be an important place. Already people were coming to the stores from six or seven miles around; and it was believed that the storekeepers, especially Bland & Jones, were making great profits. Threats had been made that unless they would fall in their charges they might hear of opposition. While talking together upon these things, Mr. and Mrs. Hodge seemed almost simultaneously to think that it might be well, in all the circumstances, to convert one of the little shed-rooms into a little store. The more they turned this idea over, the more it seemed good, especially to Mrs. Hodge. She was for going into it immediately. Mr. Hodge thought he wanted a little more time for reflection. He did have a few hundred dollars which he had accumulated by honest work and good economy; but he was without mercantile experience, and people had told him that merchants sometimes break like other people. Besides, he should not think it prudent to neglect his farm, and that required most of his attention. But Mrs. Hodge suggested that she could attend to the store her own self. She could do it, she knew she could. He could go on and attend to the farm, and spend what time he could spare from that in the store. Mrs. Hodge reasoned that her husband had sometimes complained that she invested too heavily even in the purchase of necessary articles; and here was an opportunity of getting all such things at home and not have to pay out one cent for them, except, of course, what little was paid out for them in the beginning, and that would be lost sight of in the general profits of the concern.

Mr. Hodge reflected.

What about the housekeeping?

Mrs. Hodge in her turn reflected.

Where was Susan Temple?

There now! If ever one question was well answered by

propounding another, it was in this case. Mr. Hodge admitted this to himself. It was a matter he had himself once proposed. The truth was, the house ought to be kept by somebody; and Susan, though a plain girl, was known to be neat, orderly, and industrious. Mr. Hodge thought to himself, that, as his wife's talent did not seem to be in housekeeping, it might not be wrong to let it make a small effort in the mercantile line. And so they agreed.

This was all right. Susan was so thankful for a home that she did her best, and any sensible and honest person would have been obliged to see and admit that the housekeeping improved. Everything was kept clean and nice. Mrs. Hodge, however, thought that if she gave Susan too much credit for this change it might spoil her. It was the way with all such people, she thought. So she took all the credit to herself, and would occasionally remind Susan of what would have become of her if they had not taken her and put clothes upon her back. Susan ought to be very thankful, more so than she seemed to be, in fact, that she had not been left to the cold charities of an unfeeling world. To make things under this head perfectly safe, she sometimes insisted that Susan ought to be ashamed of herself for not doing more than she did, considering what was done for her. Susan, doing everything as it was, would seem to look about as if to find something else to do. Not being able to find it, she would get very much confused, and seem to conclude that she must be a very incompetent person.

But the store. Mr. Hodge went all the way to Augusta. Mrs. Hodge would have liked to go too; but it was thought not necessary for both to go. So Mr. Hodge went alone, and laid in his stock. A hundred dollars well laid out would buy something in those times. Such a sum goes a precious little way these days. He brought home with him

some pieces of calico and skeins of silk, a few hats, a smart box of shoes, nails, a barrel of molasses, and one of sugar; some coffee in a keg, two or three jars of candy, mostly peppermint; some papers of cinnamon, a reasonable number of red pocket-handkerchiefs, any quantity of hooks-and-eyes, buttons, pins, needles, and gimlets; a good supply of tobacco and snuff, and one side-saddle. Mrs. Hodge had urged and rather insisted upon the last article. Mr. Hodge hesitated, and seemed to think it not a perfectly safe investment; but he yielded. In addition to this stock Susan made ginger-cakes and spruce-beer. These sat on a shelf outside the window, except in rainy weather. Mr. Bill Williams once brought me one of these cakes, and I thought it was as good as I ever ate.

Mr. Hodge, being a man somewhat adroit in the use of tools, made his own counter and desk and shelves. It was a great time, when the goods arrived. It was after dark, but there was no going to bed until those goods were opened and set in their places. And oh, how particular they were in handling! Susan must positively be more partic'lar, and quit bein' so keerless, because them things cost money. Susan got to be so particular that she even handled the tobacco-box and the coffee-keg as if they were all cut-glass containing most costly liquors. When she took the pieces of calico one by one into her hands and put them on the shelves, you would have thought every one was a very young baby that she was lifting from the cradle and laying upon its mother's breast. When the box of shoes was opened, Susan declared that they actilly *smelt* sweet, that they smelt the sweetest of anything in that sto' exceptin' o' the cinnamon. Mrs. Hodge's feelings were too deep to allow very many words; but she let Susan go on. Much as Mrs. Hodge admired everything, she was most deeply affected by the side-saddle. The seat had a heart quilted

into it of red stuff. This was so becoming that Mrs. Hodge declared, and made Susan admit, that it was the loveliest picter that ever was loed and beholded. She said that that picter wer the picter of her own heart, and which it had been on a new side-saddle for she didn't know how long. But still—Mrs. Hodge didn't say any more about it then. She merely kept caressing the heart softly with her hand until Mr. Hodge placed it on a small board-horse which he had made for the purpose, and set it in a corner.

When all was finished it was the unanimous opinion that nobody could have had any reason to expect that that shed-room could have been made to look like it did then. If that store wasn't carefully locked and bolted that night! Susan, who lodged in the other shed-room, lay awake for hours; but, as for her part, she owned it was mostly about the shoes and the cinnamon.

There was some talk about the store in the neighborhood for awhile. Some were for it and some against it. The Dukesborough merchants were all of the latter party. Mr. Bland asked, if Hodge wanted to set up in opposition, why didn't he come into town like a man? It didn't look fair to be having a store away out there and be a-farming at the same time. But when he heard what the stock consisted in, he pretended to laugh, and said that it would never come to anything. Still, some people said that Mr. Bland fell a little in tobacco and shoes.

A person in going along the road, and looking upon this store, might have imagined that, apart from the cakes and spruce-beer, it had been established mainly for the purpose of supplying country people with such little things as they would be likely to forget while in town. Indeed, after the novelty had passed away, it gradually relapsed into such a state of things. It was seldom that a customer stopped while on his way into town. Mrs. Hodge's hopes and reli-

ance were mainly on the outward-bound. When any of these would call, she was wont to meet them with an expression of countenance which seemed to ask, "Well, what is it that you have forgotten to-day?" Like other merchants, Mrs. Hodge, who gradually became the principal person in the concern, studied the chances and possibilities of trade; and her husband, at her suggestion, laid in his stock in the fall principally of such articles as a person might be expected to overlook while making purchases of other more important things. He added largely to his stock of pins, and went very extensively upon combs, buttons, and flax thread.

The side-saddle seemed hard to get off. But Mrs. Hodge at the very start, on learning the cost, had declared that it was entirely too cheap; she asked for the pricing of that herself, and she thought she was warranted in putting it at a high figure. She had offers for it. The heart in the seat had attracted several ladies, and once it was within a half-dollar of going. But Mrs. Hodge, so far from falling, intimated an intention, upon reflection, of rising, and that drove the customer away.

Upon the whole, things went on right well. Mrs. Hodge certainly improved in spirits; but of course she never could attain to that state of contentment which her husband could have wished, and which at first he did fondly anticipate. In the matter of dressing herself she looked up a little, and there was about her person not unfrequently the odor of mingled cinnamon and peppermint. And it must be remarked that the displeasure that it seemed inevitable for her to indulge at intervals was now divided between Mr. Hodge and Susan Temple, with the greater share to the latter. Susan did not reflect nigh as often as she ought what it was to her to have a home and clothes upon her back. The girl knew she ought to do it,

and was everlastingly trying to do it, and filled herself with reproaches for her own ingratitude.

In one of his trips to Augusta Mr. Hodge brought back with him Mr. Lively. He had made his acquaintance some time before, and had mentioned the fact that the gentleman had talked about coming to take board with them, and even went so far as to propose, in such an event, to pay as much as five dollars a month. This sounded well. Mrs. Hodge had an idea that the having a boarder might make the house come to be regarded more as a public place; so she said that, as for herself, she was willing. Mr. Lively came. When he did come, she thought he was certainly the queerest person that she had ever seen. She looked at his hair and then at his nose and legs, and then at his hair again, from which he never removed his hat, not even at meals. But he was a boarder, she knew, and was entitled to privileges. She tried to pick him; but Mr. Lively was a man of some experience and would not be picked. Being satisfied that it was best for him to know at once that she was a person of consideration, she berated Susan the very first night of his arrival for her carelessness and general worthlessness.

Messrs. Hodge and Lively got along together very well. The latter, like the former, was a man of few words; and as time lapsed they seemed to have something of a friendship for each other. On the contrary, Mrs. Hodge had less and less regard for her boarder according as he and her husband seemed to like each other the more, and she was often heard to say that in her opinion there was nothing in Mr. Lively. Whatever estimate Mr. Lively placed upon her, he never told to anybody; but he went along and acted as if Mrs. Hodge and whatever might be her thoughts about him were not at all in his way. As time passed, Mr. Hodge would often sit with Mr. Lively and

talk with him with some freedom of his business and other matters. Small as his business was comparatively, he was careful of his papers, and always kept them locked up in his desk.

On one of his return trips from Augusta, Mr. Hodge spent a little more time than usual at his desk in looking over his papers and one thing and another; but when he came out he seemed to be very well satisfied. The next day he was taken sick. Little was thought of it at first; but in a day or two he took on a fever, which looked as if his time was coming. He himself did not seem to be aware of the state of the case until it was too late to leave any special directions about anything. At the last he did rouse himself a little, looked very hard at Mr. Lively, and muttered a few unintelligible words about "my desk," and Mr. Lively's being "mighty particular," and such things. But at last he had to give it up, and then Mr. Hodge carried his succession of Mr. Simmons to extremes.

CHAPTER VI.

So now here was Mrs. Malviny a widow for the second time. The deceased was mourned becomingly by all the household. Even Mr. Lively was seen to brush away a tear or two at the funeral; but Mrs. Hodge and Susan did most of the actual crying, and they cried heartily. Both felt that Mr. Hodge's continued absence from that house was obliged to make a difference.

The question now was, What must be done? Mr. Lively seemed to think that Mr. Hodge must have left a will, so he and Mrs. Hodge in a day or two went together and looked carefully over the papers; and, although Mr.

Lively followed Mr. Hodge's last confused directions, nothing could be found. Mrs. Hodge had nothing to do but to heir the property; and, as there were no debts, it was considered not worth while to get out letters of administration. Seeing that she was obliged to take the responsibility of all this business, she submitted, and was very meek, remarking that now she was nothing but a lone woman in the world, the wide, wide world, property was no great things in her mind. But she thought she could be kind to Susan Temple. Of course, Susan was nothing to her, and it was an expense to feed her and put clothes on her back; still, she might stay there on the same terms as before. People should never say that she had the heart to turn off a poor orphan on the cold charities of the world. Susan was very thankful, perfectly overcome with gratitude, indeed, and continued to do everything; and, like Alexander the Great, would almost weep that there was nothing more to do. As for Mr. Lively, he somehow had got used to the place and didn't feel like going away at his time of life to seek a new home. Mrs. Hodge also disliked the idea of turning away one that had been so good a friend of the family; and indeed, with all the business upon her hands, it did look like that one who was nobody but a poor lone woman in the world should have some friend near enough to go to sometimes for advice, instead of being everlastingly running to a lawyer, and they a-charging all that a poor lone woman could make. Mr. Lively seemed gratified, and thus matters settled down; but all seemed to miss poor Mr. Hodge.

And now many years had elapsed since Mrs. Hodge had been a widow before. She reflected upon it, and was thankful that she could bear up under this repeated infliction as well as she did, and that she was as strong and active as any person who was a mere lone woman in the world

could be expected to be. The amount of business now upon her hands would require as much strength and activity as could be commanded. Her looking-glass had somehow got broken some time since, all but one little piece in the corner of the frame. Mrs. Hodge gave what was left to Susan, remarking that as for herself she had very little use for such things. Some time afterward, however, she reflected that even the lonely and desolate should go neatly, and that it always did require more pains to dress in black. Even Susan admitted this to be true, and she fully justified her Aunt Malviny in the purchase of a new looking-glass and a new frock.

Weeks passed, and then some months. Mrs. Hodge's strength and activity grew so that she began to feel as if they might be as good as ever. Mr. Bill Williams and others, including Mr. Lively, had heard her say that, although she knew it must be so, yet she did not feel any older than she did when she married Mr. Hodge. It was plain to see that she was not willing to be considered one day older than she really was; and that if she had to grow old she intended to do so by degrees. Her face certainly looked somewhat thinner than it did in those former years; but in a short time even it began to participate in the general recovery, and to have a peachiness which occasionally extended over the whole jaw. Remarks *had* been made about that peachiness, the various directions it took, and the varying amount of surface it overspread at different times. She heard of some of these remarks once; they made her very mad, and she said that the color of her cheeks was nobody else's business.

The rest of her was satisfactory. She had always been a very good figure of a woman, and even now, from her neck down, she was apparently round as a butter-ball. And how spry she was in her walk! I do think that when

she was walking rapidly, at her usual gait, and had to pass any unpleasant obstruction, she could lift her skirts as adroitly as any lady I ever knew. And then she rode a horse remarkably well, for now she had laid aside the old side-saddle and took the one with the heart in the seat.

This restoration of her youth seemed to do away with the melancholy in which her married life had been too prone to indulge. She even became again gay. I do not mean wild; there was not a particle of what might be called wildness about Mrs. Hodge. But apparently she had made up her mind not to yield herself up to useless regrets for what could not be helped, to do the best she could as long as she was in the world, and to stay in it as long as she could. When persons come to these conclusions they can afford to be cheerful, and sometimes even a little gay. She had lost one husband. Many a woman does the same and then gives up; and, although some of them reconsider and take back, yet others give up for good. Mrs. Hodge had put herself right on this point in the beginning. She refused to give up at Mr. Simmons's departure; and then, when another man who was at least as good, and even better, presented himself, she had nothing to take back, and we saw how it all ended. People said, as they always do, that it was heartless; but this gave her no concern. And, if it had, there was Mr. Hodge to help her to bear it. This experience was of value to her in this second bereavement. The course she had pursued in that first extremity was so judicious and turned out so well, that the fact is, she began to ask herself what she might do provided another person of the opposite sex should make a remark similar to that which Mr. Hodge had made, and which had so momentous consequences.

But now, here was the difference. Men are more slow to make remarks of that sort to ladies of forty or there-

about who have already had two husbands, than to those of five-and-twenty who have had but one. Mrs. Hodge noticed this, and it made the peachiness of her cheeks increase at times to such a degree that it extended up to her very eyes. Yet the more she thought upon the probability that another person might succeed to the position which Mr. Simmons first, and Mr. Hodge afterward, had vacated, the more she believed that an extraordinary amount of happiness might result in such case to all parties. She thought to herself that she had experience, and with sensible persons that was worth at least as much as youth.

I have often heard it remarked, and indeed my own observation, I rather think, affirms, that when a lady who has been married, especially one who has been married more than once, is making up her mind to do so again, she makes it up with some rapidity. Knowing that she did not have as much time as before, she began to cast about, and her ears were open to pertinent remarks which any single gentleman might be disposed to make. But both widowers and bachelors were scarce; and what few there were either were young or had their thoughts upon younger ladies, or possibly did not understand the nature of Mrs. Hodge's feelings.

At first she had not thought much about Mr. Lively. True, he stayed there and looked somewhat after out-door business, and even advised occasionally about the store. For Mrs. Hodge still thought it best to keep up the latter, though upon a scale somewhat more limited than before; and, in the multitude of the business matters now devolved upon her, she could not give her undivided attention as before to this single one. Susan Temple, therefore, who had been anxious, as we have seen, to find additional work, looked after the store, and Mr. Lively gave a helping hand sometimes. Useful as he was, he had not been thought of

at first except as a mere boarder and friend of the family. Besides his general want of attractiveness, Mrs. Hodge knew too much about him. I am satisfied that a too long and intimate acquaintance between two persons of opposite sexes is not favorable to marriage connections. You seldom know a girl to marry her next-door neighbor's son. A notable instance, I admit, was that of Pyramus and Thisbe. They did make the effort to marry each other, and probably would have succeeded but for a very hasty and fatally erroneous conclusion of the gentleman touching a matter of fact. But even taking this to be a true history and not a mere fable, I have been inclined frequently, while contemplating this peculiar case, to maintain that the strong attachment of these young persons to each other, residing as they did in contiguous houses, was owing mainly to the fact that their respective families assiduously kept them apart, and thus they were able to court each other only through a hole in the dividing wall. But such cases are very uncommon, even in extraordinary circumstances. My opinion is that, as a general thing, persons who desire to marry well, and have no great things to go upon (if I may be allowed to use such an expression), do best by striking out at some distance from home.

I repeat that, besides his general want of attractiveness, Mrs. Hodge knew too much about Mr. Lively to be capable of entertaining a very hasty and violent thought of raising him to the succession of the couple of gentlemen who had gone before. For two long years and more they had lived in the same house, and long before this period Mrs. Hodge had contended that she already knew all about Mr. Lively that was worth knowing. Except in the matter of his hair, it would have been difficult to say in what both she and Mr. Lively had failed to find each other out in all this time. We never knew much of his opinion re-

specting her, but we know that hers respecting him fell far short of extreme admiration.

But time was moving on, and, in spite of Mrs. Hodge's own youthful gayety and activity, she had learned to give up some of that ardent appreciation which, in her younger days, she had set upon mere external appearances. It had come to be generally understood that Mr. Lively had property somewhere or other to the amount of several thousand dollars. He was neither young nor handsome. But Mrs. Hodge reasoned with herself. She remembered that she had had already two young and rather good-looking husbands; and even if she had been younger herself, she could not be expected to go on at this rate and marry an unlimited number of such men. So, to be plain with herself, she thought she ought to be satisfied with what she had already enjoyed of these blessings; and, to be yet plainer, she thought she might go further and fare worse. It has always been a matter of remark with me what an amount of prudence some women can exert under the cover of unlimited frivolity. But I have no idea of pursuing this thought any further now.

Such was the state of things at the period when I first introduced Mr. Lively to the reader. Mr. Bill Williams had noticed, as he thought, that his cousin Malviny was beginning to look up to him.

Nobody knew Mr. Lively's views, either of Mrs. Hodge or of the general subject of marriage. He had never been heard to say whether he would or would not marry in certain or in any contingencies. But, if he intended ever to marry, it was high time he was thinking about making arrangements. This was all that people had to say about it. When Mrs. Hodge began to collect her scattered thoughts, they converged upon him with the strength and rapidity usual in such cases. She had no doubt that this

would be an easy conquest. Indeed, her shrewd mind had guessed that this was what Mr. Lively had been staying there for all this while, since the death of Mr. Hodge. But she charged him in her mind with being rather slow to take a hint, after having several times pointedly driven Susan out of the room, and with her looks invited him to tell what she knew must be on his mind. At first he seemed slow to notice all this, and other things. A little bit of a something nice would be sitting by his plate every morning. This was for the most part some small fish, a string of which Mrs. Hodge would frequently purchase from a negro or poor white boy who had caught them the night before from the creek. These would usually just be enough for Mr. Lively. Mrs. Hodge and Susan would never accept of any, and the former thought that Mr. Lively ought not to have misunderstood the glance and the smile with which she would decline. Sometimes there would be also beside his plate a little sprig of something or other, mostly cedar. But he would forget to take it up and fix it in his buttonhole. Women do not like for such favors and attentions to pass unregarded. Mrs. Hodge began to be vexed, and speak sharply to Mr. Lively and Susan alternately about her opinions of both. She would say to Mr. Lively that in her opinion Susan was the most good-for-nothing hussy that anybody was ever troubled with; and she told Susan more than once that Jonas Lively was the blindest old fool that ever lived, and that he didn't have sense enough to ask for what everybody could see that he wanted.

Mr. Lively, never or seldom having been the object of any woman's pursuit, was slow to understand Mrs. Hodge. The truth was, he had become warmly attached to the place, and he was very anxious to stay there and make it his home. At first he did not clearly see Mrs. Hodge's

plans. But there are some things which even the dullest understandings may be forced to take in after awhile. By degrees he began to open his eyes, to look around him, and to appear to be pleased. The single attachment of such a woman as Mrs. Malviny Hodge ought not to be a thing that could be rudely cast aside by such a man as Jonas Lively. When, therefore, she began to press matters a little, he showed very plainly that he was *not* a fool. And she did begin to press matters. She had even gone to expense. She sat down one night and counted up what she had spent upon him in strings of fish and other luxuries, and found that it amounted to eight dollars and something. Extravagant as this was, she determined to go further, especially as her instincts had taught her that there were at last some signs of intelligence and reciprocity. Mr. Lively had lately gone upon his yearly trip to Augusta, and had returned earlier than usual with some improvement in his dress. This was an excellent sign. Besides, he was growing more communicative with his hostess, and occasionally had a kind word even for Susan. Things began to look well generally, and as if that was one undivided family, or ought to be and would be.

CHAPTER VII.

THE cordial relations in the household became more decided after a little incident that occurred one morning before breakfast. Mrs. Hodge had not yet risen from her couch; she had always contended that too early rising was not good for the complexion. Susan, who had other things to think about besides complexion, always rose betimes and went to her work. On this morning, at about

sunrise, she was sweeping the store and readjusting things there generally. Susan was an inveterate sweeper; she had made a little broom of turkey-quills, and was brushing out the desk with it. One of the quills, being a little sharpened at the end by constant use, had intruded itself into a crack and forced out the corner of a paper which had been lodged there. She drew the whole out, and seeing that it was one of Mr. Lively's letters, as it was addressed to him, at once handed it to that gentleman, who happened to be standing by the window outside and had just remarked what a fine morning it was. Mr. Lively took the letter, wondering how he could have been so careless as to leave it there. He opened it, looked at the beginning for a moment, and then at the end; then remarking that it was all right, and that he was much obliged to Susan, he went to his office. At breakfast Mr. Lively said that he believed he would ride to the court-house that day, as he had not been there in some time, but that he would surely return at night. Mrs. Hodge merely remarked that she *had* given orders for a chicken-pie for dinner; but to-morrow would do as well, she supposed. Oh yes, certainly; or Mrs. Hodge and Susan might have it all to themselves. Oh no, no! they could all have it to-morrow.

That night, when he returned and came to supper, there was a sight for the eyes of a man who had ridden twenty miles and gone without his dinner, except a couple of biscuits which Mrs. Hodge had put with her own hands into his coat-pocket in the morning. On that supper-table were not only fried eggs, but two sorts of fish, perch and horny-heads. Mr. Lively had an appetite, and these dishes looked and smelt exactly right. Uncle Moses, Aunt Dilcy's husband, had been made to quit his work for the afternoon for the express purpose of having those fish for supper. Mrs. Hodge looked at them and at Mr. Lively.

She said nothing, but there was expression in her countenance.

“Ah, indeed?” inquired Mr. Lively, as he took his seat.

“Yes, indeed,” answered Mrs. Hodge.

Even Susan looked gratified; she had fried them every one. In spite of his intense satisfaction, Mr. Lively was a little pained that the ladies should compel him to eat more than as an honest man he considered his proper share. He insisted and insisted, not only that Mrs. Hodge, but that Susan, should take some; and at last he declared that, if they didn't, he would stop eating himself. He maintained that people oughtn't to try to kill a person that liked them as well as he did the present company, by trying to make him eat himself to death, and that, as for his part, he wasn't going to do it, because he felt more like living on in this little world now than he had ever done. Being thus pressed, Mrs. Hodge compromised. She agreed that she would take an egg and a horny-head, or maybe two horny-heads; but she declared that she wouldn't tech a perch: they was for Mr. Lively, and him alone. Susan had to come in that far also; Mr. Lively insisted upon it. She tried to get off with one very small little bit of a horny-head; but it was no go. Mr. Lively maintained that there was enough perch for all, and he made them both come squarely up.

Oh, it was all so nice! Mr. Lively was quite chatty for him. His visit to the county town, the ride, and the supper had all enlivened him up smartly; but, after all, he didn't see that the county town had any very great advantage over Dukesborough. Dukesborough was coming along; there was no doubt about that. As for himself, he would rather live where he was living now than at the county town, or indeed any other place he knew of; he

hoped to end his days right where he was. It would have been too indelicate for Mr. Lively to look at Mrs. Hodge after these words, and so he looked at Susan. Both the ladies looked down; but it was all *so* pleasant.

By the time supper was over, as it had been delayed for Mr. Lively's return, it was getting to be his bedtime; but it didn't look right to be hurrying off after such a supper as that. Besides, of late he had been in the habit of lingering in the house a little longer of evenings than formerly—no great deal, but a little. On this occasion it might have been foreseen that he was not going to rush right away from that society.

"Well," said he, when he and Mrs. Hodge had taken their seats before the fireplace, and Susan was clearing away the things—"well, they *ware* fine! I pity them that don't live on any sort of watercourse. Fish air blessings, certain, even when they air small. Indeed, the little ones air about the best, I believe; because they air as a general thing always fried brown, and then a person don't have to be always stopping to pull out the bones. Those we had for supper ware fried *ex-zactly* right."

Mrs. Hodge was a woman who liked appreciation even in small things. "I'm glad you think so, Mr. Lively. I told Susan to be very particler about 'em, because I thought you loved to have 'em brown."

"Yes," said Mr. Lively, with some emphasis; "always when they air small and you don't have to stop to pull out the bones."

"Yes, you may well say *bones*," replied Mrs. Hodge—"fish-bones in particler. Fish-bones is troublesome, and even dangous sometimes. My grandfather had an aunt that got one in her throat outen one o' them big fish they used to have in them times, and it come nigh of killin' of her at the first offstart; and it never did git out that anybody ever

heard of. And she used to have a heap of pains for forty years arfter, and she said she knowed it was that fish-bone, and that it run up and down all over her; and even when she was on her dyin' bed with the rheumatism, and I don't know how old she war then, she declared that it was nothin' but that fish-bone that was a-killin' of her."

"My! my! your grandfather's aunt!" exclaimed Mr. Lively, and he could not have looked more concerned if it had been his own grandfather's aunt, instead of Mrs. Hodge's, who had come to such a tragical end. But he reflected, perhaps, that for some time past that relative had been relieved of her sufferings, and then he looked toward the table where Susan was rapidly clearing away the things.

"Be in a hurry there, Susan," said Mrs. Hodge, in a mild but admonitory tone.

"Yes; fish and such-like's blessin's; but yit—" Mrs. Hodge couldn't quite make it out.

Susan hurried matters, I tell you.

"Oh yes, indeed!" suggested Mr. Lively.

"Yes," Mrs. Hodge admitted; "but still fishes and—livin' on watercourses, and—everything o' that kind's not the onliest things in this world."

"Oh no, indeed!" hastily replied Mr. Lively. "But still—I suppose, indeed I think—of course thair must be—and—" But at that moment he seemed too embarrassed to think of what else there was in the world.

"Yes, indeed." Mrs. Hodge, having thus recovered, could proceed a little further: "Fishes and such-like's blessin's, I know; I don't deny it. Of cose it is to them that loves 'em, and to them I s'pose it's very well to live on watercourses. Yit them and everything else is not all to *every* person."

"Oh no, no! by no means." He would not wish to be so understood.

“Not all,” continued Mrs. Hodge; “particler that a person might wish in a vain and unglorious world. No, fair be it to them that has loved and lost, and loved and lost again, and might love again once more, and that forever and eternally!”

Pen cannot describe the touching solemnity with which these words were uttered. Mr. Lively was extremely embarrassed. He had not intended to go very far that night; matters were so recent. He looked very much puzzled, and seemed to be trying to make out how an innocent remark about watercourses could have led them away so far into dry land.

“Susan,” he called out confusedly, and looked around. But Susan had cleared off everything and gone to bed.

Mrs. Hodge waited a moment to see if he intended to avail himself of the good opportunity of saying anything specially confidential; but he was too confused to get it out. So she thought she would venture a remark about the weather that might reassure him.

“It’s right cool these nights, Mr. Lively.”

This made him almost jump out of his chair. He had been remarking only a day before how warm it was for the season, and according to his feelings there had been no change since that time. He answered as well as he could.

“No, I don’t—yes—it’s right cool—that is, it’s *tolerable* cool. I suppose—that is, I expect it *will* be *quite* cool after awhile. A—yes—I think a good rain—and a pretty strong wind from the northwest now—would—ah, help—and ah—”

“Yes, indeed,” assisted Mrs. Hodge, “and it’s about time that people war getting ready for winter. Thar isn’t anything like people’s bein’ ready to keep theirselves warm and comfortable in the cold, cold winter.”

Mrs. Hodge shrugged her shoulders as if winter was

just at the door, and then she hugged herself up nice and tight.

“Yes, oh yes,” answered Mr. Lively, somewhat circularly; “we all don’t know. But still comforts—yes—of course—and especially in the winter-time.”

Mrs. Hodge looked down, her hands played with a corner of her pocket-handkerchief, and she thought that she blushed. Mr. Lively, concluding possibly that he had carried matters far enough for one evening, rose up and broke away. When he was gone she said to herself: “The slowest, the very slowest man-person I ever laid eyes on!”

Although matters did not advance with the rapidity that might have been expected, yet it was very plain to Mrs. Hodge, and even to Susan, that Mr. Lively saw and appreciated the whole situation. Mrs. Hodge knew that he was a steady and rather a slow man, but persistent in his purposes, and somewhat peculiar in his ways of compassing them. He could neither be driven nor too violently pulled. His growing cheerfulness and the new interest he took in everything about the premises showed that his expectation was to make that his permanent home. He even went so far one day as to say that the house needed repairs, and that it must have them before very long. Mrs. Hodge and Susan looked at each other, and both smiled. Susan, poor thing—for of late her aunt had grown to be somewhat more kind and considerate of her feelings—seemed to be gratified about as much as anybody. Thus it is that a new and very strong feeling toward one dear object disposes us sometimes to feel kindly toward all.

It was delightful to see how pleasant and affable Mr. Lively could be; slow as he might be, he was perfectly affable and pleasant. Mrs. Hodge would have been pleased to see him more ardent; but she knew that was not his way, and she tried to feel satisfied.

Matters grew more and more interesting every day. All parties were perfectly sociable. Improvements were constantly going on in Mr. Lively's dress. A great box came for him one day from Augusta, and the next Sunday Mr. Lively came out in a new cloth suit. Both Mrs. Hodge and Susan declared at breakfast that he looked ten years younger; that pleased him highly. It seemed that thoughts upon marriage had suggested to him the notion of going back to his youth and living his life over again. But how would you suppose Mrs. Hodge looked when, after breakfast, he brought in a long paper bundle, laid it on the table, and then took out and handed to her one of the finest black silk dress-patterns that had ever appeared in that neighborhood?—and not only so, but buttons, hooks-and-eyes, thread, lining, and binding! Nor had that kind-hearted man forgotten Susan, for he handed her at the same time a very nice white muslin pattern and one of calico. "Oh, my goodness gracious *me*, Mr. Lively!" exclaimed Mrs. Hodge; "I knew it; but—but—still I—I didn't—expect it." Susan was overpowered too, but she couldn't express herself like her Aunt Malviny. But she took the pattern, and blushed all the way round to the back of her neck. It was her first present.

And now those frocks had to be made up right away. Mr. Lively required that in the tone of a master, and he intimated that there were other things in that same box. Mr. Bill Williams was not so far wrong when he said that man was a book.

People now began to talk. Already Mr. Bill had hinted to several persons how his cousin Malviny appeared to look up to Mr. Lively. This started inquiry, and the new clothes and youthful looks convinced everybody that it was so. Mrs. Hodge began to be joked; and, without saying yea or nay, laughed and went on. Susan was ap-

proached; but Susan was a girl, she said, that didn't meddle with other people's business, and that if people wouldn't ask her any questions they wouldn't get any lies—a form of denial which in old times was considered almost as an affirmative. So here they had it.

Matters had come to this stand when Mr. Lively determined to make a decisive move.

CHAPTER VIII.

It so happened that my parents had made a visit, taking me with them, to my father's sister, who resided about a hundred miles distant. We were gone about a couple of weeks, and returned on a Saturday night. I wished that the next day might have been the one for the monthly meeting in Dukesborough, as I was anxious, among other reasons, to see Mr. Bill, and inquire about the parties on Rocky Creek. The next afternoon I was walking alone in the grove, and was surprised and pleased to see him coming up the road toward me.

"Why, Philip, my dear friend, you've got back, have you? I'm so glad to see you. Mammy said you was all to git back last night, and I thought I'd jes' walk over this evenin' like, and see if you had come shore enough. And here you are! In cose, you've heerd the news?"

"No; we got back last night, and have seen no person but the negroes. What news?"

"About the old man Jonis. You hain't heerd the news? Goodness gracious! I'm so glad. Come along, squire. I'm so glad."

He did look glad—even thankful. We went together to our tree.

“And you hain’t heerd it? Goodness gracious! I thought it would a been all over Georgy before this. Let’s set down here. Philip Pearch, I think I told you that Jonis Lively war a book. I won’t be certing; but I think I did.”

He certainly did.

“Is it all over?” I asked.

Mr. Bill smiled at the very idea that I should have expected to get it out of him in that style.

“Don’t you forgit what I told you, Philip. Philimini-rippip Pearch, let every part have a far chance to be interestin’ accordin’ to hits circumsances and hits warios pro-prowsoes.”

He *fixed* himself as comfortably as possible among the roots of the old tree, and thus began:

“Well, you know, squire, I told you that I seed that Cousin Malviny war lookin’ up mightly to-wards the old man; which I sposen I oughtn’t to say the old man now; but let that go. I seed that she war lookin’ up to him, and I knowed that she war thinkin’ about of changin’ of her conditions. I knowed that she had change ’em twice already befo’; and wimming, when they git in sich a habit, you needn’t try to alter ’em. When Cousin Malviny have made up her mind, she take right arfter Mr. Lively with a sharp stick, as it were, as the sayin’ is with us town people. Mr. Lively, it seem, war at first surprise, and he rather hold back. It appear like he war hard to understand Cousin Malviny. But the more he hold back, the more Cousin Malviny keep movin’ up. Hit were jes’ like one feller with two kings, in draffs, a-follerin’ of another feller with one king, and him a-retreatin’ to a double cornder. He see Cousin Malviny keep sprusen up; but he think he know sich things is common with widders, and he have no sich idee that she war sprusenin’ up so for him. But

byn-bye he begin to sprusen up hissself, and to get new clothes; and he war monstous free and friendly like with Cousin Malviny, and begin to talk about what ought to be done about fixin' up the house and things in ginilly; and it seem like he and Cousin Malviny war movin' up toler'ble close: and I hain't seed Cousin Malviny so spry and active sence she war a widder befo', and that war when I warn't nothin' but a leetle bit of a boy.

“Well, things kept a-goin' on, and everybody see that they war obleeged to come to a head, and that soon, because people knowed they was both old enough to know thar own mind; and both of 'em a-livin' in the same place, everything was so covenant like. Mr. Lively begin to spend his money free. He have bought new clothes for hissself, and he have bought a fine silk dress for Cousin Malviny, and he even went so far as to give a right nice muslin and a caliker to Susan. Stick a pin right thar, Pelomenenon, my friend. Oh, he's a book! The very day you all went away, a man come thar from Augusty and fotch a bran new gig, and two fine bedstids, and a bureau and cheers. And he never say a word to Cousin Malviny till they got thar, and he have all the furnitoor put in the office; and Cousin Malviny war delighted, and didn't ast him anything about it, because she know he war a man of mighty few words, and didn't do things like t'other people nohow, and didn't keer about people astin him too many questions—which *I* could a told her the same. When all this got thar, people know what was a-comin'; leastways they think they do. As for me, I war lookin' out every day for a invite.

“And now, lo and behold! The next mornin' I war woke up by daylight by wheels a-rattlin'; and our nigger boy, who war makin' me and Mr. Jones's fire, he went to the door, and he come back and he say that it war Mr.

Lively in a new gig, and he have a female in thar along with him, and which she have on a white dress and a veil, but which he know it war Cousin Malviny Hodge, and they went a-scootin' on. Thinks I to myself, and I says to Mr. Jones, what's the reason they can't git married at home like t'other people? And Mr. Jones he say that considerin' they war both toler'ble old people, they was in a monstous hurry from the way the wheels was a-rattlin'; and which they 'minded him of what old Mr. Wiggins said in his sarmints about rushin' along Gallio-like, a-keerin' for none o' these things. Shore enough, they goes on to Squire Whaley's at Beaver Dam, and thar they git married.

"I have just git up from breakfast at Spouter's, when, lo and behold! here come that gig a-drivin' up nigh and in and about as fast as it come by the sto'. I know that they was in for a frolic that day, and was bent on havin' of it, and I laughed when I see 'em a-comin'. When they got to the tavern-door, Mr. Lively he hilt up his horse, and it war nice to see how spry the old man hop outen the gig and hand out his wife. And she, why she farly bounce out, and bounce up and down two or three times arfter she lit! I says to myself, Cousin Malviny she think now she about sixteen year old. She have on her white veil till yit, and clean till she got in the house.

"'How do you do, Mr. Williams?' says he to me when I follered in; 'a very fine morning,' says Mr. Lively. Says I, 'How do you do, Mr. Lively; or mout I now say Cousin Jonis? A fine mornin' indeed, I sposen, to you, sir, and 'specially for sich pleasant bizness. I wishes you much joy, Mr. Lively, and also Cousin Malviny. But,' says I, 'I did spect a invite, and I wants to know what made you two run away in that kind o' style; for I calls it nothin' but runnin' away, and I can but ast myself who is they runnin' away from, and who can be runnin' after

'em? Why didn't you have the frolic at home, Cousin Malviny?' says I. And then she ansered me. I tell you, Philinipinimon, she ansered me!"

Mr. Bill paused, and seemed waiting for me to question him further. "Why didn't they marry at home, then?" I inquired.

"Ah, yes; well mout you ast that question, my friend of the sunny hour. When you ast that question yur talkin' sense. Well, I'll tell you. *One* reason why they didn't was becace they couldn't."

"They couldn't?"

"Couldn't. Onpossible. Jest as onpossible as if it had been a bresh-heap and it afire."

"But why not?"

"Becace Cousin Malviny wouldn't a been willin'." This was answered almost in a whisper.

"Well, that *is* funny."

"Fun to some people and death to the t'others."

"Why, I should think she would rather marry at home."

"*She*, I think you said, Philip?"

"Yes. *She*."

"Well, Philmon Pearch, will you jes' be kind and condescendin' enough to tell me who it is you're speakin' about at the present?"

"Why, Mrs. Hodge, of course!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Bill in apparently great surprise. "Oh yes; Cousin Malviny. Yes. Well, I sposen Cousin Malviny, reasonable speakin', she mout ruther git married at home, providin' in cose that people has got homes to git married at. I should ruther suppose that Cousin Malviny mout some ruther git married at home."

"Well, why didn't she do it then?"

"Do what?" Mr. Bill seemed to be growing very much abstracted.

"Get married," said I, quite distinctly.

"Git married! Ah yes. Git married. To who, Philip?"

"To Mr. Lively. What's the matter with you, Mr. Bill?"

Mr. Bill slowly elevated his eyes until they looked into the zenith, and then he lowered them again.

"Oh! Mr. Lively! Well, when Mr. Lively, *he* got married—you see, Philip, when Mr. Lively *he* got married, Cousin Malviny, *she warn't thar.*"

I could have put both my fists into Mr. Bill's mouth, and there still would have been room.

"What!" I exclaimed. "Didn't Mr. Lively marry Mrs. Hodge?"

Mr. Bill rose upon his feet, bent his head and knees forward, and roared:

"Na-ee-ii-o-oh-woh!"

"What! Then they didn't get married after all?"

"Yes, they did."

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Bill? Did Mr. Lively get married?"

"Certing he did. Ef any man ever got married, Mr. Jonis Lively got married that same mornin'."

"Who did he marry, then?"

"Se-oo-woo-woosen!"

"Who?"

"See-oo-woo-woosen, Tem-em-pem-pemple. Susan! Temple!"

"Susan Temple!"

"Yes, *sir*, it war Susan Temple; and I didn't have not the slightest consate of sich a thing tell she lift up her veil and I see her with my own blessed eyes spread out in all her mornin' glories, so to speak. Didn't I tell you, Phile-rimon Pearch, that that blessed an' ontimely old feller war a book? I'm not so very certing, but I ruther *think* I did."

“But what about Mrs. Hodge?”

“Ah now,” said Mr. Bill sadly, “now, Philip, you’r astin’ sensible questions, but monstous long ones. You must let me git over that first awful and ontimely skene befo’ I can anser sich long questions as them about poor Cousin Malviny. Them questions is civil questions, I know, and I shall anser ’em; but they’re mighty long questions, Philip, and a body got to have time. Ain’t he a book? Come now, Philippippimon, my honest friend, you astes me questions; and far play, I astes you one. Ain’t he a book?”

I could but admit that, if ever man was, it was Mr. Lively.

CHAPTER IX.

I HAD to let Mr. Bill expatiate at length upon his surprise and that of the public at this unexpected match before I could bring him to the finale. Mr. Bill admitted that he was at first not only embarrassed, but speechless. He never had expected to live to see the day when he should be in that condition before Susan Temple. But such it was. We never know what is before us. The longer a man lives to see anything, the more he finds that it is a solemn fact that he can’t tell what he may live to see. He had never been so minded of that as at the present; “leastways” on that blessed and “ontimely” morning.

“When I got so I could open my mouth,” said Mr. Bill, “in cose I feel like I ought to say somethin’, even ef it war but a few lines, and—ah—some perlimentary remarks—so to speak. So I goes up to Mr. Lively, I does, and I says to him: ‘Mr. Lively,’ says I, ‘you has took us all by surprise. And you more so, Susan,’ says I; ‘which I

sposen I ought to say Miss Lively, but which it *is* so unexpected that I begs you'll excuse me.' And then I ast 'em, I does, ef Cousin Malviny know of all sich carrin's on. Susan she looked skeerd. And I tell you, Philippimon, that gurl look right scrimptious with them fine things on and them shoes. But Mr. Lively war cool as a kercomber, or, what I mout ruther say, a summer evenin' like, and he said that he sposen not. Then he say that he had stop to git his breakfast, him and Susan, and that arfter breakfast they was goin' out thar; but also that he war first goin' to git Mr. Spouter to send Cousin Malviny word what had become of 'em, and that they was all safe, for he said he was afeerd his Aunt Malviny might be oneasy about 'em. And then I tells Mr. Lively that ef it suited him I would go myself. I tell you, Philip, I wanted to car' that news out thar. Mr. Lively he sorter smile, and say he would be much obleege ef I would. I hurries on to the sto', tells Mr. Jones what's up, and gits leave to go to Cousin Malviny; and I mighty nigh run all the way out thar.

"Cousin Malviny war standin' at the gate. When I git about twenty yards from her I stop to catch a little breath. Cousin Malviny holler out to me, 'Has you seen 'em, Cousin William?' I tried to be calm and cool, and I astes Cousin Malviny to be calm and cool. And I says, 'What's the matter, Cousin Malviny? Ar anything wrong out here? Seed who?' 'Susan,' says Cousin Malviny, 'and Mr. Lively, and Uncle Moses.' 'Uncle Moses!' says I; 'have Uncle Moses gone too?' 'Yes,' says Cousin Malviny; 'I sent Moses on John mule to look for 'em when I heerd they was gone.' At the very minnit here come old Uncle Moses a-trottin' on up on John mule; and I don't know which war the tireddest and solemest, John or Uncle Moses. Cousin Malviny astes Uncle Moses what news. 'Bad, missis,' said Uncle Moses, 'bad nuff. You

see, missis, when you tole me git on top o' John an' take arter 'em, I thought fust they was gwine todes Augusty, but, missis, time I got to the creek and t'other side whar the roads forks, I gits off, I does, offen John, and looks close to the ground to find track of 'em an' which road they tuck. Day, hit jes' begin to crack a leetle bit; and bless your soul, missis, they hadn't been thar. I rode on back tell I got to our cowpen right yonder; and shore nuff they has been done got down, let down the draw-bars, gone round the cowpen, let down the fence up yonder ontoo the road agin, back up yonder, and gone on todes Dukesborough. I tracks 'em in that field thar same as Towser and Loud arter a possum.'

"Cousin Malviny tell Uncle Moses to let possums alone and go on. 'Yes, missis. I war jest tellin' how dee let down our draw-bars an' went through behind the cowpen yonder, an' got ontoo the road agin an whipt on to town.' But, Philip, I couldn't stop for Uncle Moses to tell his tale; it war always astonishin' to me how long it do take a nigger to tell anything. So I tells Uncle Moses to go 'long and put up his mule, and feed him to boot, and hisself too, as I seed they was both of 'em hongry and tired, and that I knowed all about it and would tell Cousin Malviny myself. And so I did tell her the upshot of the whole business. And oh, my honest friend, ef you ever see a person rip an' rar, it war Cousin Malviny; she came nigh an' in an' about as nigh cussin' as she well could, not to say the very words. But which you know she ar a woming, and kin to me—leastways we claims kin; and you mustn't say anything about it. When I told her they was comin' back arfter a little, she declared on her soul that they shouldn't nary one of 'em put their foot into her house ef she could keep 'em from it; and it look like, she said, she ought to be mistiss of her own house. Well, I war natchelly sorry

for Cousin Malviny, an' I astes her ef Mr. Lively have promise to marry her. Cousin Malviny say that no, he didn't in ezactly them words; but he have bought furni-toor, an' talk in sich a way about the place an' everything on it as ef he spected to own it hisself; and she war spectin' him to cote her, and then she war goin' to think about it when he did ast: not that she keerd anything about him no way; and now sense he had done gone and made a fool o' hisself, and took up with that poor, good-for-nothin' Susan Temple, he mout go; and as for comin' into her house, she would set Towser and Loud arfter him first. Now I know that war all foolishness; and specially about them dogs, which I knowed they was bitin' dogs, and which I wouldn't a gone out o' that house that night I stayed thar ef I hadn't knew that Uncle Moses have went possum-huntin'; but which I told Cousin Malviny that them dogs warn't goin' to pester Mr. Lively nor Susan, becace they knowed 'em both as well as they knowed her. We was inside the gate, and we was jest a-startin' to go to the house when here drive up Mr. Lively and Susan. 'Here, Towser! here, Loud!' hollers out Cousin Malviny, 'here, here!' Says I to Cousin Malviny, 'Cousin Malviny, ef them dogs bites anybody here to-day, it's a-goin' to be me; and I hopes you will stop callin' of 'em.' But bless your soul, my friend Philipiminon, them dogs was round by the kitchen, and they heerd Cousin Malviny and they come a-tarin' and a-yellin'. As soon as they turned the corner o' the house, I seed they thought I was the person they was to git arfter. I jumps back, I does, and runs through the gate and shets it. 'Sick 'em, Towser! Sick 'em, my boys,' says Cousin Malviny—the foolishest that I think I ever see any sensible person ever do sense I war born; but Cousin Malviny, all the eyes she had war upon Mr. Lively, and he war a-gittin' out of the gig, cool

and calm, and he give Susan the reins to hold. 'Sick 'em, my boys!' kept hollerin' Cousin Malviny, outen all reason. Well, sir, lo and behold! while old Towser war at the gate a-rippin' and a-roarin' to git out, Loud he run down about thirty steps whar thar war a rail off the yard fence, and he lit over and he come a-chargin'. I says to myself, ef here ain't a responchibility nobody ever had one, and the only way I has to git outen it is to clime that gate-post. So I hops up, one foot on a rail of the fence, hands on the gate-post, and t'other foot on one of the palin's o' the gate. I war climbin' with all that bein' in a hurry that you mout sposed a man in my present sitooation would know he have no time to lose. I has done got one foot on top o' the fence, and war about to jerk the t'other from between the gate palin's, when old Towser he grab my shoe by the toe, inside the yard, and the next minute Loud he have me by my coat-tails outside.

"At this very minute Mr. Lively have farly got down from the gig; and when he seed Loud have me by my last coat-tail (for he have done tore off t'other), he rush up, gin him a lick with his hickory-stick, and speak to Towser, and they let me go. Bless your soul, Philip! I war too mad to see all what follered. Both o' my coat-tails was tore pretty well off; and hadn't been for my shoes bein' so thick, an' tacks in 'em to boot, I should a lost one of my toes, and maybe two. When I got sorter cool I see Mr. Lively tryin' to show Cousin Malviny a paper, and call her *aunty*. When she hear Mr. Lively call her aunty, Cousin Malviny, who have been a-ravin' all this time, she say that war too much; and then she go in the house, and sink in a chair and call for her smellin' phial, and tell 'em to put her anywhar they wants to, ef it even war her grave. She give up farly and squarly.

"Come to find out, Mr. Lively, while I war gittin' back

my temper and bein' sorter cool—for I tell you, boy, I war never madder in my life—Mr. Lively have been a-tellin' Cousin Malviny what I'm now a-tellin' of you, that that place and everything on it belong to him now as the husband o' Susan; and which they have jes' t'other day found Hodge's will, which he have hid away in that desk; and which Hodge he give everything thar to Susan and Cousin Malviny jintly, ontell Cousin Malviny's death, and arfterward the whole to Susan; and which he have pinted Mr. Lively his Ezecketer; that is a law word, Philipip—a-meanin' that somebody arfter a man dies have got to tend to the business in ginerly.

“And now, Philip, I tell you that Mr. Lively is a right clever old man arfter all. He is from old North Calliner, shore nuff; and away long time ago he have a plantation thar, and once goin' to marry a gurl over thar, long time ago, but she took sick and died. And then once he got low-sperited like, and sold out and move to Augusty and buy prop'ty, and make more money and buy more prop'ty, tell he got to be worth twenty thousand dollars at least calc'lation. Did you ever see sich a man?

“Well, he got tired livin' in sich a big place, and he want to git back in the country. But somehow he don't feel like goin' back to old North Calliner; and then he git acquainted with Hodge, and he heern about Dukesborough, and so he come here. Well, arfter Hodge he died, Cousin Malviny, you see, she think about changin' her conditions again, and they ain't no doubt but she take arfter Mr. Lively. She deny it now; but wimming can't fool me. Well, Mr. Lively he git somehow to like the place and don't want to go away from it; but he see somethin's obleeged to be done; and he have always like Susan, becasse he see Cousin Malviny sorter put on her so much. Hodge war sorry for Susan too, and he use to talk to Mr. Lively

about her; and he tell Mr. Lively that ef he died he war goin' to 'member her in his will. But shore nuff they couldn't find no will, and Mr. Lively he sposen that Hodge done forgot Susan; and so he make up his mind to cote her, and ef she'd have him he mean to buy out the prop'ty even if he have to pay too much for it. So he go to cotin' Susan the first chance he git; and Susan, not spectin' she war ever goin' to be coted by anybody, think she better say *yes*, and she say yes. It war a quick cotin' and a quick anser. But lo and behold! Susan found in the sto' one day a paper, and she give it to Mr. Lively; and Mr. Lively see it war Hodge's will, as I tell you. But this didn't alter Susan; for when the old man told her about it, and say he'd let her off ef she wanted to, Susan say she don't want to be let off; and you now behold the conshequenches.

“And now, Philip, what make I tell you he's a right clever old feller is this: when Cousin Malviny have sorter come too, and understan' herself and the sitooation she war in, Mr. Lively call Susan in; for I tell you that gurl war not for gittin' out o' that gig till matters got cooler. And then Mr. Lively tell Cousin Malviny that she mout stay right whar she war, and that he war goin' to fix up her house, and she mout keep her same room, only it should have new furnitoor, and he would fix another room for him and Susan; and he war goin' to find everything hisself, and she shouldn't be at no expense; and ef she got married he would give her more'n the will give her in money, and she mout will away her intrust into the bargain and he would pay it in money; only Mr. Lively say that sto' must be broke up, and he will pay her down in cash twice what the stock war worth. Arfter all this, Cousin Malviny gin up for good, and call for Susan. Susan went to her, and they hugged; and Cousin Malviny she laughed, and Susan she cried. I could but notice them two wimming. Hit

was the first time them two wimming ever hugged, and I couldn't but notice the difference. One of 'em was a-laughin' and one was a-cryin'; and which I couldn't see the use nor the sense of nary one. But wimming's wimming, and you can't alter 'em.

"But it war time I war leavin' and goin' back to my business. Thar business war not mine. I bids them wimming good-bye; and I astes Mr. Lively, ef it war not too much trouble, to see me throo the gate and safe from them dogs; becase I told Mr. Lively I didn't want to hurt them dogs, but I wanted 'em not be pesterin' o' me no more. Mr. Lively he go with me about a hundred yards; and as I war about to tell him good-bye, I says to Mr. Lively, says I, 'Mr. Lively, it 'pear like you has plenty o' money; and I don't sposen that you think people ought to lose anything by 'tending to *your* business, when it's none o' theirs. Well, Mr. Lively, it seems like somebody by good rights, reasonable speakin', somebody ought to pay for my coat-tails; for you can see for yourself, that ef this coat is to be of any more use to me it's got to be as a round jacket; and all this business whar it got tore—and I come monstrous nigh gittin' dog-bit—war none o' mine, but t'other people's; and it seem like I ought to git paid by somebody.' Mr. Lively smile and say 'of cose,' and asts me about what I sposen them coat-tails was worth; and I tells him I don't think two dollars and a half was high. And then, Philip, ef he didn't pull out a five-dollar bill and give me, I wish I may be dinged!

"And then, what do you sposen that blessed and on-time old man said to me? Says he, 'Mr. Williams, you did lose your coat-tails, and come very nigh being badly dog-bit while looking on at business which, as you say, was not yours. You've got paid for it. When you were out here before, Mr. Williams, you took occasion to look

at some other business—oh, Mr. Williams, I saw your tracks, and you told on yourself next morning at breakfast. Towser and Loud were then gone with Uncle Moses possum-hunting. Suppose they had been at home, and had caught you in the dark at my window. Don't say anything, Mr. Williams, but let this be a lesson to you, my young friend. There's more ways than one of paying for things. I advise you not to talk about what you saw that night to any more people than you can help. I am not anxious to fool people, and haven't done it; but I would rather people wouldn't *dog* me about. You see how unpleasant it is to be *dogged*, and what Loud got for meddling with your coat-tails. But *he* didn't know any better. *You* do, or ought to. Let Loud's be a example to you, Mr. Williams. Good-day, Mr. Williams.' And he left me befo' I could say a single word.

"Now, Philip, I war never so much nonplushed in all my born days; and which when he talk about how Loud mout be an ezample, I knowed what he mean, becuse which I don't have to be knock downstairs befo' I can take a hint. But you see, under all the circumsances, I think it's maybe best not to say anything about the old man's har. Not as I keer for his old hickory-stick, becuse thar's plenty o' hickories in the woods; but, it mout git *you* into difficulties; and ef it was to do that, I should jest feel like I ought to take the responchibility, and I should do it. So le's keep still. I hain't told nobody but you and Mr. Jones; and he's a man of mighty few words anyhow, and he ain't goin' to talk. So le's let the old man go, and not interrupt him, and wish him much joy of his young wife. Poor Cousin Malviny! But she look peert as ever. I see her yistiday, and she look peert as old Molly's colt. But wimming's wimming, Philip, and you can't alter 'em."

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW.

CHAPTER I.

MR. RICHARD PARKINSON sat by his fireside on an evening in the fall of the year. He was of about five-and-forty years, and in good vigor. His fine face, with the large brown eyes that saw for themselves, and his tall, unbent form, showed, in spite of a few gray hairs among his glossy black locks, that time had dealt lightly with him. Fond of the chase, his horn and his hounds were wont to be heard at least twice a week in the hunting season. In pursuit of the fox no whoop more loud and clear, no steed more swift and sure, than those of Mr. Parkinson. But this very morning he and his hounds had their usual sport. In the back piazza hung the fox-tail, his trophy; and now he was waiting for the return of the servant with his mail.

There, also, sat Mrs. Richard Parkinson. If the husband seemed young for his age, the wife seemed younger for hers. Forty times had she seen the year come and go. If you had not known that, you would have supposed, except for one thing, that she could not be beyond thirty.

I say except for one thing. That was her daughter Lucy, who was approaching her nineteenth birthday.

A prettier or a sweeter girl could not have been found anywhere in middle Georgia. She was about of the middle height. Her form was slender, yet not wanting of sufficient

fullness. Her hair was of a color properly compounded of the jet-black of her father's and the fair of her mother's. And how plenteous it was! If she was vain of her hair, as before the mirror in making her morning toilet she gathered it in her white hand, almost too small to grasp the luxuriant wisp, and led it round and round and round until it sat upon that fine head an ornament of glory, no right-minded person would have blamed her. Hazel were her eyes, large like her father's, though not lustrous as his, but soft, liquid, deep. Her skin was fair, and her cheeks, though not habitually rosy, indicated perfect health. Her mouth—oh, dear me!—I have not the time, nor at my age the talent, to describe minutely just such a girl as Lucy Parkinson. I can only repeat that I never saw a sweeter or prettier in all my life—not even in middle Georgia in the times when I was a boy.

The last personage, and least of the group, was Jack Parkinson, then ten years old. His light hair and complexion, and stout, square form, so unlike his father's, had led that gentleman, in the infancy of this his only male offspring, to call him a Fort. For Mrs. Parkinson before her marriage was Miss Susan Fort. The Forts were as much below the middle height as the Parkinsons were above it. Then the Forts were very fair, while the Parkinsons were brown. When Richard Parkinson and Susan Fort were married, the disparity of the couple was the theme of much pleasant jesting.

On the night of the wedding, Mr. Parkinson the elder, Richard's father, was said to have perpetrated the only, or at least the best, joke of his life. For he had ever been a serious person, as most men of his extreme length are. He had been observed to look with much earnestness upon the couple while the ceremony was going on. When it was over his countenance relaxed into an expression indicating

remote cheerfulness. He nudged the fat side of old Mr. Fort, near whom he was standing, and then, having lowered his head until he could whisper into the latter's ear, said, "Archie, a black crane and a white guinea-chicken. Good cross, ain't it?" At which Mr. Archibald Fort laughed vehemently. Doubtless his hilarity was the greater because he had been so far from expecting any such thing from Mr. John Parkinson. So Mr. Fort laughed and shook his sides, and was enabled at length to say emphatically, Yes, he did, blamed if he didn't! After this Mr. John Parkinson went up again to his native height and dignity, and stayed there. But Mr. Fort, more than once afterward and during the evening, was heard to say, after a silent shake, "I didn't think—upon my word, I didn't think it was in him." But this little prophetic jest of the elder Parkinson, while it did meet with a verification in Lucy, who combined the physical characteristics of her parents with improvement on both the original stocks, seemed to have been lost on Jack, who, from the day of his birth until now, had shown himself to be all Fort. Mr. Parkinson used, therefore, in comparing his two surviving children with each other, to say that Lucy was a Parkinson but Jack was a Fort.

So there they sat by the fireside, these four, and a snug little family they made. Little Jane was not there, it is true—little Jane, who was Jack's junior by two years, and his playmate. She had been gone two years. Her departure had cast a shadow on all hearts there, but mostly on the mother's. But time and heaven had brought much consolation, and the mother had enough of love for those who survived to make her life yet very happy.

It was a snug little family. Jack was the main talker to-night. He had been in the fox-chase that morning for the first time. A noted rabbit-hunter he was, but had never been allowed until this morning to follow the fox.

All day he had been full of the great things of the morning. His mother and sister had been to town and had not returned until night, so his triumphs had to be recounted during the day only to the negroes. To-night, when the supper was over, they expressed a desire, upon a wink from his father, to hear something about the race. It was a spirited narrative. The ladies were delighted to hear him declaim upon the performances of the pack. Old Rock would keep before and Little Rock wouldn't stay behind. Terror was the first to see him, and when he did you might have heard him two miles. But at that very minute, Damon, a rascal who was two hundred yards off, knowing the fox's ways, cut across and got in ahead. Once, and it was after an hour's run, quarry doubled so that for awhile they thought they had lost him; but old Pluto went back and circled, until suddenly lifting his head toward the sky and howling out a scold and a triumph, carried it off again. But the puppies Jeff and Matt, they were the fellows! They made more fuss than any four dogs there, not knowing, in his opinion, what was up until they saw him; for the little fools had run off twice after rabbits, and this was the very thing that had bothered them. And that pony: didn't he enjoy it! He knew what they were after as well as anybody.

Jack, having finished the narrative, and finding it not interesting to his hearers to tell it more than once, grew sleepy and went to bed. At that moment the servant brought in the mail—a letter and the weekly newspaper. The letter was a long one. While Mr. Parkinson was reading it, Lucy glanced over the paper and read items of news in a subdued tone to her mother. When her father had finished, he laid the letter on the table and looked musingly into the fire.

“It is quite a long letter you have,” said his wife.

“Yes,” he answered. “He is coming, sure enough.”

“Who?” asked both ladies at once.

“Overton.”

CHAPTER II.

GEORGE OVERTON was a Virginian, from the town of Staunton. From this section the Parkinsons had emigrated to Georgia thirty-five years before. After some correspondence it was agreed that the young man should repair to Mr. Parkinson's and remain until he could find an opening for his purpose, which was to become a lawyer. Meanwhile, as it was further understood, Overton, as compensation which he insisted upon making in some way for this kindness, was to superintend the studies of Jack Parkinson.

This service had been performed heretofore for Jack as well as possible by his sister. She had been well educated, considering the times, at Savannah. But Lucy Parkinson by experience had found out a truth which it is surprising how slow many parents are to discover: that very few children, especially male, can be well educated without having companions in their studies. Jack Parkinson, who was uncommonly good and sensible for an only son of a man of some wealth, was not an exception to this rule. Lucy, after about a year's trial, was disposed to give him up as a pupil, provided that anything better could be done in his case.

It was at this juncture that George Overton proposed to come to Georgia; and as he had shown a very decided desire to get some occupation for the time that must be spent in his legal studies, it occurred to Mr. Parkinson to propose to him to keep a small school in a house which he would build upon his own ground, and to which he knew

that several of his neighbors would be glad to send their children. To this proposition Overton consented readily. The room was built, and the school was to be opened at the beginning of the year.

The new teacher arrived late in December. He was pleased, and so were the Parkinsons, only Jack was a little shy; he had heard something of schoolmasters. Mr. Parkinson could not but allow to himself that his having come from Virginia was much in his favor. Then he knew that he was of good family. Yet he must stick to the principles of the old Virginia Parkinsons, and let his judgment, or the utterance of it, wait awhile. The young man's looks and behavior were all right. He was tall, and slender, and graceful, and strong. He was polite, easy, and good-humored.

On his travel throughout the afternoon he had been put into a satisfied mood from admiring the country, which at that time was so fresh and strong. Very much of the primeval forest was then standing; and, though the leaves had fallen from the trees, the magnificent growth of oak, interspersed with the poplar, and maple, and chestnut, and gum, and short-leaf pine, filled his eye with admiration. A servant with a gig had met him at the county town and driven him out to Chestnut Grove, as Mr. Parkinson had named his residence. On the way he had speculated much upon what manner of place it was that was to be his temporary home. His blue eye brightened as the driver turned from the road and drove up through the long avenue of chestnuts. The house was a well-built, square, two-story building, with two wings of one story proceeding in a line with the rooms in the rear. The yard of about four acres was inclosed with a board paling. Overton noticed the foremost of a row of negro cabins, which, beginning at some distance behind the mansion, extended backward and

fronted the garden. There was but little shrubbery in the front yard; the forest growth allowed little room for any other form of tree or flower. There were two or three cedars, but the flower-bushes were mainly in the garden.

There was an air of thorough gentility about this place, though the mansion was of some years' standing, and was a little brown for the lack of fresh painting. It had a proud but not inhospitable look, that mansion. As the gig drove up, the huge oaken gate was opened by several little negroes, whose sleek faces and active forms showed that they were both well-fed and happy.

Until that afternoon Overton had not known of Lucy Parkinson. He felt all the gratification which an educated and well-bred man must have in making the acquaintance of such a young woman. When the evening was over and he had retired to his chamber, he sat long by the fire and mused. It was so strange to be so far and rather an exile from home, yet to be so free from repining. Thoughts of home became interwoven with those of the new persons among whom he was thrown, of their cordiality and gentility, and their evident interest in him and his purposes. For some time he yielded to these various emotions, and then retired to his bed.

"I like him so much," said Lucy, after he had retired.

"I do believe we have done the best thing for Jack," said the mother. Jack looked as if he thought matters might be much worse.

"Yes," said Mr. Parkinson, "he has the manners and breeding of a gentleman. His father's family was all right. I don't know who his mother was; but he does seem to be, and I think is, a gentleman."

CHAPTER III.

THE schoolhouse, a neat little framed building, was situated about half a mile from Mr. Parkinson's residence, near the roadside, and on a knoll of land at the foot of which was a spring of water. All schoolhouses in those days must be near springs. Oh, those old springs in the granite region of middle Georgia!

In this place George Overton began his simple work. The consciousness of having a very superior education, considering those times, had precluded all apprehension of unfitness for the small duties of a country schoolmaster; but all at once he felt a seriousness that was surprising to himself.

About twenty boys and girls were there already. Among these were some of our acquaintances of Goosepond times. There were Amanda Grizzle, Henrietta Bangs, Amelia Jones, among the girls; and William Jones, Samuel Pate, Asa Boatright, and Abel Kitchens, among the boys.

In a little while he looked over their books, set them their tasks, and began to walk to and fro, ruminating on the strangeness of his new position. While thus engaged, he noticed an elderly woman riding toward the house. When she had approached within a few paces of the door she stopped, and asked if she could see the schoolmaster. He took his hat and walked out to her, following several steps as she led him on; then she pointed to a lad who was leaning on the fence in the road at some distance from them.

"That's my son," she said. "Law bless me! I do believe I forgot to say good-mornin'. Excuse my manners, sir, if you please; but that boy that you see standin' yonder is my son, and he's the onliest child I have in this world."

Overton looked at the boy for a moment, and turned again to the mother.

“Now I see,” she began again, “I see that you don’t know what I mean and what I’m talkin’ about: do you, or don’t you?”

“I don’t think I quite understand you, my good lady; but if you mean that you have not the means to send him to school, but would like to do so—”

“Thar now! I knowed he didn’t understand me. I do want to send him to school for a quarter, ef no more. I hain’t much, that’s a fact, but yit I can pay for it, and wouldn’t by no means wish to have him teached for nothin’. Oh yes, I can pay for it; but that ain’t the thing. The question is, will you take him? Now, you must mind what you goin’ to say, because I wants to take no ’vantage of nobody. I can pay for it if you’ll take him.”

Overton smiled, and answered, “Certainly I will take him, my dear madam. Why not?”

“Ah, that’s it!—why not. Because he’s done gone and fout one schoolmarster already, and the onliest one he ever went to; and have sorter disgraced hisself. I thought maybe you might heerd about it, as you was a-boardin’ at Mr. Parkson’s; which, though they are rich, yit they know us, and has been monstous good to us, specially Miss Parkson and Lucy; and they knows that boy ain’t a bad boy nately; yit we, that is, him and me, we thought that, specially bein’ of a schoolmarster yourself, you might not like no sich, under no circumstances whatsoever; which I myself sposed I wouldn’t ef I was a man, and was high larned and war a schoolmarster; and which we also, him and me, we thought maybe you hadn’t heerd about it, and that we ought to tell you ef you hadn’t; and I made him stay yonder till I told it myself, because I knowed I could tell it better’n he could.”

“I suppose this is Mrs. Glisson?” said Overton.

“Yes, sir. Law bless me! I been talkin’ to the man all this time and never even told him who I war. Yes, sir, I’m her; that’s my name, and I’m his mother; and I tell you, sir, that he war not so mighty much to blame as you mout suppose. I know that as I *am* his mother, and he’s my *onliest* child, it’s reasonable that I should take his part; but which I don’t believe, indeed I don’t believe I would take his part if I knowed he war in the wrong, Mister—Mis—ter—”

“Overton is my name.”

“Yes, sir. Law me! I knowed what it war, but I forgot it at the minit. Excuse my manners, sir, if you please. I knowed it; Lucy and little Jack Parkson both told me, and they are both mighty good children. Lucy, of course, she’s a grown young woman now, and the smartest and prettiest, and the best to old people and poor people of any girl in all this country, and is jes’ exactly like her mother war before her. Oh yes, I knowed your name, but I forgot it at the minit. Well, now, Mr. Overton, you see that boy a-standin’ yonder? Well, though I say it that oughtent, he’s nately as biddable a boy and as obedient to them that’s above him, as anybody’s child, I keer not whomsoever they mout be. And he tried to git along with the schoolmarster, and he studied his lessons every night of his life till I made him go to bed, and up before day every mornin’, and the man wouldn’t *be* satisfied, and made the child go beyant hissself in his books; and then he took to abusin’ him, and beatin’ him, and so he got him cowed down to nothin’, and then he—well, he jes’ forgot hissself, and fout him.”

She looked anxiously at Overton for a moment, and continued:

“Oh, Mister—Mister Overton, it war monstous onfortunate; but you know that arfter they begun it the child had

to fight for life, for I tell you he war a monstous hard man, and which I begs your pardon for sayin' so about a schoolmarster."

Overton was amused at her eagerness, especially her apology for the terms in which she had alluded to Mr. Israel Meadows.

"I will take your son with pleasure, madam. I have heard something of the treatment which he received. I think we can get along together; at least we can try. If we fail, we can separate in a friendly way."

"The Lord bless you, sir. Mr. Overton, the child ain't been raised nuther to fightin' nor to be impudent to grown people, and God bless you for not turnin' him off."

She beckoned to Brinkly, and he came up.

"Mr. Overton says he'll take you, my son—that is, on trial; and *ef* you don't behave yourself, now mind you, *ef* you don't—"

Overton interrupted her, and, taking Brinkly by the hand, said that he was glad he had come, and he did not doubt that they should be friends. Brinkly looked humbly but steadily at the master, and said that he would try to do all that was told him. The widow delivered to her son a short lecture, which was mixed up of scolding, threats, and praise; then bidding Overton good-morning, she went off, about as happy an old soul as one would be apt to see riding along the road at that time of day.

When Brinkly came in there were signs of satisfaction on the part of the boys. Bill Jones winked one eye at Sam Pate, and Sam passed it over to Asa Boatright, who nodded to both the other gentlemen. After examining Brinkly and assigning him a task, the teacher sat down and tried to reflect. He was puzzled how to begin. The ways these urchins had did not serve to help him. How they did eye him as he sat there! He rose and walked to

and fro, and they eyed him yet more, all except Brinkly and Jack Parkinson; these went at once to their work. The others pretended to do the same, but they watched the teacher continually. There was one little fellow who was especially interesting to Overton. He too was an old Gooseponder, the same who was represented as having been so far gone under the Meadows rule that to the last he could not understand that great business of the breaking-up—Abel Kitchens. He was very small for his age, of eleven years, slender, but rather knotty-looking, with sandy hair, very piercing hawk-eyes, and a long, thin nose, curving downward at the end, and always shining and looking as if it had been newly peeled. He wore sumac-dyed homespun clothes. He sat on a line with Jack Parkinson, and at first watched him and Overton alternately. Jack's nice clothes attracted him. Soon, however, he dropped Jack and his clothes, and watched Overton alone. He eyed him over his book, then under, now from one side, now from the other. But he studied awfully. To convince the teacher of this, he kept up a continual swaying to and fro and a buzzing with his lips. At intervals, in order to see him better, Abel would rise from his seat, dart at him, and, putting a finger on his word, hold the book up to him, the back toward himself, and look him through and through; then, rushing back to his seat, his eyes would shoot at him again from all sides of his book. Wherever Overton went, that eye, like the basilisk's, preyed upon him. He was alternately amused and embarrassed by it. Once or twice he felt that it would be a relief to wring his little neck somewhat. Reflecting that this would not do, and not being able to find what would do, this young Virginian, though a man of education and courage, then and there debated in his mind whether he would or not take his hat and run away. He decided at once that it was quite a job to get his

pupils out of the jumble in which he found them. He understood the difficulties of the case, and that was all that he did understand at first. He was able to make the diagnosis. There were cataracts, strabismuses, and all manner of ailings in the catalogue of the ophthalmist, down to the case of little Abel Kitchens, who seemed to have been born blind. The young physician was sore puzzled.

But he was enlightened, and, what was more, he was humane. When he had fully understood the injury these children had endured from Israel Meadows, and such as him, he pitied them. Their general apparent stupidity, and their almost universal proclivity to falsehood, were sad to behold; and his heart sickened to see the distrust and the abject fear with which they regarded him.

But youth is strong and hopeful. He felt that he could at least remove their distrust and fear, and he hoped to be able in time to gain their friendship. Fortunately, he had a coadjutor in Jack Parkinson. The others saw that Jack was neither a fool nor a slave, although he had been made to study books. It was amazing to them that he should like the schoolmaster, and even be upon easy terms with him, while at the same time he took a hearty part in their sports. Yet they had a way of accounting for all this. Mr. Overton boarded with the Parkinsons, who were richer than they were; and no matter what Jack did, it would be all right. As for Abel, he had no views upon the subject. He constantly pierced the master every day with eyes and nose, and seemed to wonder at not being beaten half to death. He could not understand this case any more than the former; indeed, he seemed to be even more helpless than before. There was danger that he might come in time either to feel contempt for the schoolmaster or grow thoroughly insane.

And now in this little realm there was needed, in order to counterbalance the patrician influence, a representative of the Third Estate, one with homespun clothes and a wool hat, to settle with the upper estates upon some safe and reasonable understanding. The commoner for this momentous undertaking was Brinkly Glisson.

Two such persons could not long misunderstand each other. Overton readily measured the amount and the kind of work that he could do, set him to it, and gently led him along. Before the end of the week he was another boy altogether. How he did study! Not in the old digging way that we first found him at. Overton had already taught him other modes of obtaining knowledge than by grubbing it up with his head for a hoe. The boy was so grateful, and in his small way so proud, that the young teacher felt some kindred emotions, and was better pleased with himself than he had ever been before. How little it often costs to bestow a blessing upon the lowly, and how rich is the return to the bestower!

CHAPTER IV.

BUT while Brinkly was doing so well, the rest were yet in the jumble. They had been in a much worse condition than he; for while he had been badly shaken, yet he had kept enough of his native wits to be able at last to break away. Then there had been an individuality in his case. They had all been scrambled, as it were, together, and there seemed to be no earthly way of pulling out one without getting the whole lump. Overton tried all expedients—lecturing, encouraging, persuading, threatening to drive them home. They had little confidence in anything which

had the appearance of kindness or of concern for their happiness. They were not to be fooled with so incredible a thing as that a schoolmaster cared any more for the happiness of his pupils than for so many dogs and cats that belonged to other people. His show of kindness was about as if he were angling with an insufficient hook among timid little fishes in a shallow stream where they could distinctly see the fisherman. He could never get more than a nibble. Occasionally a horny-head would make as if he were inclined to bite, and would play around the bait. Not taking hold, the angler would make a sly jerk in the hope of hooking him in some way or other, whereupon he would take fresh fright and scamper off with all the minnows at his tail.

Overton was really embarrassed. The servile fear which they felt toward him distressed as well as disgusted him. So did their falsehood and their treachery among themselves. In vain he joked with them. But it is poor fun when nobody laughs at a joke but the joker. The only response he could get was great stares that a schoolmaster could tell jokes and laugh. True, they remembered that Mr. Meadows used to laugh in the circus; but that laugh was not one of the sort that was catching, while this man's was hearty and genial, and therefore must be a snare.

But for Brinkly, Overton would have been forced to give it up. Brinkly's case was a poser to them. Remembering how bravely he had broken off one set of shackles, and now seeing him so happy, so fond of his books, and so in love with his teacher—they could make nothing of them. Sometimes they were inclined to believe that he had been bought over by the enemy, and they rather expected to see him come to school some morning with store clothes on; and, when he did not, they had to give it up.

Brinkly knew their difficulties, and talked with them in private; he made many comparisons between things here and things at the Goosepond. The girls came over first, and then the boys must follow. By slow degrees they came to their senses, and began to take a feeble hold upon things.

A little accident occurred one day which probably served to hasten the adjustment. The teacher was sitting in his chair looking through the window in a musing mood. Suddenly a little girl cried out: "Mist' Ove't'n, can't you make Abel Kitch'n quit a-keepin' a-constant a-makin' mouths at me with his ole nose?"

Overton started. Abel immediately responded:

"I ain't a-doin' no sich thing, Mist' Ove't'n, and the gal know I ain't. I wur jis' a-settin' here and a-gittin' my lessin, and I wa'n't a-studyin' about the gal."

"He know he wern't," she replied; "he wer a-makin' mouths at me with his ole nose."

Abel persisted in denying the charge; but it occurred to him to endeavor to divert the master's attention from himself, or at least to have others joined in the punishment.

"I never done no sich a thing," he insisted; "and Asa Boatright he cussed, he did; and Bill Jones and Sam Pate they been a-fightin' down to the spring."

The teacher laughed and laughed; he laughed till he shed tears. Then Brinkly and Jack laughed, and then the girls, and then the boys, except the four culprits. When he was able to grow serious he talked kindly, but remonstrated upon such improprieties. But most of all he condemned Abel for tale-bearing. He declared that if Abel were not such a little fellow he would feel like breaking his neck square off. He should not watch the boys himself, and they should not watch one another. He would have no meanness and no lies, even if he had to quit keeping

the school himself, or come down to Brinkly Glisson, Jack Parkinson, and the girls. He told them that if they expected to make of themselves men who were to be of any account, it was high time that the most of them were learning how, and that at least they should not grow up under his charge to be rascals.

This was a great step for him, and it was not long before all were in a good way, except Abel. Abel still hung back; he couldn't understand yet. Overton had tried all the means he could think of. He had scolded, joked, flattered, to little purpose. The disappointment at not being flogged for his ungallant conduct, and at receiving abuse instead of thanks for giving information of the misconduct of the other boys, seemed to confuse him more and to render him somewhat dogged. Not that he was much afraid; for fear, as other feelings, seemed to have been beaten out of him at the Goosepond. But his deportment did not change. Those eyes and that nose inflicted innumerable wounds upon the teacher every day.

At last, one afternoon (it was the second Friday), just before the school was to be turned out, Overton determined to make another trial. He went to where Abel sat, and in beseeching tones asked:

"Abel, my dear old fellow, tell me why I can't do something with you? Such a fine old fellow as you are! so smart, so good-looking! I would give anything in the world if I could do something for you! Tell me why I can't."

He spoke in half-desperate, half-playful exclamation, not expecting an answer. He had placed his hand upon the little wretch's head in rash defiance at whatever might come. The effect of this was to make Abel's coarse hair rise like bristles. His eyes glared with uncommon wildness, and his nose became a two-edged sword. But the

master persisted. Patting him on the head, now gently remonstrating with him, now praising, he put the question to him again. Abel looked up to him with unutterable ferocity, clinched his yellow teeth together, and shot forth in screams the following sentences, pausing among them as we have sometimes seen small fire-balls projected from a Roman candle :

“ Hit’s becace I hain’t got the hang o’ this school’ouse yit!

“ Hit’s becace you ain’t like no schoolmarster nohow!

“ Hit’s becace you laughs in the school’ouse, and that when you ain’t mad nuther!

“ Hit’s becace you don’t whip nobody for fightin’, and won’t let nobody tell you nothin’, and I hain’t got the hang o’ nothin’ here!”

Overton was aghast. He looked around at the other boys. They were waiting for him to begin. He smiled, and they roared. In vain Abel tried with eyes and nose to pin them all down. The girls screamed. They had a great row. The poor little fellow didn’t have a friend.

Overton had retreated from him during the explosions. He now went up to him again, took him up in his arms, carried him to his own chair, sat down, and placed him on his lap. What in the world could he have been thinking about, that he had not found out before what the difficulty was? It was as plain as day now. Just as soon as Abel could get the hang of things generally, which of course he was going to do right away, he would make one of the best scholars in this school or any other school. We have seen a wild, puny, snaggy little kitten run into a corner and caught in order to be tamed; how it doubled itself up and grinned and sniffed! We have taken it upon our laps, and hiding its head, and gently talking to it, and stroking its back, we at last have seen how, after repeated

efforts to bite and scratch, it has gradually yielded to the gentle friction and gone to purring in comfort and contentment. So Abel. He dared not bite and scratch, but he put his little legs straight out, and retreated his little back as far as he could, and shrunk up, and tried all the old resources of his eyes and nose. But he soon seemed to recognize that their influence was gone. He gave himself up at last to the master's fondling, and though he did not even smile in accord with the general merriment, yet when he was loose he went back to his seat looking subdued and reconciled.

Overton now dismissed the school. He announced that all who really desired to be improved, and who intended to do right and tell no lies, and all who were not afraid of him, might come back on the next Monday morning; but that all others might stay at home. He said he was especially determined upon the subject of lies. He had never had a great fondness for dogs, but if it should be necessary to do so he intended to keep one hound for the purpose of chasing off any liars that might be there.

That evening, while they were going home, Abel told Brinkly that all had come to him right thar while he sot in Mist' Ove't'n's lap.

CHAPTER V.

"FATHER, I would like to learn Latin."

"The mischief! I thought you considered your education finished."

"Very far from that! I wanted to study Latin in Savannah, but Miss Jennings advised against it, and said that girls did not need it."

“I am somewhat of the same opinion,” answered Mr. Parkinson; “but, admitting that it is worth while, how are you to learn it?”

“You can teach me, for you learned Latin.”

“That’s a poor chance indeed! Even if I had not forgotten all that I ever learned about it, I have neither time nor talent for teaching; but I have already forgotten all I ever knew about it, except, I believe, *penna* and *bonus*.”

Lucy was silent.

“Suppose you go to school to Mr. Overton. Susan, you must get a bigger dinner-basket, Lucy wants to go to school again.”

“I should think,” answered Mrs. P., ignoring the humor of her husband’s remark, “that if Lucy would like to learn it, Mr. Overton might give her lessons in private.”

“That’s a good idea, wife. Who will ask him?”

“Let Lucy do so herself.”

Friday night, after supper.

“May we not have music to-night?” asked Overton of Lucy, when they had met in the drawing-room.

Lucy played and sang several pieces.

“Do you like teaching?” she asked, turning slightly round on the piano-stool, and carelessly playing with one hand an indifferent air.

“Not very much,” answered Overton, “yet it is more interesting than I expected to find it. There is more labor than I anticipated, and more anxiety and more pleasure.”

“You feel, then, as if you had quite enough to do?”

“Yes, indeed, such as it is.”

“And that you deserve to have your rest when the day’s work is over?”

“Why, as to any great meritoriousness, I must admit that I can plead only the claims of tired nature.”

“You really, then, are fatigued by the exercises of the day?” she said earnestly.

“I was at first. I was quite fatigued, but now since (as one of my little chaps told me to-day) I have gotten somewhat of the hang of things, I do the work with less pain; yet when night comes on I am quite ready to leave off.”

“Then there are your law studies.”

“No, they are a recreation.”

“Are they quite enough for that purpose?” How rapidly her fair fingers ran over the keys!

“Oh, quite enough; I delight in my law studies.”

Lucy rose from the piano. They seated themselves before the fire, and their conversation went upon other things.

Jack Parkinson usually got his lessons at night in Overton's chamber. When the latter went up, Jack said to him:

“I suppose you have a new scholar, Mr. Overton?”

“Oh, dear me! I hope not; I have heard of none. Who is it? Another Abel?”

Jack looked quite embarrassed, but answered timidly that he had thought that his sister intended to ask Mr. Overton to give her lessons in Latin. At that moment Jack was called by Lucy to come downstairs.

“There now!” thought the young man. “And now I suppose the best thing I can do is to go to her and confess that I have told a lie about the fatigue and all that.” He rose and started down the steps. Just then Lucy went rapidly from the drawing-room, and immediately afterward he heard her singing gayly in her own chamber.

The next morning Overton rose earlier than usual. When he had descended and was standing at the front door, he

saw Lucy walking in the grove, and went to join her. The cool air had reddened her cheeks, and her eyes were liquid as the dew. She returned his salutation, and, he thought, regarded him with an expression of mock sympathy.

“You have rested well, I hope?”

“Oh yes, I always rest well, thanks to a good constitution.”

“And plenty of work,” she added.

“According to that, I should rest yet more soundly if I had more work. But you, Miss Parkinson, you who have so little to do, I suppose you find sleep a burden and a bore. You must painfully watch for the morning. Isn't it so? Whenever I come down, however early, I find you already risen.”

“I? Why, I have more to do than you suspect! True, I rise early, but that is from a habit of obedience to a rule of the house.”

“Ay? Then I must take notice of that rule and conform to it.”

“Oh, it is binding only on Jack and myself.”

“And you have work to do also?”

“Yes, indeed. You do not believe me? Well, *imprimis* (that is a Latin word, is it not?—yes). Well, I am the keeper of this house. I superintend kitchen, dairy, and smoke-house. Besides, I work the bosoms of all of father's shirts, and I make Jack's clothes, and I cut and make my own.”

“Then you must be rather tired yourself at the close of the day.”

“Oh, very!” and the grove rang with her laugh.

“Well, I have been thinking,” said Overton, “and I have concluded that I am not usually as much fatigued by my labors as I thought I was.”

“That, I fear, is because you are so refreshed this morn-

ing by your night's rest. I am sure that you have already too much."

"Upon my word, I have not."

"What made you say so, then?"

"I told a story."

"Oh, Mr. Overton, I shouldn't have thought it of you! And really, now, you think you could do any more work than you have already?"

"Indeed I could—of the same sort, at least. I could at least enlarge the school a little. I could take one more scholar, and even one more class. Indeed, since I have been thinking about it, one thing more I am very anxious to do."

She looked at him as much as to ask, what is that?

"To give you lessons in Latin."

"Jack had no business to tell you that. But he thought I had done so before. Really, then, you could give me lessons easily and without much trouble—upon your honor, now?" She held her finger up in warning.

"Upon my honor, I could, and it would give me real pleasure."

"Then you shall do it, and you will receive all our thanks. But I notify you that you will have a dull scholar. I shall be another Abel."

"Not when you get the hang of things," he said; and thus began their relation of teacher and pupil.

CHAPTER VI.

My firm belief to this day is that Miss Caroline Thigpen was without exception the best weaver I ever knew. She was about two years older than her brother Allen; and

they were the only members of the family then living. They had a good piece of ground of a couple of hundred acres. On this Allen, with four negroes, a man, his wife, and their two boys, used to make good crops, and was able to lay up a little every year. Everybody liked the Thigpens. With all their industry they were as accommodating as any people in the neighborhood. If anybody was sick, Allen or his sister was ready to sit up at night. Sitting up with the sick seemed not to have the slightest influence upon their strength, for they never lost the day's work by it. Any other special little accommodation which a neighbor wanted, and they could bestow, was always easily obtained. As for weaving, why, Caroline Thigpen in her mother's lifetime stayed very little at home during the fall seasons, so much was she employed for miles and miles around to weave the jeans and the counterpanes. Since her mother's death she had not been used to go so much away from home, and the materials were sent to her own house, for Allen was lonesome without her, and they were very fond of each other. Allen especially gloried in his sister Karline, as he called her. Sometimes when it would not be very convenient to send her the yarns, and she was begged as a special favor to go and do the weaving at a neighbor's house, Allen, if that neighbor were somewhat of a favorite, urged her to go, saying that he could keep bachelor's hall for awhile. Then she would go, finish her job as quickly as possible, and it was good to see how glad they both would be when she returned.

I was always glad to see Miss Caroline come to our house. I spent much of my time in the weaving-room while she was there, and filled her quills and watched and talked to her as she tied her threads, and worked the treadles, and threw the two shuttles. She was fond of reading, and I think rather prided herself somewhat upon

the knowledge she had acquired from books. In this respect she was quite superior to Allen. She used to chide him, but very kindly, for not reading more himself and thus improving his mind; but Allen complained that reading made him sleepy, and that he couldn't remember what he read, except the "Life of Marion." This he was familiar with, and he considered it the greatest of books next to the Bible. He had a notion that anything outside of that work that was worth knowing was known to his sister Karline, and that was enough for that family.

Her jeans were beautiful, but what she prided herself upon were her counterpanes. She distinguished them by historic names. There was one figure which she called the Battle of New Orleans; another Bonaparte a-crossing o' the Rhine; another was Washington's Victory. What special victory it was I don't think was understood. I used to try to see the resemblance between these figures and the things signified, and when I could not I supposed that it must be there somewhere.

"Where is Bonaparte?" I asked one day.

"Why, don't you see that longest, biggest thread in the middle, and a-rising above the others? Well, that's him."

"But where's the Rhine?"

"Lor' bless your soul, child! Why, the balance of the counterpane's the Rhine."

It seemed to me, I remember, that it was somewhat rash in Bonaparte to be going on a perilous enterprise with such a small body of men; yet even to this day I never see a counterpane of the old fashion of raised figures that I don't look out for that great chieftain crossing the mighty river.

The Thigpens resided on the other side of Dukesborough from us, and near to the Parkinsons'. Miss Karline's stay with us was generally about three weeks, in which time she usually rode one of my father's horses home on Saturday

nights, returning on Monday morning, except it might be meeting-Sunday, when she always came to church, and on to us when the service was over.

It was on one of these Sundays, in the ride from church, that Mr. Bill Williams, who knew her well, began in his gay manner a sort of flirtation. On this occasion old Molly Sparks was unusually restive about her colt, who seemed to be determined, as it was a beautiful day, to run over every person and horse and vehicle on the road. Mr. Bill seemed to enjoy old Molly's prancings consequent upon the erratic conduct of her offspring. They served to impart to her some character of wildness which he seemed to be pleased that Miss Thigpen should witness his power to control. The truth was that, both from ploughing and from nursing, the mare looked rather thin, and but for her spirit would have cut a poor figure. As she reared and turned about and whickered, he sometimes would frown in view of the dangers to which any other rider would have been exposed, and then smile at what he knew must be the effect upon Miss Thigpen to see how he could avoid being dashed on the ground. "She need me," said Mr. Bill, "that's who she need. She gittin' above herself fast sence I been to town. And I don't know but what it is time I war settlin' myself anyway—stock gittin' wild this way, and things goin' wrong in giner'l. But a man can't settle in the country jes' so by hisself, you know, Miss Karline?"

Miss Karline answered that she did not know so well; that that was a thing that a person had to settle for himself—that of course—yes indeed—it might be *one* other person's business, too; leastways a part of it; but of course—nobody knows.

Mr. Bill, as usual, stopped at our house to dinner. My parents were surprised that Miss Karline seemed pleased with his attentions. "If Bill is in earnest," remarked my

father, "and can get her, he will do a good thing. But I doubt if he has sense enough to know what a fine girl she is."

"Why, Caroline is three or four years older than he is," answered my mother.

"That would make no difference," continued my father; "he would do a cash business to get her. Bill is getting to be of very little account there in Dukesborough. He had a right good turn for farming; but he did not like that, and going to Dukesborough is likely to ruin him. If he could get Caroline, and then would go back home to the work he is fit for, he might do well. Her age is no objection, or ought not to be with him."

"William is rather fond of Elizabeth Acry, isn't he, Philemon?" asked my mother.

"Oh yes," I answered; but I gave it as my decided opinion that, if he ever had had any chance there, he had lost it on the day he and I had left Mr. Lorriby's school.

"I tell you," insisted my father, "that if he can get Caroline it would be doing a long way better than I ever thought he would be able to do, and he's a fool if he don't."

Mr. Bill seemed flattered by the impression he had made upon Miss Caroline, and was as polite as a Dukesborough beau knew how to be. We used to hear of other attentions which he paid to her. He went to her house several times; but as he was a great visitor generally, we did not think a great deal of that. Allen did not have much fancy for Mr. Bill, and especially for his town airs; yet he loved his sister dearly, and he tolerated her visitor for her sake. So, whenever Mr. Bill would come to the house, Allen would treat him hospitably, and on his leaving would invite him in his dry way to come again whenever it was convenient.

The Thigpens were quite friendly with the Acrys; and

the two young ladies frequently visited each other, and sometimes stayed as long as two or three days.

Mr. Bill had never quite relinquished his preference for Betsy Ann, though since the affair at Mr. Lorriby's he had had almost no hope. The growing intimacy between the two ladies made another inducement for him to cultivate the society of Miss Thigpen. But for Betsy Ann, Mr. Bill would have been inclined the more to make serious proposals to Caroline. His mother, who had begun to see that his mercantile career was not promising of great results, and who was anxious for him to come back home, thought that it was best for him to marry; and she very decidedly preferred Caroline to all other young ladies of her acquaintance, and she used to urge her son to go right along, court her, marry her, and bring her right straight home. Mr. Bill had nearly made up his mind, and would have gone on, probably, but for the fact that the more attentive he became to Caroline, the more gracious to him Betsy Ann grew to be. He finally began to reflect upon this change in the latter's deportment, and was delighted to be able to attribute it to jealousy. So he began to enjoy a little sharp practice upon the two ladies, and pleased himself with the idea that something important was to come out of it.

One day, as we were riding home from church, I said to him that we had heard how he had been going lately to the Thigpens'. We had had but little to say throughout the ride, for old Molly had worried him with her prancings, and there had been no lady before whom he could exhibit his dexterity in riding. He declared for the fiftieth time that he would sell her, dinged if he wouldn't, ef she weren't such a good brood-mar and plough-nag.

My remark being made, however, as we were near home, and the mare and colt having become more quiet, he got at once into a good humor.

“ Oh yes, I war thar. Who told you? Miss Betsy Ann? ”

“ Yes; how did you guess? ”

Mr. Bill laughed very slyly. “ What did she say, Philip? ”

I answered that I had heard Betsy Ann joking Miss Caroline about him, and that the former told me that he had been to the Thigpens' over and often.

“ How did Betsy Ann 'pear like she liked my goin' thar so ofting? ”

I did not remember anything that would have helped me to form an opinion on that point.

“ Philip,” said he, turning to me and looking extremely cunning—“ Philip, has you ever heerd of a flurrit? ”

“ Of what? ”

“ Of a flurrit: of a—flurritin'—as it war, with the female mind? ”

“ No.”

“ Oh, my young fren of the sunny hour! You think you know all. Wait till you're older and have experence before you think you understan' all you sees in this gain-sayin' world. Miss Karline is a very fine young 'oman; now ain't she, Philip? ”

“ Yes, indeed.”

“ Thar it is now! I knowed it. I knowed he think he understan'. Oh, my fren,” he said, just as we were about to part, “ my young fren, when you git to be a man of my age, that is, providin' you don't keep buried here in the country whar a man can't larn much o' the ways o' this ontimely old world, you'll know what I mean by *flurritin'*. And when you do, won't you see fun! Oh, my gracious granny! Oh yes, certing, Miss Karline is a monstous fine female! Good-bye, squire.”

Then the old fellow gave his mare the reins, and she went off galloping and whickering after her colt as it was dashing furiously down the lane.

CHAPTER VII.

THE lessons progressed. The young man was proud of his ability to teach so fine a young woman as Lucy, and she was repaying his work by making rapid progress. She had learned the elementary principles of Latin at school, and, being uncommonly quick of apprehension, she now advanced easily and rapidly. It was only a few weeks before she was reading in Virgil.

They could not fail to be friends now. No other relation is so favorable to the growth of friendship between two young persons of opposite sexes. We love those on whom we depend; and much more do we love those who depend upon us. Lucy grew to be dependent upon Overton, not only for what she was to learn of a dead, but for the development of her being in the lore of its own living but hitherto unspoken, language. All untaught as she was in the history of life, whom had she that could tell her so well of what one like her must soon needs begin to be told? She had always been fond of her studies, but she had never before gone to them with such avidity. She had never had such a teacher. Besides that he was very handsome and thoroughly bred in all social knowledge, he was an ardent and earnest teacher. Well acquainted with mythology, and with the history and literature of the ancients, it was a constant charm to her to listen as he taught her from day to day what was to be learned from the works of this great poet. He was as fond of speaking as she was of listening. It was pleasing to see the gradual approximation of these two natures toward each other. It was inexpressibly sweet to feel it. Not that they understood it

fully, or could foresee what it was to become. They usually had long sittings at recitations; neither ever grew tired. It was never the case that something more could not be found to be said about Troy, old Priam, his sons and their wives—his daughters, both unhappy, one Cassandra, a prophetess, but destined never to be believed; the other Creusa, wife of the half-divine Æneas—and others famous as well in Greek as Trojan story. These recitations were usually had in the drawing-room on his return from school in the afternoons, and the announcement of supper usually found them not quite finished. Sometimes, as the season advanced, they would sit in the grove, and perhaps the young teacher would be a little more ardent as he spoke of Ida, and Idalus, and Cythera, and the wandering Delos. For the spring was coming on fast, and long before he had been accustomed to such things the birds were chirruping and building their nests, and trees and shrubs were blossoming, and the evening air was beginning to be sweet to breathe and to smell.

The school went along henceforth with little difficulty. People were surprised and somewhat disappointed to find how well their children advanced without the stimulus of the whip; indeed, it was soon found that this discipline was needed at home less than formerly. This did not look exactly right, and some people shook their heads. But the teacher was so handsome and gentlemanlike, and the children loved him so well and studied so hard, that even the oldest seemed to think that they might wait awhile and see what it would all come to.

Brinkly did the best of all. Overton discovered that he had a more vigorous understanding than he at first had supposed. Under the new *régime* the boy grew apace in all ways. Never did a schoolmaster get better pay, so far as it could be made out of a pupil's love and gratitude,

than he got in the case of Brinkly. All the rest, even to Abel, were proud of being the pupils of one who they did not doubt was the most learned and the best of mankind.

The lessons at the house progressed. It was now the first of April. Overton and Lucy were beginning in the afternoons and upon Saturdays to walk together in the woods adjoining the mansion. Sometimes with hooks and lines they made excursions down the creek for a mile and angled for perch. Whenever they went thus far they were accompanied by Jack; often Brinkly would accept their invitation to join them. He and Jack were great friends. His mother resided within a mile of Mr. Parkinson's, and, notwithstanding their difference, there was that cordial understanding between the two families which has ever obtained in country neighborhoods in Georgia, and which has made the poor of that State so superior to those of many of the States of the Union. There was ever among these poor a sense of dignity that is not always to be seen elsewhere. When Mrs. Glisson visited at all (and this was seldom), she would come to the Parkinsons as freely as to any place in the neighborhood, and she knew that she nowhere would meet a better welcome. Brinkly partook of his mother's regard for this family; and as for Lucy Parkinson, he thought her to be as nearly divine as was possible to human nature.

One Saturday morning these four set out together to the creek. The day was beautiful. Trees were in full foliage; birds were full of love and song. Lucy, in her gingham frock, her buckskin gauntlets, and her wide straw hat decked with a green ribbon, was very fair to see. The spring had imparted a livelier freshness to her complexion; and as she walked along and talked so joyously, Overton thought that he had never seen one so lovely.

“What a glorious thing it is to be young!” said George,

as he looked at Jack running to and fro ahead of them, shouting and trying to urge Brinkly to a more rapid pace.

“Are you then so old that you can thus praise youth?” said Lucy, smiling; “I thought you were a young man.”

“To be a child, I should have said. See that boy: how elastic and joyous! He has ten years that are already gone from me.”

“But have they left nothing behind whereby it is good to remember them?”

“Oh yes, indeed! It is a great comfort to think so.”

“Do you like teaching? You seem to.”

“That pleasure has its dependences.”

They walked on.

They were now in the midst of the forest; the branches of the trees on either side of the path completely shut out the sun's rays. Lucy had doffed her hat, and, tying a noose in the string, carried it upon her arm.

“The pleasure of teaching,” resumed Overton, “depends somewhat upon the person who is taught.”

“No doubt it is influenced by the docility and capacity of the pupil.”

“And somewhat, much indeed, upon the pupil's regard for the teacher. An honest teacher can never enjoy leading a hostile, or even an unwilling, pupil.”

“In that respect you must feel fully secure. Your pupils all regard you as you could desire; instance Brinkly yonder. It would make you vain to know what he thinks and says of you.”

“I know that Brinkly likes me; but may not that be from contrasting me with Mr. Meadows?”

“Never! Brinkly is too fine a boy to found his attachments upon mere contrasts. Besides, they all like you.”

“They all remember Mr. Meadows,” he persisted, laughing.

“They have not all known Mr. Meadows.”

“Who has not?”

“Why—Jack.”

And she again put on her hat.

“True,” said Overton, “there is Jack, and a loving heart he has, not only for me, but for all mankind, I believe. Yes, I do derive far greater pleasure from my little school than I anticipated. Before I came here I was far from foreseeing that within four months I should feel such sadness at the idea of leaving, even at the end of the year.”

They reached the creek and wandered leisurely down the stream, angling a little and talking much, until they came to a high bluff thickly covered with laurel. At the bottom of this bluff were two ledges of rock, about thirty feet apart, overhanging the creek. A narrow path winding along the bank through dense shrubbery of various kinds led to these ledges. On the first of these George and Lucy sat. It was a place to which the latter often resorted in the spring and summer. The water was deep, and it eddied slowly on the hither side as if it loved to linger in so cool and lovely a place.

“A charming spot!” exclaimed George.

“Is it not?” she answered. “I knew you would say so. I call it Laurel Hill; but Brinkly and Jack, who come here for other purposes than mine, call it Rock Hole.”

Interwoven among the laurel were great numbers of yellow jasmines. Brinkly and Jack had followed the path to the farther side of the bluff, from which it could be ascended, and, gathering the flowers, brought them down. They then seated themselves on the lower ledge of rocks and angled. Brinkly quietly regarded from time to time Lucy as she wove garlands for his and Jack’s hats. In imitation, Overton wove one and fastened it around hers.

It might have been done more handsomely, but she did not reject it.

They talked more than they angled, especially Overton, about many things; among others, of Daphne, of whom these laurel shades reminded him. How Daphne was the daughter of the Peneus, and was loved by Apollo. Apollo, after the slaughter of the Python, had ridiculed the little bow and arrows of Cupid; the latter in revenge took two shafts from his quiver, and with the one sharpened with iron he pierced the boastful victor, and with the other blunted with lead he shot Daphne. The one created love, the other dislike. She fled, and Apollo pursued her to the laurel shades. Finding herself about to be overtaken, she cried to her father. The river-god heard her and changed her form to the laurel, and this was why the laurel was made sacred to Apollo. One might well imagine this to be the very spot to which she had fled from her lover.

But Cupid used to do such strange things.

Lucy looked at the two boys fishing.

“Music,” said George, “would sound sweetly in this place, so still and shady.”

She made no answer.

“Have you never sung here?”

“Sometimes,” she answered, smiling.

He asked her to sing.

“Do you know ‘The Poet’s Sigh’?” she asked.

“I am familiar with the words, but have never known it set to music.”

She sang it low and clear. When she repeated for the last time the refrain—

“ Then here’s to her who long
Hath waked the poet’s sigh;
The girl who gave to song
What gold could never buy”—

she turned unconsciously to Overton, and her voice trembled in concluding. He was looking and listening with his whole being.

“Beautiful,” he said quietly.

She cast down her eyes. She did not sing any more. He did not ask her. She was sitting upon the highest promontory of the ledge, with her face looking down the stream; he, a few feet back, reclined against the bluff. He made no motion, but sat still, looking at the singer. She averted her eyes in the instant of their meeting his, cast them down, and curiously contemplated the wreath upon her hat. If she had looked a moment more she would have shown him how she saw and how she valued all that he was thinking.

It is a delicious thing to feel that we are as those whom we are most fond to please would have us to be. It is like, and even of a kind with, the consciousness of the favor of the Divine Being. Exquisitely sweet to this young woman was the feeling of the possession of beauty and goodness; sweeter than ever before, because these were the charms which had drawn to her this young man's adoration. It was sweet to him, too, to behold the pleasure which the feeling of that adoration afforded. How true what Goethe says, that the first propensity to love in young hearts that are uncorrupted by vice is used to assume a spiritual form, in conformity with the law of our nature, which designs that one sex should be awakened by the other to the love and appreciation of the best and worthiest.

They had not observed how still and silent Brinkly sat upon the rocks below while they were talking; and Jack, who had grown tired, was reclining asleep against the bluff. Why sat the orphan so still and silent, his fishing-rod lying by his side? Was it because a better fortune

had not bestowed upon him the goodly gifts which that young woman sees and admires in the youth by her side? Has he too been building, though far away in secret, a little altar whereon, because he could not avoid it, he has been placing the offering of all that was ever conceived in his simple heart to be possible to him? We cannot say. When Lucy called to him and Jack, he rose, descended upon the other side of the rocks, knelt down, bathed his face, and dried it with his rude handkerchief. There he broke down, not rudely, but gently, that little altar; and when he joined Overton and Lucy his brave heart throbbed with all the pleasure he could bring himself to feel as he looked upon his teacher with a quiet smile of congratulation.

CHAPTER VIII.

OVERTON gave a week's holiday for the purpose of attending the sessions of the Superior Court.

As he was returning one afternoon, he reached the cottage of Mrs. Glisson. Before the gate, hitched to a post, stood Lucy Parkinson's riding-horse, and she was sitting with the widow and Brinkly before the door.

"' Light!" said the widow, in a hospitable tone. Brinkly was already at the gate, and while he tied the horse by the side of Lucy's, which made a great show of delight at his fellow's return, Overton advanced to the house. Lucy rose, made a slight readjustment of her dress and hat, and gave him her hand.

"We did not expect you quite so soon," she said.

The widow was delighted to have these two favorites, as she called them, at her house, and in no time she had brought from the kitchen a small pine table, spread a clean

white cloth, and placed upon it cakes and strawberries and cream.

“Now you two jes’ set right down thar and eat ’em. I made ’em for you and picked ’em for you: that is, Brinkly he done the pickin’. I want you two to have ’em, and God bless your two souls and bodies.”

This was a hearty grace, they thought.

It might have been because they were happy for having met again at the board after several days of separation, or they might have been willing to gratify their humble hostess by seeming to enjoy her hospitality. It might have been that, both being young and healthy, they had appetites, and it now being late in the day, they could not see why they might not be comforted by what was good when it was offered with such cheer. So they ate. The first serving was nearly consumed. The hostess, with a huge pewter spoon, clean and bright as rubbing could make it, piled up the deep saucers again and poured in the rich cream.

“Brinkly,” she said, in most hospitable inattention to their remonstrances—“Brinkly, my son, go to the kitchen and fetch here that hot cake off the spider.”

Good old times! when hospitality meant something more than formal invitation and an orderly array of silver forks, napkins, and finger-bowls; when it was not a ruinous business for a girl to send her plate a second time for what she wanted, if it were a slice of meat or even a spoonful of greens; when young ladies, even those in love, could eat at dinner-tables with as good appetites as those with which they now eat at cupboards and other secret places; when everybody ate as much as was wanted—sometimes, to gratify the earnest wish of the hostess, even eating a little more.

Dear old times! when, if people asked people to come

to see them, it was a sure sign that they wanted them; when people were always at home, if indeed they were at home in point of fact; and if they were not, and yet were within hearing of a horn, the blowing of it would bring them there. When calls were not considered as debts to be paid, which, when paid, transferred the entry from the debit to the credit side of the account, thenceforward excluding further visitations until there was another change of entries; when people visited because they felt like it, and would not have gone if they hadn't; when they carried their children and their knitting and spent the day, remembering that they derived as much pleasure as they imparted in such visitations.

I met not long ago an old Georgian, something the worse, like myself, from time and the war. We had a moderate mint-julep, and were sipping along and talking to each other of those old times when even the mint seemed fresher and more fragrant than now, especially in this latitude. We talked of the old-time visits; how the women sat at the house and knitted and sewed, and the men sat at the spring where the pig was barbecuing, and whittled with their knives, and chatted, and made bows and arrows and popguns for the children; and then when called up to dinner! When my friend got to talking about the chicken-pies we used to have in those days, the old fellow cried. I laughed at him a little at first; but he was so feeling when, after finishing his julep and laying down the tumbler softly on the ground under the trees where we were sitting, he spoke about the sort of crust they had then, and the oceans of gravy at the bottom, I cried some too. I couldn't help it.

Blessed old times! They had their errors and their evils. Many of these have been corrected, and others, I trust, will be in reasonable time. Would that what were

some of their greatest goods, the simplicity of ancient manners and the cordiality of social intercourse, could have been found to be not uncongenial with our advancing civilization!

Overton and Lucy rode home together.

The evening was delightful. The woods on either side of the road were redolent with sweet odors, and the pink and white flowers among the abundant shrubbery, contrasted with the varying green of the forest trees, were beautiful to see.

"You've had a good rest this week," said Overton.

"Not a bit; I have been studying more than usual. I have read the whole of the Fourth Book since you have been gone."

"Indeed! And you have read all about the career of Dido, and I was not here to enjoy it with you! That is the most interesting of all the books. How did you like the Carthaginian Queen?"

"I liked her—in some respects very well; but I think she might have expected such a result from—forgetting what certainly a higher delicacy would have made her remember. But I was deeply interested in her grief and her unhappy ending."

"It is a pretty episode. As for her want of delicacy, we must remember that Cupid was in that case, as in that of Phœbus and Daphne, and in those times even the goddesses did not afford the best examples in delicacy to women.

"But for the poet to make her fall in love twice—I did not like that. I suppose, however, he must follow the legend."

"Yes, in that respect," answered George; "but," he resumed, smiling, "Virgil took a great liberty with chronology in order to get in the legend. There was once a story that the bards indicted Virgil before Apollo for making

Dido fall in love with Æneas two hundred years before she was born, and that Apollo scolded him a little, but pardoned him afterward because he was a favorite. You will find afterward that her old love for Sichæus returned, and that when Æneas met her in the lower regions she would not so much as speak to him, but ran away and sought the side of her first love."

"What strange things there are in those old books!" said Lucy. They had just reached home.

After supper that night Mr. Parkinson and Overton had a long conversation concerning the incidents of the week and courts generally.

That night in their chamber, Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson had a little talk.

"Susan, that fellow's right in going to the law, and he knows it. A pity! a pity!"

"A pity what?" she asked.

"That he has nothing."

"Nothing of what?"

"Why, money, my dear."

"He will make it, no doubt."

"That's not the thing; he ought to have it now."

"Never mind; we can help him, if he should need it, until he gets where he will not—that won't be long. We owe it to him for what he has done for Jack."

"I wish he had money to be able to support himself in a rank suitable to his talents and his family. I am satisfied now that his mother's family must have been good. I didn't know them, as I told you; but I've no doubt that they were all right. And, indeed, those Overtons would not have intermarried with a family beneath themselves. I wish, however—of course on his account—that he had some means of his own."

"I tell you, darling, he does not need them now; and

will not as long as you are the dear, good, generous old fellow that you are."

"Humph!" Mr. Parkinson did not and probably could not explain what he meant by this ejaculation; so he went off to sleep.

The next day in the afternoon the lessons at the house were resumed. They must review the story of Dido. That is not a story to be read by one's self.

"Queen Dido," said Lucy, "was, indeed, a lovely character as Virgil represents her; but in one respect it is very imperfect. Can you guess what I mean?"

"Because she fell in love again after the death of her husband?"

"No; I have been thinking of that. That, indeed, would seem impossible, but that I have known some excellent women who have done the same thing."

"Was it, then, that she did so after so short an acquaintance?"

"No, not exactly that either," she answered; and continued with some hesitation: "It was soon, very soon; but I can understand that. Then Æneas was a godlike man, and, as you say, Cupid was on hand to inspire. And then he was an exile seeking for a home and kingdom. Then the queen was surrounded by barbarous and hostile kings, and needed, or thought she needed, a man and a hero to conduct successfully her city's relations with strangers. I can well understand how such things might happen. But that is not what I was thinking of. And you cannot guess?"

"No, unless it was her conduct after the departure of her lover."

"Oh no, no, not that!—that was the most natural thing of all. It is that she—I hardly know how to express it, but she seems to me to have been too ready to let her lover

know the state of her feelings, and too ready to presume that he was similarly impressed."

"Oh, she could not fail to know that the Trojan, after those years of wandering, would rejoice in the assurance of rest and a kingdom, especially when to these was super-added such a woman."

"But the poet should have represented her as waiting for a declaration of preference on his part for her, individually and especially."

"She could not fail to know that from the consciousness of her own perfections. A queen, ruling over a powerful people, young and beautiful, would have no doubt upon that point. Besides, you remember that she had *said* nothing to Æneas. *We* know that she loved him because she had confessed to her sister Anna. But he did not know it, or was presumed not to know it, until the hour of their mutual avowal. Yet would you not admit that in certain circumstances the woman might be the first to avow her love?"

She hesitated.

"In the case of sovereigns, where marriages are managed generally for the sake of political purposes, I suppose such a thing might not be far amiss; but when it is purely a matter of personal regard, I cannot imagine it possible, consistent with delicacy."

"In no circumstances?"

"None."

They were both silent for several minutes.

"Suppose," said George at length, "that she knew that a man loved her with all the strength of his whole being, suppose that his love had been so ardent and single that in her heart of hearts she had grown to reciprocate it; then suppose that he was so related either to her or to her family that he could not, or she knew that he *thought* he

could not, in faith and honor, make that avowal himself—then what?”

He turned his deep blue eyes upon her. She knew it, although she did not look up for a minute, in which she was slowly turning the leaves of the book. Then she suddenly lifted her face to him and answered:

“In such an event I—should think that both should wait until that relation was ended.”

She turned her face away and blushed. Overton felt a thrill of pleasure, but he said nothing. He knew he could not trust himself to speak in that wise any more now; and he saw that she was frightened. He took the book from her hands, and said:

“Did you ever hear of the trial of fortunes by the Virgilian Lots?”

“No, indeed; how is that?”

“It is an old fashion, but it was once believed to be infallible. During the Middle Ages, and even later, Virgil was considered to have been a wizard. Kings and commons consulted him alike. It has been said of Charles the First that when he was planning his escape from Carisbrooke Castle, he resorted to the Virgilian Lots. The way they are tried is this: you make a wish, then open casually the book, and the sentence on which your eye first falls will give the answer to your wish.”

“How curious!”

“Shall we try it?”

“I have no objection. You will try first.”

“Here goes!”

He looked at her for a moment, and, opening the book, placed his finger upon the page.

“Read it,” he said, without looking at it. It was the line in the First Book, running thus:

“Sed magno Æneæ mecum teneatur amore.”

Lucy looked at it for a moment, and then tried to hide with her hands the blushes that were deeper than before. He glanced at the line.

“It is singular,” he said. “Will you try yours?”

“Not now.”

Then she arose and went to her chamber.

CHAPTER IX.

MIDSUMMER. The lessons, both at the schoolhouse and the mansion, had been going on well; and now from the former the schoolmaster thought he needed a little rest. He was thinking of closing the school quietly for a couple of weeks; but from time immemorial in that section the custom had been to hold, at least in midsummer, a public examination of the pupils. The parents were so anxious upon this point that Mr. Parkinson persuaded Overton to yield.

With what interest, with what awful anxiety that day was expected! Boys and girls prepared for it as for an epoch that was to absorb the attention of all mankind. As for the amount of studying that was done, figures and words would be wholly inadequate to calculate and tell of it. Yet, if one could believe them, every one was destined to fail. Betsy Wiggins was going to be scared to death. She just knew she was. Mandy Grizzle could tell just as well now as after the thing was all over that she was going to miss every word that was asked her, even if it was to tell what her own blessed name was. As for Mely Jones and Henritter Bangs, they were both bent on telling their mothers that if they didn't want to be everlastingly disgraced they had better not come to that schoolhouse on

that day. It was a contest between Sam Pate and Bill Jones which was going to burst open the widest. The probabilities were that, if not on the night before, at least on the morning of the awful day, Asa Boatright calmly and affectionately would bid the world farewell. Abel made no promises nor threats, but we know what a firm fellow he was.

The day previous to the examination was devoted to preparation for the entertainment. The ground in front of the schoolhouse was carefully swept by the girls, and an arbor of green boughs constructed by the boys. Mr. Parkinson had furnished planks and blocks of wood for the seats. The little piazza was to be the stage. Wreaths of flowers were hung around its pillars and the posts of the arbor. But the great thing of the whole arrangement was a floral vignette festooned over the door by Lucy, in which, in large letters made of cedar-leaves, were the words "DEVOTED TO LEARNING AND VIRTUE."

She had arranged it at home, and availing herself of an occasion when all the pupils were out of sight to fix it in its place, she called them to see it. In their opinions, never had been seen before such a magnificent work of art. Some had a dim idea of the design; others were wholly in the dark, and their admiration was the highest. They didn't need to have it explained. They didn't want it explained; there it was, and let it explain itself. Brinkly did indeed attempt to make Sam Pate understand it, but Sam had no idea that Brinkly did it justice.

"Means the schoolhouse!" said Sam indignantly: "it means everything, by Jings!" And he looked and looked, and he felt in his soul that those letters, to say the least, were the index to all human knowledge. When Abel got home that afternoon he tried to give his mother some idea of it, but from his account she couldn't make it out. So he told her impatiently to wait and see for herself, and that

he didn't have no time to bother with nobody nor nothin' that night exceptin' of his books.

The great day came. It was sunny, but not too warm. The pupils had all come very soon after breakfast. Whoever might have liked to see a little crowd of fresh and anxious yet happy children, there was the place and then was the time. They were mighty serious under the burden of impending responsibilities, but proud and happy. This was the day on which the mysteries of knowledge were to be exhibited to their parents and friends. Not only so, but there was that glorious inscription which was to fill all beholders with wonder, of the glory of which they were participants, and the mighty meaning of which was known to no outsiders.

They came up early. The boys wore clean copperas-dyed pants and brown linen jackets. The girls, in striped homespun frocks and checked aprons, with their red cheeks and round figures, were types in their way, I tell you. Mely Jones was the oldest and the most advanced, and she had on a calico which had been proven to have come from Augusta. It had not been seen often, but when it had been it was noticed.

Oh, you Mely! you are not so far ahead of Betsy Wiggins that she may not overtake you in a year or two. She has no calico; but look at the buckle in that belt, and say if it doesn't outshine yours!

And see that flounce of Mandy Grizzle! I want you to look at that, and then at that ribbon round the neck of Henritter Bangs, which last week, only last week, by fortunate accident had been bought from a peddler, who pledged the word and honor of a gentleman that it had not been taken out of the box since he bought it in Philamadelphly.

"Philadelphia, Henry!" said Mely, who prided herself on her geography; "not Philamadelphly."

“No,” maintained Henritter; “they was the very words he said now. And he stayed all night at our house; and he had a blue wagon, and streaked and striped wheels; and he had a short-tailed black dog; and he slept under the wagon; and he wouldn’t let nobody go nigh that wagon; and he whipped our dog Wallis, and Wallis was a heap the biggest; and pap said he wouldn’t a believed it; and he said that it was the first time he ever knowed Wallis to be whipped by ary nother dog; and ma said that he had the prettiest things that she see ary pedler have in a long time; and she actilly made pap buy her a set of knives and forks, which pap said that we didn’t need ’em, but ma and the man talked around him so fast and good that he couldn’t help it; and then he said that them ribbons come all the way from Philamadelphly. Now they was jes’ the very words he said.”

Mely had to let her alone.

But where was Abel? All were there except him. He was wont to be the most punctual of the punctual. Where was he? And now yonder came on a gentleman of about his size, and from the direction whence he used to come. Nobody had any idea who it was. He walked by the side or a little in advance of a woman, whom he held by the hand and apparently was trying to tug along faster. He was clad in new clothes from head to foot—a green cotton frock-coat and nankeen pants striped, actually striped. From his head hung backwardly a new straw hat. These articles were full large, and left, as they were designed to leave, ample room for growing. Shoes? Yes, shoes! and if they ain’t rights and lefts! They too were somewhat oversized, and the legs of the gentleman in question made rather a slim figure as they came out of them. But this wasn’t all. Would you believe it? he had on a cravat—a bandana cravat—and one side of his collar was sawing his ear at every step he took.

Who could it be? He almost dragged the lady along, who, as she approached, seemed amused at what she probably considered unnecessary haste on such a warm morning. As he got under the arbor, his eyes alternated between the lady and the schoolhouse door. Right up to the latter he marched, and, pointing to the inscription, cried:

“Look-ee thar! Didn’t I tell you so?”

That voice could not be mistaken. It was the voice of Abel.

He looked at his mother with an expression almost ferocious. He seemed to feel that he had done his duty in leading her to the vestibule of the temple of wisdom, but that she was too far gone in ignorance to enter in. So, leaving her to take care of herself, he pulled off his hat, rushed in, and was the first to take his seat. Finding that he was yet too early, he rose again after a moment or two, walked out into the yard, and, without saying much to anyone, directed his observations in turns to the inscription, the visitors as they came up, and his own coat and shoes.

Jack Parkinson, notwithstanding that he was a general favorite, yet was the object of a little, only a little, jealousy on account of his better clothes. The difference in this respect, however, had grown less gradually. Mrs. Parkinson had made this change (and fully with Jack’s consent) out of regard for the feelings of people whom she considered in all other respects except worldly possessions as good as herself. Even on this public occasion Jack had only a suit of linen, but cut and fitted so as to make him look fine. Abel liked Jack very well; but he was bound to turn him down one time. He had been eying him for some time. Finally he sidled up to where Jack was standing and talking to Brinkly. He then looked alternately at Jack’s clothes and his own. He did not speak a word; but his counte-

nance, as plainly as could have been done by words, asked: "How do you feel now, my lively lad?"

Jack complimented and Brinkly looked benignly upon him. How Brinkly had grown!—every way. He was taller by much, and his face and form were beginning to assume the appearance of manhood. Frequent association with his teacher had given him much gentleness of manner. Overton admired him more and more, and gloried in instructing him. He had presented Brinkly with a coat of bombazine cloth for this occasion, for which his mother seemed to think that she and her son ought to work in payment for the rest of their lives.

After Abel had got through with Jack, he looked critically and doubtingly at Brinkly's coat; then glancing down at his own tails, he seemed reassured and strutted off again.

And now the visitors were gathering—some on foot, a few old people in gigs, but the most on horseback. Bouncing girls, some with beaux and some without, rode up on spirited horses, and tying them to the limbs of trees, alighted, generally without assistance. About two hundred persons were present. The patrons of the school had contributed to furnish a dinner, and early in the morning Allen Thigpen, who was to superintend the barbecue, announced to Mr. Parkinson that all the *carcasses* which had been put down had come and were now in the pit.

The last visitors to arrive were Miss Thigpen and Miss Acry, escorted by Mr. Bill Williams. This gentleman had asked for a day's holiday, and had got it. Mr. Bill seldom made a request of that sort of late but it was granted. Messrs. Bland & Jones were growing very obliging, it seemed, and let him go whenever he pleased. To-day Mr. Jones had even lent him his horse to ride. Miss Acry had gone the day before to the Thigpens', partly on a visit, and

partly preparatory to attending the examination. Mr. Bill had got there early, and was cordially received by the two ladies. His attentions since the last time we saw him had been divided between them. His mother had urged him again and again to go right straight along and ask Miss Karline to have him, and not come away until she said yes; and then go right straight to work and git ready and git married, and quit all that foolishness of keeping of a store. Mr. Bill could but admit that things were going wrong there in general. The stock was getting wild. Old Molly had tried her best to fling him coming from meeting, and even while he was riding along with Miss Karline. If it had been anybody else but him on top of her she would have flung him and probably broke some bones. As for that colt, which he were now a mule-colt, he had torn down fences, and he actilly believed that same colt would jump over the moon providing he wanted to go over on t'other side, and old Molly, in course, would foller straight arfter him. They all need him, that's who they need.

Still he hesitated. The more attentive he was to Miss Karline, the more gracious became Miss Betsy Ann. If he lagged at all in his attentions to the former, the latter grew a little colder. With all his knowledge of women generally, he sometimes doubted if he understood Betsy Ann fully. It was only a day or two before the examination that Betsy Ann had carried with her own hands a counterpane to Mrs. Williams as a present from herself and Miss Karline jointly, though Betsy Ann confessed that it was mostly the work of Miss Karline. She needn't have done that; for it was Bonaparte a-crossin' o' the Rhine; and, with all her efforts and instructions in that line, Betsy Ann could not yet quite get up to Miss Karline in thus illustrating that achievement of the illustrious Gaul. Mrs. Williams, on receiving the present, had taken upon herself

to go into Dukesborough and tell her son that her desires was that he should go as straight as possible to Miss Karline, and not to come away till to such questions as he might ask her she should say yes. It wasn't worth while to be fooling any longer; and if he didn't strike now while the iron was hot, in her opinion it would get cold.

So Mr. Bill, with a yet uncertain mind, however, went to the examination. He was very gay this morning, and gotten up uncommonly well. The only extravagance about him was a nice little green riding-whip, with a cracker twisted of crimson silk. The notice of the crowd was first attracted to this by the violence with which, as he walked to the arbor, he thrashed the dust from his pants and coat-tails. There were smiles and nods at his town ways. Allen looked at him with an expression that was not entirely intelligible; but Allen was devoted, as we have seen, to his sister, and was therefore determined to like him as well as possible.

The great floral wreath made an impression far beyond all expectation. Lucy, whom everybody considered the greatest of her sex, was called upon many times to explain its meaning, no one after hearing it appearing to be able to give anybody else a satisfactory idea. It was so interesting, and the fair artist talked so prettily, that those who had heard her several times were as eager to hear again as new listeners, and as attentive to all subsequent explanations. One elderly lady who had heard about a dozen, after looking through her spectacles in silence for some time, turned to Lucy and said:

“Now, is it natly so, or do it jes' 'pear like?”

This was rather a poser. Lucy could not answer readily and categorically. She did the best she could, however, putting it somewhere between the two. The elderly lady merely replied:

“Hit beats me!” and then gave way to another.

The two ladies whom Mr. Bill Williams had escorted expressed their admiration, and at the same time hinted that it was a little beyond them too. But Mr. Bill thought he could satisfy them.

“You see,” said he, “it is a sign that this here house is a school-’ouse, instid of a meetin’-house, or a dwellin’, or a cote-house, or a sto’-house, or a—so to speak—blacksmith-shop—or any other kind of buildin’ exceptin’ *of* a school-’ouse. Oh yes, they ain’t no doubt that that’s what it is; and it have been done very well—very well indeed. It is not altogether as *solid* as our signboard at the sto’; but for a school-’ouse it do very well—very well indeed.” And he bobbed his head condescendingly.

Oh yes, indeed, they could understand it about the LEARNING; but they couldn’t, especially Allen, quite comprehend the last part of the inscription.

“I sees your de-ficulties,” replied Mr. Bill. He looked steadily and even frowningly at the wreath for a moment or two, and holding his whip somewhat as if it had been a pen, pointed to it, and slowly went through the motions of writing the word *Virtue*.

“Yes, verter,” he said, as his countenance cleared up; “verter: that’s the de-ficulty, is it? Why, verter—you understand—it is a female. Yes: that’s it! Which you know thar’s both girls and boys in this school, and which you know in Dukesborough Mr. Cordy have the boys in hisn an’ Miss Wilkins have the girls in hern. Yes, sir; verter is the female.”

The young ladies smiled, and Allen, putting his hands in his pockets, walked off to look after the barbecuing.

CHAPTER X.

THE examinations commenced, and it was good to see the results of a reasonable and humane system of instruction; not a parent there who was not proud of his children that day. There being but few classes, and the studies being simple, every pupil had a fair opportunity for distinction in geography, grammar, arithmetic, reading, and spelling. Problems in arithmetic were done on a blackboard. Some long ones would cover a whole board. Sam Pate and Asa Boatright did sums in interest which made many of the audience imagine they foresaw that these boys were destined to become in time great money-lenders. In multiplication and division Abel seemed to exhaust numbers. Bill Jones did the great horseshoe sum. It was such a big job of setting down and rubbing out, and multiplying and adding, that Bill got himself white all over with the chalk-dust. Bill didn't care; this was business. Bill was after that great pile of money for the last nail, and when he had got it he turned to the audience, shook some of the chalk-dust off, and looked as if he were seeking for investments. A general murmur of relief and satisfaction went through the audience.

"Ef he ain't broke," whispered Allen, "I be dinged! That's the last horse that feller'll buy." Then Allen said seriously that he never had believed that horseshoe sum. nohow.

"Oh, in cose," answered Mr. Bill, "I don't sposed that no man, nor no set o' men, wharsomever they mout a come from, ever sot about a-tradin' for horses in that kind o' style. If I was goin' to sell old Molly, and which she's as

good a plough-nag as ever hopped over a bush, and a feller was to begin talkin' to me about takin' of her by the nail, I should give him sich a piece o' my mind as would make him go arfter another customer quick. Oh no, they jes' sposens the case, and put it in thar to show what figgers will do when you keep on a constant a-pilin' 'em on top o' one another."

Allen again walked off with his hands in his pockets, and Betsy Ann slyly laughed as she watched him.

The girls of the school did splendidly. They talked about the countries and the rivers, and mountains and deserts, and oceans and lakes, as if they had crossed them over and over again and were ready to do it now, taking with them anybody else who might wish to go along with them.

Upon the whole, however, I believe Abel afforded the highest entertainment. Abel was such a scraggy little fellow to look at, and had done so poorly at the Goosepond, and he had such strange ways, that he was generally considered as of very weak understanding. All such notions came to an end to-day.

By way, probably, of giving variety to the exercises, Abel answered the questions interrogatively. It was music to hear him spell words of eight syllables, and then in a rising and pathetic tone sing out *Unintelligibility? Incomprehensibility?* He could be heard far and wide. Allen was at the pit, where, besides superintending his *carcasses*, he had been wondering what his sister Karline could see in such a man as Bill Williams to like him. When he heard Abel's screams he was in the act of turning over a pig. He raised himself up, and looking toward the stage, he asked of a bystander:

"Who in the name of Jee-roozelum is that?"

"Don't you know who that is, Allen?"

Allen looked fixedly at the speller.

“No, dinged if I do! I never seed him befo’.”

“Why, it’s Abel Kitchens.”

“Who?”

“Abel Kitchens.”

Without saying more, he advanced several steps toward the house, and listened with unmixed delight until Abel had spelled himself out of breath. He then turned and remarked:

“I never should a knowed him with them clo’es if you hadn’t a told me. And if I hadn’t a seed it myself, I never should a b’lieved he could a spelt them words in that kind o’ style.”

Abel did as well in geography, with the exception of one temporary mistake. When asked by whom Pennsylvania was settled, he hesitated a moment, and then answered:

“By the English—ah—Earthquakes?”

The audience seemed a little uneasy. Overton glanced at Lucy, who had her handkerchief to her mouth, while her eyes were suffused with tears of laughter; so he bit his lips and coughed slightly. Mandy Grizzle, who was Abel’s classmate, turned and looked upon him with horror. Abel grinned, frowned, and catching at his coat-tails with his hands, and rocking himself right and left for a moment, answered rightly in the same tone:

“By the English Quakers?”

Afterward Abel shut up Asa Boatright, who was laughing at his mistake, by insisting that there weren’t no sich a mighty difference between ’em, anyhow, and asking Asa if he knowed what that was.

Bill Jones was the leader in geography. He was heard to boast that you give him a plenty of money, and insure his not getting drowned nor murdered nor eat up by wild beasts and other animals, he could find his way plump into

the middle of Africa. It wasn't worth while to try to lose Bill Jones anywhere on the top of the ground.

During the examination of the classes the audience, with few exceptions, kept their seats. Toward the last the smell of the barbecue was becoming very sweet, and one could notice occasionally a nose turned toward the pit, and a pair of lips giving a subdued smack. There remained only the speaking, and the schoolmaster announced that it would be postponed until after the dinner, to which all were cordially invited. So they arose. And oh, what congratulations! Especially to the girls, for they were through with their work, and it was a safe business. Now that the excitement was over they did look exhausted, and yet so calm, so serenely triumphant! Mely Jones especially had done so much, had answered so many questions, and been put through such a searching course, that she seemed to feel that no reasonable person could expect her to recover herself in some time. After the rest had risen she sat with her head resting upon her mother's shoulder, her long hair hanging down at full length, and her pretty face and languid eyes indicating that though she had conquered, yet that such a victory was more expensive than most people were aware of. Oh, you Mely!

The dinner was capital; pig, lamb, kid, chicken, goose, all sorts of vegetables, pies, tarts, custards. Allen got enough compliments for the barbecue to make anybody else very vain. But Allen merely remarked that he should not have undertook it if he hadn't knowed what he was about. Give him the right sort of *carcasses*, good oak-bark, and a plenty of pepper, vinegar, and salt, and he would be monstrous apt to have it right; that is, providin' the people didn't git hungry too soon and begin to hurry him up.

Mr. Bill was very gay. Notwithstanding that he had to serve two ladies at the table, he did not part from his riding-

whip; with singular dexterity he fastened it under his left arm, and as he turned here and there the silk cracker played all sorts of tricks, occasionally tickling Miss Acry's nose to such a degree that she would laugh and chide him so sweetly that it would soon be tickling her again. Miss Karline looked uncommonly well to-day. Betsy Ann called Mr. Bill's attention to the fact, and with great generosity gave it as her opinion that she was the finest girl in all her acquaintance. Mr. Bill smiled and said nothing in answer to such remarks, yet he thought to himself that he had never seen Miss Karline look so well.

He congratulated everybody who had any special interest in the examination. Who knowed but that some of them boys, providin', in cose, they lived and kept goin' in the same in which they was a-startin', mout live to be big men in Dukesborough or some other big place. Who knowed?

Lucy went about from one to another of the elderly ladies and helped them from the various dishes. What little distinctions of honor were made, were in favor of the mothers of the children. The pupils were the main attendants, and boys and girls were liberal to a degree that approached prodigality. Abel's attentions were confined mostly to his mother. He piled the good things upon her plate so that she had to stop him and inquire if he expected her to eat everything on the table, and all at once at that. But Abel had an object: he wanted to practice his speech one more time. So, having served his mother, he gathered in his hands a big piece of pie, and, eating rapidly as he went, rushed into the woods, and in quite an elevated tone put a number of interrogatories to a certain red-oak tree to which he resorted.

The dinner being over, the ladies repaired to the arbor again, and the men stood without in knots of eight or ten,

and discussed the weather and their crops. Every one insisted that he had received less rain than any of his neighbors. Whenever a rain was proven upon one, he insisted either that it was not enough to wet a pocket-handkerchief, or that it was so much as to set out the grass again that had just been chopped, and that it fell so hard as to wash his plantation clean away besides. I have often noticed during all my life that one of the most difficult things has been to make a farmer admit that he had had a seasonable rain upon his crop.

But the bell was rung in the midst of such disputes, and all repaired at once to the arbor.

Samuel Pate!

Mr. Pate was not by nature a great orator; but art and exercise enabled him to show off to considerable advantage. Hearty applause followed, for several of the boys had hinted that a little of that would have an encouraging effect. A yet greater share fell to Mr. Boatright, who followed. Mr. Jones had expected to carry everything before him, or at least lead it very closely up behind him. Sinking or swimming, living or dying, surviving or perishing, he was for the Declaration; and he looked as if he meant what he said. There was not a man there who felt like controverting his position when, in conclusion, he announced in thundering tones, "In-derpendence now, and In-derpendence forever!" Jack Parkinson did the poetry. It sounded very genteel; but there was not much room for spreading, as Bill called it.

But Abel! That was the speech that stirred the crowd and made everybody, as it were, feel like changing seats. His piece was a famous one in the old books, yet familiar to us all. Abel adhered to the interrogative manner which his teacher had labored in vain to correct. He inquired of the gentlemen and ladies present if they were not Ameri-

cans, and if they did not have a country vast in extent, and embracing all the varieties of the most salubrious climes. He went on further to ask if they were held not by charters, and propounded various interrogatories of that sort. His little voice screamed in a way which it was a wonder to hear. His gesticulation was equally remarkable. Occasionally he would rise on tiptoe and stretch out both arms; then his coat-tails would expand themselves and almost become separated in his rear. His shoes, however, remained wholly unexcited, refusing to follow his heels, but waiting patiently for their return. When he had asked questions enough to have taken the most of his audience weeks and weeks to answer, he retired, and blowed and perspired as if he had been running a mile. The surprise and pleasure that he had been inspiring all day came now to a climax. Everybody clapped their hands and rapped the benches and laughed with glee. Allen Thigpen, who had been standing at the outskirts, beat with a big stick one of the posts with such violence as to shake the whole arbor. Allen afterward passed his word and honor that never in all his born days had he ever heerd anything so unexpected.

“Becase, you see,” said he, “I knowed him at the Goose-pond. By the time he quit thar he didn’t ’pear like he have any more sense than a biled egg. But to-day! Why, it come on me to such a pitch as farly made the goose-bumps rise all over me. That spellin’ this mornin’ first started me to thinkin’; but the speakin’, it finished me. When he said ‘Hell not by chotters,’ dinged if I didn’t think he was a-cussin’!”

The exercises were closed by Brinkly Glisson. His speech was one that had been composed by Overton for the occasion. Not loud and violent like Abel and some of the rest, he spoke easily, naturally, and to the point. Everybody listened eagerly as he declaimed on the value of

education, and the greater value of honor, and truth, and courage. Warming more and more as he proceeded, he made really a fine ending. His mother had been filling up all day. She ate almost nothing at dinner, telling Lucy, who pressed many nice things upon her, that she could not eat until Brinkly got through. While he was speaking she did not look at him except by stolen glances, fearing that she might put him out. When he had finished, and the whole air was rent, and the woods resounded with applause, as well for Brinkly as in general commendation of the whole exercises, her mother's heart could repress its emotions no longer, and she wept those tears of joy and pride that are so sweet to the lowly. The neighbors congratulated her, but she could weep only the more. Allen squeezed her hand the hardest of all, and he cried like a child when she hugged him.

"Ding it all!" said Allen, but he blubbered so that he couldn't make it out, and so, breaking off from the widow, he hugged Brinkly, and wept on his neck. "I knowed it was in you," he said, as the tears ran from his eyes, "if—if it only could be fotch out."

As soon as the audience arose to disperse, the widow went to Overton and humbly took his hand.

"It is you who done it all. If it hadn't been for you the child might have been ruined. Oh, the goodness of the Lord that brought from so far away off yonder such a friend to me and my child!"

This was all she could say: a poor little speech; and even in that her greatest thanks were carried beyond himself. Yet, though he lived to make a high career, and to receive much of eloquent praise, it never imparted a pleasure superior to that he felt as that poor woman held his hand, and he knew what she felt but could not express.

Although there was to be but a couple of weeks' holiday,

yet the pupils took most affectionate leave of their teacher, and not one failed to look with pleasure to the reunion. While Brinkly went for his mother's horse, she asked Lucy in a low tone:

"Ain't he glorious?"

"Who? Brinkly? Yes, that he is."

"Oh, you know who I mean: that man yonder."

"Mr. Overton? Yes, he'll do pretty well."

"And now, honey, you listen to me. Don't you let that chance slip. Don't you."

As Lucy held the stirrup for her, after Brinkly had set her upon the horse, she bent down and whispered in her ear:

"Him and you was *made* for one another."

The girl pretended not to hear, and the widow, followed by her son on foot, rode away.

The last to leave were Mr. Bill and his party. They had to wait for Allen, who lingered in order to see that all the dinner-vessels were sent to their owners. On the way home Mr. Bill, as long as they all rode together, made sundry comments upon the exercises. They were for the most part commendatory; yit Mr. Cordy's school in Dukesborough were certainly ahead of Chestnut Grove. Ef Mr. Overton should live and keep at it awhile longer, he mout some time move into Dukesborough and keep school thar, arfter Mr. Cordy give up; in cose he had never heard of Mr. Cordy's givin' up, but he did know that somehow schoolmarsters, as a giner'l thing, were a movin' kind o' people, and never stayed long in one partickler place, and that made him say what he did. But still, it weren't no business of hisn, and he merrily made the remark because, from all he could see, he thought well of the young man and hoped that he would do well.

Allen and Betsy Ann fell back a little, and Mr. Bill and

Miss Karline rode on together. Mr. Bill was much flattered by Miss Karline's regard, as well he might be. Whenever he found himself alone with her of late he felt that he would do reasonably well to get her, and it was only the increased graciousness of Betsy Ann that hitherto had prevented his addressing the former. Betsy Ann's remark at the examination had the double effect of stimulating his feelings toward Miss Karline, and of raising the suspicion that she herself did not mean that her own deportment toward him should be considered in the light in which he had been regarding it. So, as he rode along, he was decidedly more demonstrative to Miss Karline than he had yet been. He delivered his mother's thanks for the counterpane, and told how anxious she was that he should settle himself.

"And, indeed, it look like a man of my age ought to settle hissself; but sich it is, a man can't settle hissself by hissself."

How archly and mischievously he did look at Miss Karline!

"Ahem! of course not," said Miss Karline. "Still, I don't know so well about that. Of course it's not for me to speak."

Mr. Bill insisted that he believed his mother was right, and that he ought to leave off the vanities of a vain and foolish world; and, to tell the truth, a man wasn't going, and wasn't expected to be going, to do that excepting he was to git married and have a wife to help him, and he declared that he would like to have Miss Karline's opinions upon the subject.

Miss Karline answered that if he *wanted* her opinions certain and in earnest, and if he *needed* her opinions, of course he should have them.

Now Bill said that he did want 'em, and felt like in all the circumstances he stood in need of 'em.

Then Miss Karline said that as for herself, provided she knew herself, she desired to fool no person, nor to trifle with no person's feelings, nor to keep people a-waiting for answers to polite and gentlemanly questions. Mr. Williams was a person whom she could but have a great respect for; and as for his mother, she loved her almost like her own blessed mother that was dead and gone. As Mr. Williams had asked her opinions on that partickler subject, and had ever acted in such a gentlemanly way, she would at once give him her answer. She always had liked him, but never, never in this blessed world should he have knew it from her lips if he had not first asked her opinions, and that in such a gentlemanly way.

They were now near the house. Mr. Bill smiled, and looked back at Allen and Betsy Ann, who were now riding fast. He gave his whip to Miss Karline, who gave her horse a cut, and they galloped to the gate. As he assisted her to dismount he took the liberty to squeeze her hand, and, as he had acted in such a gentlemanly way, Miss Karline quietly but firmly returned the pressure.

Allen looked at them closely when he came up. His sister's face assured him, he thought, that matters were settled, and he therefore treated Mr. Bill with increased cordiality. Mr. Bill was obliged to go on to Dukesborough that evening. When he was about to start, all shook hands with him, and Betsy Ann said that she was always glad to see him. He opened his eyes a little at this remark, but only said good-bye, and then took his leave.

CHAPTER XI.

THE vacation was spent by George Overton at Chestnut Grove. He needed no further recreation than what would

be afforded by the more constant association of Lucy Parkinson. The lessons to her were not discontinued. The new term opened with an increased number of pupils, and everything went on as usual. It was now near October, in which month he was to be admitted to the bar, and would then give up the school.

Thus far no word of avowed love had been spoken. The young man had a long-continued struggle between inclination and a sense of duty. An inmate in Mr. Parkinson's family, intrusted with the education of his son, and, to some extent, with that of his daughter, the very facilities which he had for engaging her affections prompted him the more to feel as if he ought to abstain from any positive avowal until he should be ready to go away. He believed that both her parents had noticed his attachment, and he hoped that the mother would favor the suit; he feared that the father would oppose it. The former had grown more and more cordial from the beginning; the latter was simply not less so, and his general deportment had been such that Overton felt as if he regarded their connection as a mere matter of business, and that when it should be ended he would be ready to form a similar arrangement with somebody else. If Overton had been a man to calculate upon other influences in his intended suit besides his own personal character and exertions, he would have set some value upon the regard which Jack had for him, a regard which had grown into a most ardent affection.

When he first was aware of a growing attachment to Lucy, he had resolved, even if he should ever come to suspect that his passion was reciprocated, to abstain from all mention of it while he should remain in the family, and, indeed, to abstain from proposing marriage until he should become established in his profession and be able to maintain himself well. Although his father's estate had not been

yet settled, he looked for no means from that quarter, and expected that the law would be his only dependence for a living.

He thought he had been keeping his resolution. How prone is youth to persuade itself that it faithfully pays its vows, when sometimes, unconsciously to itself, it can but keep back a part! In all this time he had never *said* he loved; yet how many times, when alone with her, it was hard for him not to tell her all he felt. Many times he would look upon her and his voice would take on a trembling and tenderness which were quite as expressive as any words would have been. Though no expressions of love had been spoken, each knew what the other felt.

The term was near its end, and seemed this time to be destined to close as happily as before, with the exception only that the teacher so well loved was about to leave for another field of endeavor. Jack Parkinson had become so fond of him that, whenever the subject of the latter's leaving was mentioned, his eyes would fill with tears. One day he went to his mother and laid his head in her lap, and asked her why it was that Mr. Overton must go away. She put down her work and smoothed and stroked his yellow hair, and they talked much with each other about how kind Mr. Overton had been, and what a great service he had rendered Jack, and how they would always be his friends, and many such things, and the mother shed as many tears as the child. The next day Mr. Parkinson left home for a visit of a few days to Augusta, and that evening when Jack had come from school he went to his mother, and, laying his head in her lap again, told her that he did not feel well. She saw that he had some fever, and she led him to his bed.

I can never think without sadness of those seasons of bilious fever consequent upon too reckless destruction of

forests. The country physicians of those days, with few exceptions, seemed to have made themselves acquainted with only two great remedies: blood-letting and calomel. Our laws then allowed to all young men, however unqualified either by general culture or in native talents, after having read through a few books of medical science in a doctor's office, to appear before a committee of physicians in Milledgeville, who, after a nominal examination, might give them certificates of proficiency and licenses to distribute their knowledge among the sick and the afflicted, and, in return for such distribution, to charge, and when disputed either by the patients themselves or their representatives after they were dead, to sue for and collect their fees and rewards. The qualifications mainly requisite for passing before the committee were the facile use of the lancet, the determination to refuse cold water to those who were sick with fever, and to give calomel in unlimited quantities.

It has always been a matter of wonder with me why many more persons were not killed by that old method of treatment. But I remember that men were stouter and stronger then than now; they lived more simply, and worked and exercised more heartily. Then I have known of those who cheated physicians and got well in spite of them, and in ways unknown to them.

I knew of two young men, brothers, great, robust, brave, hard-working fellows. They were both sick of bilious fever. From the first day they grew worse, and the fever racked them sore. Consumed with thirst, they begged for water, and a little must be given to them while they had strength. But on the sixth day they were so weak that it was considered safe to deny them altogether. They lay in the same room, and the water-pail was at the door. Oh, how they had begged that day for water, and, when constantly refused, how they had watched the water-pail! Their attendant left the room in

which they were lying for a few minutes. No sooner was she gone than, exerting their utmost strength, they crawled from their beds to the pail, and the stronger first assisted his brother to drink, and he drank to his fill; then, as the other was about to do the same, the attendant, returning, gave a scream, and, rushing to him, carried him back. Two days afterward he died, and the other was convalescent. When he got well he swore a great oath that he would never again take medicine from a doctor; and he kept his word.

Ah me! what survivor of those times remembers them well, remembers the long, weary days when, hot and thirsty, he saw the well-bucket with newly drawn water set out in the sun, from which, when it had lost its coolness, he was permitted (with what a show of kindness in the midst of anxious remonstrance!) to moisten with a spoonful his parched tongue and lips.

The long, weary nights, longer and wearier than the days, because, in their deep, solemn stillness there was but a mockery of the rest for which he longed.

When sometimes dreams would come over him—those strange dreams that bring to the unhappy the things they most desire; and they would lift him from his couch of fire and bear him away to a well-known spring of water, cold and crystal, and he would see it bursting out from the hill-side, and hear it and feel it gurgling in his throat.

Then when he would awake and feel—oh, what anguish he would feel when he would awake and find them dreams!

And he, fortunate survivor, has he not seen others suffer worse things than these? Yes, many times has he watched when, after long, weary days and nights, with their alternations of painful realities and blissful dreams, when the sick man's body was fast yielding to the ravages of fever, and the mind, partaking of its weakness, was growing unsteady,

he would beg in childish and piteous tones for water, for water!

When at last all hope of life was past, and the physician, good man, now thought it could do no harm, and the rag-mop dipped in water was inserted into his mouth, he would champ it and champ it with feeble eagerness, till death came at last, and cooled the fever and ended or fulfilled the dreams!

When he remembers these, let him thank God that this one cruel folly is passed away; that though he may yet see death, and must suffer it, he may not see it nor suffer it amid scenes like these.

When Dr. Wilson first saw Jack he pronounced the case difficult, and a neighbor was dispatched to Augusta to hasten Mr. Parkinson's return. Dr. Wilson was considerably in advance of the country physicians of the times. Carefully and tenderly he attended the case, and watched with unceasing anxiety the development of the disease. Yet, conservative and cautious, he administered medicine in quantities which, while it would have been considered by his contemporaries as too insignificant to be capable of producing any effect good or evil, would be regarded with alarm by any intelligent physician of this generation.

Jack lay on his bed and made no complaint. He was neither cheerful nor very sad; he was only silent and thoughtful. His mother was intensely anxious, and the more so on account of the absence of her husband. But she would try to rally him on his thoughtfulness, and would speak cheerily on what was to be done next week when he should be well again. But Jack remained silent and thoughtful, and seemed to feel little interest in what they were going to do for him next week. The doctor was distressed every morning to find that he had not improved from the day before. Overton was devoted to him, and

Mrs. Parkinson and Lucy were with him all the time. On the night of the third day his condition appeared to be improved, and his mother at midnight retired to rest, leaving Overton and Lucy to watch. She gave him her blessing, congratulated him on his improvement, and said she knew—oh yes, she knew he was going to be bright in the morning, when father would be at home.

And Jack did rest and sleep so well that Overton, on Lucy's insisting that he should do so, retired to his own chamber, to be called up if necessary. Jack slept away. His face became serene and happy. Sweet dreams had come to him. His grandfather and grandmother and little Jane had visited him in his dreams. He thought they took him by the hand and were leading him along, pointing to prospects which, though he could not plainly see them, were exceeding beautiful. They did not speak, but they led him along into sights which may not be written or told.

Then he awoke and looked strangely at his sister.

"How well you have slept, dear!"

"Have I not been away?" he asked.

"No, you have been sleeping, and you are so much better."

Jack sighed, and said he wanted to see his mother. But his mother had already heard him and was in the room. She felt his brow, and talked as such mothers know how to talk to their sick children. Then he told her whom he had seen and what they had done to him. How he did talk! He talked of many things, and at last of his teacher. He told his mother that none of them knew how kind Mr. Overton had been to him, nor how much he was loved by him. He said, and with great earnestness, that he wanted him never to go away, never to leave his father and his mother and his sister. He knew, he said, that Mr. Overton did not desire to go away; for he had asked him, and

he had answered that he would rather live there than anywhere else in the whole world.

Lucy leaned her head upon the bed.

Overton, overhearing the continued talking, came downstairs into the room and approached softly. As the boy continued to talk Mrs. Parkinson looked up toward him. The tears were running down her cheeks, and she looked from him to Lucy. Then Overton went to Lucy and took her hand, and lifted her up. She arose, trembling through her whole frame.

“Let it be so,” he said—“in God’s name let it be so! Only He knows how much I desire it.”

Lucy looked at Jack and saw how he was smiling. Then she laid her head upon Overton’s shoulder, and he, putting his arms around her, drew her to his breast. He led her around to the other side where Mrs. Parkinson was sitting, and they knelt down by the bed, and Jack called him his brother, and the mother called him her son, and then all but Jack wept afresh.

The next morning the sun rose brightly, and Jack looked out upon it with a smile; but they saw that his face was more pale than yesterday. Mr. Parkinson returned shortly afterward, having ridden all night. He was terrified beyond expression by his son’s condition.

The day wore away, and night again came on. In the early part of it Jack lay with his eyes closed, his hands folded upon his breast, and his lips occasionally murmured a text of the Holy Scriptures. Midnight was passed. Jack asked for a chapter to be read to him, the fourteenth of St. John. Nobody could do it except Overton. Mr. Parkinson had not been able to remain in the room since his return but for a few minutes at a time; Mrs. Parkinson and Lucy had no voice for reading. So Overton read the chapter.

Just then his father came in. Jack made signs to him and Overton to approach him. When they did so, he joined their hands.

“That will do,” he said.

He then gave his hand to his mother and bade her hold it. As the sun rose, he smiled once more, and whispered:

“Even so—come—Lord—Jesus.”

“Amen!” said Overton, closing his eyes.

The neighbors were assembled to the funeral. The rooms not being capacious enough to contain them all, they were seated upon the piazza, and upon benches on the ground before the door. The body had been removed into the hall, and the preacher stood in the door.

Mr. Sanford was an old man whose life from early manhood had been spent in the Christian ministry. He was not deeply learned in the schools; but a long habit of public speaking, added to a blameless life spent in the study of the Scriptures, and in teaching and practicing their precepts, had conspired to make him a useful, and at times an eloquent, preacher. He was tall and thin and pale, and his hair was long and almost wholly white. He was universally revered, and was especially dear to this family. He had always loved Jack with peculiar affection. Before he rose he had been leaning his head upon his hands resting on the little table before him, and they saw that he had been weeping, for he had just spent an hour alone with Mrs. Parkinson.

He began with general observations upon the shortness of life and the insufficiency of human affairs to satisfy our best desires. Heathen nations, especially those that had been enlightened, were accustomed to have as serious and just reflections upon this subject as we. Like us, they believed in the immortality of the soul, and the necessity of making preparation for a higher life by a purgation from

earthly impurities. But at the coming of the Messiah old things were to pass away, and all things were to become new. Jesus Christ, the Righteous, born in the flesh, after living a life of poverty, and enduring all the ills that flesh is heir to, even the temptations to the commission of sin, at last suffered death in the most painful and disgraceful of all forms known to the cruel and remorseless. And then His followers, first chosen from among the simple, were slow to understand the fullness of that mission. Not able to see beyond the veil, they mourned for their departed Friend, whom in His last extremity they had been driven in terror to desert. Full of pious grief, the women, on the first day of the week, after having rested the Sabbath, according to the commandment, repaired to the grave with the spices which they had prepared.

“And they entered in, and found not the body of Jesus.

“And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments.

“And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

“He is not here, but is risen. Remember what He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee,

“Saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

“And they remembered His words.”

The preacher dwelt at some length upon the method of salvation, and then he spoke briefly of Jack; and when he did no eye was without tears, for who does not love to hear the dead praised, especially the early dead?

“And now,” he said, “my friends, look upon the body of that boy, and look upon me. Does it seem strange to you that he should be there, while I am standing here?—I, a broken,

aged man, full of years and infirmities. One week ago! suppose you had been compelled to choose between him and me for the chances of life—him, the young plant, strong, blooming in beauty, with the full promise of goodly fruit; me, the old and withered tree, its blossoms and leaves fallen to return no more, and the time of its poor fruiting so long past as to be forgotten. It seems strange to you; it seems strange to me. Old as I am, having felt such afflictions as this and seen them so often fall upon others, yet the deaths of those who are so young and so fair as that boy was yet seem strange to me, until I remember this text and study the lessons it teaches. Strange indeed it would be but for the assurance of resurrection to another life, compared with which this one passes swifter than a weaver's shuttle. We shall soon repair to the grave in order to deposit this body from which the beauty and the life have departed; but he will not be there: he is risen. The great King of kings, in making up His jewels, selects from all conditions. If we cannot refrain from weeping that one so young and gifted is taken from among us, let it be our consolation that he was ready and willing to depart."

Then he raised his hands and eyes toward heaven, and prayed that all there, every one in his appointed time, might die the death of the righteous.

The old man sat down for a moment, and leaned his head upon the table again. After a few moments he rose, went to the body, uncovered the face, and stood at the head until all present had come, as was the custom, and taken their last look. As they gazed upon the marble features, so still and peaceful, some sighed, while others smiled, but all were weeping. When it was over, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting," said the preacher, as he covered the face again.

Well, well, I do not know why I have dwelt so long upon

these last-mentioned scenes, so different from the sportive ones which I have been describing, unless it is because those old-time ceremonies over the dead seemed always to me so becoming, and because in these latter times they are growing into disuse. In addition to the pain I feel at the death of those who were dear to me, and who have departed within these few years past, I am always the sadder to see them laid away with no other words than the form which the Church has prescribed for the burial of all the dead. In the old funeral sermons that I used to hear, how much there was of comfort! How sweet were the tears that ran down as the beloved were praised in the hour of their departure, and mourners, with their friends around them, felt as if they could almost see them ascending and waving back their farewells! The practice of parting from the dead in silence, and refraining afterward from the mention of their names, seems so strange to me, so sad. But perhaps it is the best. I am an old man, and, it may be, cling too fondly to the memories of my youth.

The events just described took place within a day or two of the time fixed for the closing of the school. Overton met his pupils once more, but only to take leave of them. It was a sad day for them. Jack Parkinson was dead, and their teacher was to leave them. Teacher and pupils shed tears. He had taught them not books only, but things outside of books, and better—to love honor, to love truth, and to speak it; to be brave. Every one of them, even the poorest and most simple-minded, had been led by him to believe that he could do something for which it was worth while to strive.

And thus ended George Overton's career as a teacher. It was made quietly and on a little field. It had been begun without aim or expectation of doing any good; yet the seed that he sowed sprung up and produced its harvest.

He gave an impulse to education that raised that community quite above the average of the country society of the State. Such men as the Meadowses could never more find employment there, and they soon ceased to seek it.

A few days after Jack's death, Overton formally asked for the hand of Lucy. He did this the sooner because he had learned that the settlement of his father's estate had resulted more favorably than had been expected, and he could realize enough from it to enable him to live without other income for several years. Consent was given to his suit at once and cordially, and the marriage was appointed to take place upon his return from Virginia, whither he was to go in order to have a settlement with his father's representatives.

CHAPTER XII.

"THAR it is agin, now!" soliloquized Mr. Bill Williams, as soon as he had mounted his horse, and thought of Miss Acry's remark that she would always be glad to see him. That was an unconsidered, or, at least, an unfortunate speech. Feeling quite safe in the matter of Miss Karline, Mr. Bill set about interpreting Betsy Ann's gracious conduct; and upon reviewing the events of the day, and his own felicitous doings and sayings, the interpretation was very favorable to himself. He almost regretted having gone so far with Miss Karline; but the truth was, he thought that it was no more than Betsy Ann could have expected in being so slow to recognize his claims. She knew what was what. Now that he had rather turned from her to Miss Karline, lo and behold! here she comes up and says she will always be glad to see Mr. Williams. Jealousy, jealousy!

Oh, how gay he did become!—the greatest beau in the neighborhood. The smiles he had received from Miss Acry, coming on immediately after the chat with Miss Karline, almost spoiled him. He had not intended, indeed, to go quite so far with Miss Karline on that particular occasion, although he was saving her in his mind for his second choice; but his long residence in Dukesborough had served to impart such ease to his manners and gayety to his heart, that it would have been really a difficult thing to avoid toying with Miss Karline's obvious fondness for him, and allowing her to dream, for a brief period, of what happiness she might have if he should conclude to bestow himself upon her. Then we remember that Miss Karline did look uncommonly well on the day of the examination.

He had many, very many, reflections upon these things. Time enough, he thought.

His mother had never fancied either his living in town or the personal improvement that had been brought about by it. She used to talk with my father about him, and his remarks confirmed her opinion that it would be better for him to quit his foolishness, as she termed it, and come straight back home where he belonged. We have seen how fond she was of Miss Karline; the two ladies had grown quite cordial with each other, and sometimes, even before the examination, Mrs. Williams would make a remark that would make Miss Karline blush, and afterward become more fond of Mrs. Williams than ever. The latter was in high glee when she had heard of her son's last day's work, and she would have gone the very next day to see Miss Karline, but that Mr. Bill told her that she would better hold on awhile. But for that remark of Miss Acry's at the Thigpens', there is no telling what might have taken place; for it cannot be denied that the improvement that had been going on in Mr. Bill was not such as appeared to

Messrs. Bland & Jones to be of the kind that would justify them in increasing his salary, as had been expected, and as had been even promised in certain contingencies. Mr. Bill had never doubted that it would be at least doubled in another year, in view of the invaluable services he had rendered. He was therefore not prepared for the announcement of Mr. Bland, the leading partner, instead of being raised it would probably have to be somewhat reduced. No complaint was made; but these times was hard, you know, William, and nobody knows, you know—and so on. We remember that Mr. Bill had said that Mr. Bland was a monstrous funny man.

So Mr. Bill began to look around him. But then Betsy Ann was so pretty, and tempting, and cordial, that he could but look at her more often than at anybody else. It was, of course, to be expected that he would now go to the Thigpens' as often as his business engagements would permit; but he held off, and availed himself of all opportunities to see Betsy Ann, and ride with her from church. On such occasions she would inquire about Miss Karline in a way that amused and interested him very much. His conscience hurt him sometimes when he thought how Miss Karline might be feeling on the subject of his continued absence and silence; but, law me! wasn't such things common every day?

“Philip,” he said to me one day, when I was joking him about both these ladies—“Philip, I do b'lieve I'm gittin' to be a reg'lar old flurrit.”

By this time I had found out his meaning of this term, and I knew what he was after.

Mr. Bill thought and thought. At last he made up his mind.

One Sunday, on the way from church, he informed Betsy Ann that he had something very panted to say to her. She smiled, and answered that she had been expect-

ing it for some time, and other people besides, probably, and that she was quite ready to hear it. Mr. Bill hemmed and blushed, and she laughed and begged him to go on. Then he got so full and so confused that he said he would have to send her a letter, that his words was entirely absent from him at the present, and he ruther thought he should have to send her a letter, which it was not common with him that he could not express himself, but his words in fac' was ruther absent from him at the present.

She looked at him very curiously, and declared that she couldn't see, to save her life, why he couldn't tell her right then what she knew was on his mind. This reassured him, and he opened his heart.

He had always wanted to settle hissself. It had been his desires, yea, a long time before he had went to Josiah Lorriby's school; but which it was a great deal, yea, fair worse sence that—so to speak—ontimely time, becäse—in cose—circumsances then forbid, but which they had now arriv.

Betsy Ann looked at him curiously.

“Yes, indeed,” he continued, “which they has now arriv, and the person in cos ar—a female. You know that, Miss Betsan?”

“I think so. I've thought so some time.” Still she looked at him very curiously.

“In cose you do. Yes, it's a female. Nobody but a female could be expected to have anything to do with circumsances o' that dilicate kind. Yes, it were time I were settlin' myself. I'm a gittin' 'long in years now, and it's time that a man o' my age was settlin' hissself. In cose hit could not be did, nor it *could* not be did, without the necessary female. And as I has made myself understood in all the circumsances, in cose I should now like to hear from the opposite party.”

Betsy Ann looked at him so strangely that he reflected a moment, and then supposing that perhaps he had not made himself sufficiently explicit, went through another long circumlocution. His absent words had now returned in quite sufficient quantities. He spoke of the school-days at Lorriby's, and that untimely time when those 'orrible people, ef it hadn't been for him, mout have done things to Miss Betsan which would a been too 'orrible to think about; but which he should ever be glad that he was thar to take the—responsuability—so to speak; and that always sence then his bres' had been a-beatin' with the same tremenjuous feelin's.

"Mr. Williams," said Betsy Ann, "I—don't think I exactly understand you. I thought I did once, but now I'm afraid I don't."

Mr. Bill reflected again, and this time upon the fact that in addressing females one must employ terms suitable to their comprehension.

"My meaning is," he answered, with a winning smile, "that as I now desires to settle myself, I also desires, in all the circumsances, that a certain person—the present female, for instance—will jine along with me and travel along with me down the road to happiness and bliss."

They were now near the Acry gate.

"Mr. Williams," she said, "is it *me* you're been talking about all this time? Is it *me*? Mr. Williams, it *ain't* me? Please tell me, Mr. Williams, that you don't mean ME!"

"Yes, but I do mean you. Who, in all the circumsances of the case, could I mean but you?"

They stopped at the gate. Mr. Bill alighted gayly, and started to lead Betsy Ann's horse to the block in order to assist her, but she gathered up her riding-skirts and was upon the ground by the time he had touched the bridle. Then she stood and regarded him yet more curiously than before.

“ Mr. Williams,” she said, “ as it’s *me* you mean, you’ll give me a little time to think about it, I suppose. I thought it was another person that you was going to talk about. But as it’s me, you’ll give me a little time to think about it, I know. You’ll hear from me soon; I’ll not keep you waiting long.”

“ But how? ” asked Mr. Bill.

“ Never mind,” answered Miss Acry, “ I’ll find the way. Of course you won’t say anything about what’s passed to-day.”

Not he; he was not the man to be blabbin’ out matters, ’specially dilicate matters like the present, to a universal world.

That’s right. Good-bye now. She ran into the house, and Mr. Bill rode away.

Somehow he couldn’t quite make it out, but upon the whole he thought he was the winner.

As he rode away, Betsy Ann, who had reached the door, turned and looked at him. She leaned against the door-facing, patted her foot against the floor awhile, and thought, with an expression upon her face half serious and half comic. Then, lifting her bonnet and shaking her curls back from her neck, she said: “ Yes, *he* must tell him. He is the very one to do it; the very, very, very one. I never, never, never—yes, he’s the very one to tell him, and he shall do it.” She then went to her room, singing a hymn and talking to herself alternately—

“ ‘ Come, thou fount ’—

“ Yes, sir, that’s it—

‘ Of every blessing,’

“ He’s the very one to do it—

‘ Tune my heart ’—

“ If he don't give him—

‘ To sing thy grace: ’

“ I never, never, never—

‘ Streams of mercy, ’

“ Oh, Karline, Karline! —

‘ Never ceasing, ’

“ Dear, dear Karline—

‘ Call for songs of loudest praise. ’ ”

And then Betsy Ann sat down upon her bed and cried and laughed, and laughed and cried.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. BILL waited the answer. He thought to himself that he would have preferred a categorical affirmation in the beginning; but he had often said that wimming was wimming, and it wasn't worth while to try to alter 'em. This was on a Sunday, as we have seen. Friday night had come, and yet no answer. He was getting a little inclined to complain, and the more especially as he had seen Betsy Ann, on that very afternoon, riding by the store, on her way to the Thigpens'. True, she bowed very graciously to him and Mr. Jones, as they were standing in the door, but otherwise she left no sign as she passed. That night Mr. Bill didn't sleep well.

On the next morning, about ten o'clock, Allen rode up to the store. He alighted, hitched his horse, and walked in. There was nothing remarkable in his appearance, except that he carried in his hand a big, freshly cut hickory-

stick. He seemed to be in remarkably good health and spirits.

"Hello, Allen!" said Mr. Bland, who was sitting before the door; "what's the matter? Lame?"

"Oh no, nothin' partickler," answered Allen. "Is William Williams in this mornin'?"

"Yes, he's in the store. Want to see him?"

"Not very partickler—only for a minute or so. Fine day, Mr. Bland."

Allen walked in and saluted Mr. Bill thus: "I want to see you a minute or so, Bill."

"Why, good-mornin', Allen. How's all?" said Mr. Bill, disposed to be cordial, but feeling a little uneasy.

"Well as common," answered Allen dryly. "I wish to speak with you a few words. Is you partickler busy this mornin' that we mout not have a little convisation jes' 'twixt me and you? Ef you're very busy I can wait till you're through. But I *must* have a little bit of convisation with you befo' I leave. Ef you're very busy I can set out thar with Mr. Bland, and wait."

Mr. Bill looked very curiously at the stick.

"I'm not so very busy, Allen, ef it's anything very partickler. I hope—that is—in cose I hope—"

"Certinly," said Allen; "sposen we take a little walk, as maybe nary one of us mout keer about havin' other people knowin' 'bout our business." Allen had raised his stick and was holding it with both hands, and quietly striking his teeth upon the head. Mr. Bill scratched his head.

"Take—take a walk?—ye-yes. But, Allen, ah—not—ah—not *too* fur."

"Oh no, jes' across the street thar."

Mr. Bill came slowly from behind the counter.

"Is you got a stick?" asked Allen.

“Stick?” exclaimed Mr. Bill.

“Yes; stick.”

“No. I sildom—ah—walks with a stick nohow, and specially—sich a—sich a—short ways as that. Oh, stick!” and he began backing again behind the counter.

Allen quietly placed his own in a corner. Mr. Bill seemed a little reassured, and coming forth again, they walked across the street and leaned upon a rail-fence which enclosed a lot on which several calves were feeding. Mr. Bill managed so as to get a corner between himself and Allen, and seemed rather thankful that one of the rails protruded some distance, on which he could rest his hands.

“Bill Williams,” said Allen, “maybe you know what I’m goin’ to talk to you about, and maybe you don’t. I know you don’t know *all*, but I think it’s highly prob’le you know *some*.” And Allen took a chew of tobacco.

Mr. Bill looked anxiously back toward the store for a moment. “Allen, I hain’t the least idee—that is—I has—ah—”

“That is, you has a idee, is it?”

“Allen Thigpen, I’m as good a fren as you’ve got in all this blessed world—and—”

“That ain’t got a thing to do with it,” said Allen; “not the very slightest little teeny bit.” Allen chewed away until he could squeeze his quid into one side of his jaw. He had never appeared to Mr. Bill to be so stout and strong; his very jaws looked as if they could grip anything they might take a fancy to. “Does you,” said Allen, when his quid was fixed satisfactorily—“does you, or does you not? Which?”

“Is it—ah—Allen—ar it a fe—female?”

“Hit it right squar’ the first jump!”

“Ar it Miss—ah, Miss—”

“Right agin. Yes, it’s her.”

Mr. Bill declared that he had always been one of the best friends that Miss Karline ever had, and not only so, but he always had respected her, and ef he was to be asked his opinion about Miss Karline, he should—

Oh, nobody wanted his opinion, at least yit awhile.

“Bill Williams,” said Allen sternly, “I wants to know ef you ever did want sister Karline; and ef you did, when, and why not now? and ef you didn’t, what’s all your talkin’ and carrin’ on been about, and what’s your objects, and your meanin’s, and your intentions? Now I wants you to talk up squar’. And when you’re done, I’m goin’ to do some talkin’ myself, and *I’m* goin’ to talk squar’. And then I’ve got somethin’ else to say—about—about—some other matters. I tell you now I want squar’ talkin’, and no foolin’.”

Mr. Bill saw that he was in difficulties. His too gay career was having some of its consequences. “Allen,” he said, “don’t—please don’t talk—so loud—and be—so brash. Le’s move on up a little furder.” But he looked back at the store, and seemed to doubt whether it might not be best to remain within easy call. Notwithstanding his avowed friendship for Allen, he did not prefer his society this morning so entirely as to wholly disregard all other. They walked a few steps further on and stopped, Mr. Bill again getting a corner between Allen and himself. He drew a long breath. He would have gladly made a long speech if Allen had not insisted on his being perfectly “squar’.”

“Allen, I has long wanted to settle myself, yea, even befo’ I quit the country and moved into Dukesborough. Somehow I got dissatisfied in the country and thought I would try town awhile, and—”

“Oh, ding the country, and the town too!”

“Cert’nly, cert’nly. As I was sayin’, I has wanted to

settle myself, and so did mammy want it; and at one time she and me too was thinkin' that Miss—that is—Miss Karline were the very person that could make a man like myself go on hand and hand down the road to happiness and bliss; and which even now, ef she had ary friend upon the top-side of this universal, ontimely old world—”

“Oh, ding all about friends, and all sich!”

“Cert'nly, cert'nly. But lately, it is true that they ar another person—which—I don't like to name names—but it—cert'nly—yes—in cose—it ar a fe—female; and then, yes—a fe—fe—”

“That'll do,” said Allen, bobbing his head—“that'll do. Well, now, Bill, one of the curiouseth things about the whole business is that you should a thought, even ef sister Karline would a stood sich as that, that you should a thought that *I* would. I got to be plain with you, becuse it's a right dilicate business. How sister Karline could take a likin' to you, Bill Williams, I nuver could understan'; but that ain't nuther here nor thar. But that part of it ain't none o' my business. You talked to her, and so did your mother; and you two come it over her somehow, I don't know how: I sposen sich things happens everywhar. You have as good as ast her to have you, you and your mother betwixt you, and she did make up her mind to do it—without consultin' o' me; I had nothin' to do 'long with it, and I'm glad of it. But so, lo and behold, you back out. Well, now, you see, Bill Williams, sich as that I—don't—stand.” At this point Allen made him a low bow. “Bill Williams,” he continued, “I have left home to come here this mornin' to put two things to you. I didn't expect to put but one at first—but—but—on thinkin' a little about it, and talkin' a little about it with—a certin person, I made up my mind to put you up two. Now see here: sister Karline don't understan' all your ways yit,

though she 'spicions you strong. Now here's them two things: You've got to go to sister Karline and ask her plump, squar' up to have you, and let *her* be the one that's to say *no*, ef anybody have to say it; or, you've got me to whip. Now one or t'other: you've got to lay the whole case befo' sister Karline, and do what she say, or you got me to whip. Which will you do? Maybe you ruther take the last."

Mr. Bill raised his arms in a deprecating attitude, as if few things were further from his intentions or desires than to inflict corporal injury upon Mr. Thigpen.

Oh, what a quandary he was in!

"Bill Williams," Allen began again, "I had made up my mind this mornin' to pitch right spang into you the first thing after I laid my eyes on you. I tell you why. I thought you jes' been triflin' 'long with sister Karline, and never did keer anything about her nohow. Not that I don't know that she's the best 'oman in this world, and worth two dozen sich fellers as you or ary— Oh, ding it all!" and Allen wiped his eye and blew his nose. "But I notice sence you been livin' in this here town, you 'pear to be like you feel like you better'n t'other people, and I thought you jes' been carrin' on with her and havin' your game and fun outen her. But you say jes' now that you did one time like her well enough to have her, or leastways you *thought* you did. Is that so in fac'? Mind you, now, no foolin' and no dodgin'; I want squar' talk from you."

"It ar a blessed fac', Allen, a blessed, blessed fac', on the honor of a man which he were once gay and happy as you, but which he now hardly know hissself, and what he ought to—ah—that is—in all the ontimely, as it war, circumstances of—ah—"

"Oh, ding the circumstances!"

"Cert'nly, cert'nly. But listen to me, Allen, please.

The difficulty is, I have used words of a certing kind, yea to another person—I can't say who—becase I have promised not; but you know—in cose it ar a fe—fe—male, and I'm—you see, Allen,—oh me—I'm sorter in honor bound thar too, and I'm a-expectin' of a anser every day. Ef it wasn't for that—oh, my blessed me!" and Mr. Bill scratched his head with both hands.

"Ef it wasn't for that, what?" asked Allen quickly.

"Oh, Allen—I don't—know—but I do b'lieve, and so do mammy, and I always shall b'lieve that—ah—Miss Karline is—the best 'oman in the united world," and he rubbed his nose with the back of his wrist, and looked very pitiful and longing.

"And you're waitin' your anser, is you?"

"Indeed I am, Allen, and which I hardly know."

"Well, I've fotch it to you."

Allen took a chew and started to hand the twist to Mr. Bill, but gave up the notion and put it in his pocket. Mr. Bill opened his eyes wide. "Yes, I fotch your anser to you, and hit war another piece of my business with you this mornin'. Bill Williams, when you thought about drappin' sister Karline for Betsan Acry, that war a thing that couldn't well be hope. Ef you could a *got* Betsy Ann, or ef you had a *thought* you could a got her, I don't blame you for wantin' of her. Still it was shabby in you, not to act squar' up like a man, and go to sister Karline and tell her all about it. But still I can't blame you for wantin' of Betsy Ann."

Allen pulled out his twist and offered it to Mr. Bill.

"You don't chaw? I thought you chawed. Well, you see, Bill, Betsy Ann and sister Karline is monstous friendly—we're all friendly. I sposen you know that?"

"In cose I does, and that what make me say—"

"Hold on! Betsy Ann's the person you spoke to last

Sunday. She told you she would give you a anser, didn't she?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Bill, not knowing exactly what he thought, or what he desired.

"Well, I fotch her anser to you. She tell me to tell Mr. Williams (for they was the very words she said)—she says to me to tell Mr. Williams that she is very sorry for the misonderstandin' betwixt her and him; for she thought that his idees was about another person, or, as you mout say, another female; and that she didn't know no better till last Sunday, and that she still must sposed that she must be mistaken, or him one. But she furthermo' ast me to say, ef she is not mistaken, nor him nuther, and she is the person who he do want, then so fur as she is consarned he is too late. She feel the honor and all sich, but he is too late."

Allen tore off about a cubic inch of tobacco, put it in his mouth and spat at a rock about fifteen feet off.

"Yes, Bill, too late. Ahead of you thar, Bill. Hit couldn't be hope. I beat you thar."

Pitiful and perplexed looked Mr. Bill, Allen chewing away as if it were Betsy Ann herself that he was eating up.

"Now lookee here, Bill: sister Karline don't know about all this here business of yourn and Betsy Ann. I wanted to tell her right squar' up, but Betsy Ann said no; so she don't know it. Now listen to me. Sister Karline and me has got to have a division of what's thar on the place this fall. As she's a female, and as she's the best sister that any man ever did have in this world, I'm goin' to 'low her five hundred dollars the 'vantage in the settlement. Ef arfter what's past you and she can make it up—but which I tell you now that onless you wanted her and ruther have her than ary nother female, she wouldn't have you ef you had a gold nigger hung to every har on top of your head—but

ef, I say, ef you and she has a mind to make it up, thar it is. Ef not, and ef you don't make some sort o' satisfaction for your carrin' on, and ef you don't promise me right here that you're goin' to do it, you got me to whip."

Allen threw out his quid, planted himself firmly on his pegs, clenched his fists, and looked as if he meant all that he said.

Mr. Bill looked at Allen, then on the ground, then back at the store, then over the fence at the calves. His countenance became more and more calm. Finally he looked at Allen again, smiled blandly, and said: "Allen, I wouldn't hurt a har o' your head, not for all the money that this on-timely old world could raise to pay me for doin' it; and—"

"Oh, the dickence!"

"Cert'nly, cert'nly. But what I'm a-thinkin' about now is a female, and that female ar Miss Karline. Betsan ar right, and I knowed it ef I had a knowed what I was about. It was Miss Karline that I wanted all the time. Ef she'll take me arfter what's past, I'll jine my heart along with hern, and go hand in hand along with her down the road to happiness and bliss."

"Oh, I don't keer what road you 'spect to take; but ef you foller sister Karline's advice and go to work, you'll go safe. They ain't no doubt about that."

"Cert'nly, cert'nly; that's ezactly what I means."

"You do it, then?"

"I do. I thought I done already said what was cata-mount to that. I always did love her the best, but which I didn't ezactly know it till jes' now."

Mr. Bill took Allen's hand, and said it would do him proud to call him brother and likewise Betsan sister. Allen let him hold it an instant, and then withdrew it and took out his plug.

"Have a chaw? No? I forgit; you don't chaw."

“Allen,” said Mr. Bill, as they were about to separate, “maybe it’s better not—to—ah—say anything to Miss Karline ’bout—last Sunday. Wimming’s wimming, you know, and—”

“I got nothin’ mo’ to do with it, Bill; I shall say nothin’ ’bout it. But I tell you now, you better be keerful: sister Karline ain’t so easy fooled as you mout think. You be keerful.”

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS KARLINE did not inquire of her brother on what errand he was going to Dukesborough. She had been more than usually thoughtful of late, but had kept her thoughts to herself. Betsy Ann was treated at this visit as she always had been, and especially since her engagement with Allen. Mr. Bill’s name was mentioned once or twice casually, but Miss Karline did not notice the allusion. The next day Betsy Ann went home, and that very afternoon Mr. Bill rode up. Allen had seen him coming and dodged out of view.

Mr. Bill tried to look gay and gallant. “And how is my friend Miss Karline this sweet and lovely evenin’ like?”

Miss Karline was quite cool. Of course she could but ask Mr. Williams to take a seat. She very politely remarked that as she sposen he had come to see her brother on business, she would have him called in. Mr. Bill protested that he had not come to see Allen, but her, and her only. For the life of Miss Karline she could not understand what about, and thought he must be mistaken. If Mr. Williams did not want to see her brother, then he ought to have come yesterday, for then they had a very pleasant girl in the house, which she might have been very pleasant company for Mr. Williams.

Mr. Bill saw his danger, and went right to work. He made a rather slighting allusion to the young lady in question; but Miss Karline caught him up at once, and warned him to be keerful how he talked. So Mr. Bill had to come out squarely. He confessed, and vowed his love anew, and even condescended to beg. But it all amounted to nothing. He told his mother that night that Miss Karline had kicked him so high that the bluebirds had time enough to pick every har from his head and build their nesteses outen it.

“Jes’ as I ’spected,” said his mother. But she did not reproach him harshly, for she saw that for the first time in his life he was seriously mortified and depressed. Then, as his engagement with Bland & Jones had just expired, he had come home and was to stay there. This had gratified her greatly, and so she had not the heart to scold him. But she told him to go on and attend to the business. In a day or two he expressed the intention of going to see Miss Karline again, but his mother would not hear of this. Wait, I tell you, wait.

A few days after this, as Miss Karline was sitting in her door, Mrs. Williams came up. She rose immediately and went out to meet her. Miss Karline was, perhaps, a little more cordial than usual, for she felt that she could but sympathize with Mrs. Williams in what she very well knew was giving her distress. So she met her even affectionately, and insisted upon carrying into the house a curious-looking bundle which the old lady had brought with her. It was something sewed up carefully in a pillow-case.

After entering into the house and exchanging a remark or two about the weather, their health, and so forth, Mrs. Williams looked at the bundle with a most sorrowful face, and then at Miss Karline. Then she peaked up her features as if for a cry, and shook her head dismally.

“Something is the matter with you, Mrs. Williams; I jes’ know they is. Ain’t you sick, Mrs. Williams?” and Miss Karline rose to get the camphor, which stood ready in a big bottle on the mantel.

Mrs. Williams put out her hand. “Not that, not that. I ain’t sick in body; it’s here.” She laid her hand upon her heart and murmured feebly, “It’s broke.”

Miss Karline looked down at the floor, and felt very sorry for her friend.

“Open that bundle, Karline, if you please.” Miss Karline opened it slowly and cautiously, as if she suspected it to be an infernal machine. She took out the contents, laid it on the table, then sat down, and exclaiming, “Oh, Mrs. Williams!” she folded her hands on her lap and leaned her head upon the table.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Williams, “hit’s Bonaparte a-crossin’ o’ the Rhine. I hain’t the heart to keep it now. Hit’s never been spread but once. I put hit on the shed-room bed, jes’ to see how it would look, and it look lovely indeed. And then I took it off and folded it nice, jes’ as you see it now, and put it in the chist; and, says I, I’ll save it till—oh, my goodness me! But it’s a life o’ disappointments.” And she continued to shake her head.

Oh, Miss Karline, Miss Karline! How can you afford to behold such distress? Indeed you cannot, for your head is kept leaning on the table.

“Yes, Karline, I couldn’t keep Bonaparte any longer now, arfter my heart’s done goned and broke. And what have broke it? Hit’s becasse my onliest child’s heart are broke also too and likewise the same.”

“If his heart’s broke,” said Miss Karline, raising her head, “it wasn’t me that broke it.” She spoke firmly, but not harshly.

“Ah, my dear Karline, you don’t know that child. Yes;

hit's you that broke it. He's a-dyin' for you day by day. He jes' *goes* about, and *goes* about. He ain't got no stomach for his vittals. His westcoats has had to be tuck up two blessed times; and he don't, and I sometimes think he *can't*, tie his shoes. He scacely ever says anything to me nor nobody else; and my feelin's is powerful, that, without some change, and that soon, the poor child is a-goin' to lose of his senses. Hit was only last night when I was a-tryin' to 'courage him up a leetle bit, says he to me, says he, 'Let me alone, mammy, I'm moloncholly,' and then he got up and tried to sing that hime—

' An' let this feebyul body fail,
An' let it faint or die; '

and he broke down befo' he got through the very fust veerse, and went 'long off to bed. Oh, my goodness blessed me!"

It was in vain that Miss Karline insisted that it wasn't she that had placed Mr. Bill in his present condition. She didn't *know* the child. It was true that he had done wrong that Sunday, but it was all them Dukesborough ways; and she knowed that he loved Miss Karline the best, and that he has now done quit Dukesborough and all sich foolishness, and that even Mr. Pearch said William had done ezactly what he ought to a done when he quit Dukesborough; and he war nately a industrious young man, and he told me with his own mouth that if William could git Karline Thigpen, he didn't have a doubt that it would be the finest thing that could happen to him, and he thought he would git studdy and make a good farmer. Now they was the very words he said, and—oh, gracious, gracious, gracious!"

Miss Karline deeply sympathized with the widow. She felt sorry for her from the bottom of her heart. They had

a long talk. "I wouldn't a blamed Mr. Williams," she said, "for likin' Betsy Ann; she's younger than I am, and a heap prettier. But—he oughtn't to been courtin' both of us at the same time. He ought to made up his mind, and not trifle with people—still he was gentlemany in tellin' me about it, and which—"

Miss Karline could go no further. She leaned her head on the table again. The widow pressed upon her as she found her giving way. Oh, how she did dwell on Mr. Bill's moloncholly, and the tuckin' up of his westcoats, and his havin' of no stomach for his vittals! But Miss Karline would not make any promise. She would think about it. The widow said that she could not take back home with her Bonaparte a-crossin' o' the Rhine without some little, some leetle bit o' hope for her poor 'flicted child. Miss Karline looked at the counterpane for a moment. She had made the counterpin for her—leastways she and Betsy Ann together, which of cose she had furnished the thread herself and done most of the weavin'. She had made it for Mrs. Williams, and for nobody but her, and which, she had said, and would say it again, that she had loved her next to her own blessed mother that was now dead and gone; and that as for herself, if she knowed herself, she was not a person that, when she give things as presents to people, would ever wish to take 'em back again.

During this and more such talk, Miss Karline carefully sewed up the counterpane in the pillow-case, and, though she declared that she could make no promises, the widow hugged her tight. She shortly afterward took her leave and rode on home, carrying tenderly in her lap Bonaparte a-crossin' o' the Rhine.

The next day Mr. Bill was at the Thigpens' good and soon. He came in with a subdued and solemn air. He had been extremely moloncholly, he confessed. After some

preliminary remarks, in which he again spoke of how important it was, in this vain and foolish world, for a man to settle himself, he got upon his knees before Miss Karline, and declared that he loved her the best and the onliest of all the females in this blessed world, and that he would never rise from that blessed floor until she had forgive him.

Miss Karline declared to him, upon her word and honor she declared to him, that if it was not for his mother's sake she wouldn't; and as for Betsy Ann, she was goin' to be her dear sister anyhow, and it wouldn't look right maybe; and for the sake of his mother, and—then Miss Karline broke down, and extended him her hand. Mr. Bill arose, flung away his moloncholly in an instant, and declared that he could now see his way clear all down the road to happiness and bliss.

Just then Allen came in. Seeing at once that all was settled, he went to his sister and put his arm around her. Finding he was about to cry, he jerked out his tobacco, tore off a big piece, crammed it in his mouth, and, handing the twist to Mr. Bill, said:

“Have a thaw, Bill? No, I forgith, you don't thaw.”

CHAPTER XV.

A COUNTRY wedding in Georgia, in the times whereof I write, was a thing worth going to. Allen and Betsy Ann were married on a Tuesday, and Mr. Bill and Miss Karline were to be joined on the next Thursday. The best showing was reserved for the last. They would have had both marriages on the same night if it had been convenient. As it was, Allen and Betsy Ann agreed in insisting that the

big supper should be at his sister's. All the neighbors were invited, men, women, and children; and most of them went. Pig, lamb, turkey, chicken, duck, pea-fowl, goose, partridge, pigeon, cake, syllabub. Oh, the syllabub! Every tumbler and wine-glass in the neighborhood had been called in, and were then incapable of holding it all. Miss Karline, and Betsy Ann, and Mrs. Glisson, and Allen, and Brinkly, they all made it. How they did work at it! Betsy Ann and Allen beat up the whites of the eggs, and Betsy Ann declared a hundred times that day that that syllabub wouldn't be fit to drink, because Allen would keep leaving off the beating just to give her cheeks a pinch. Brinkly was in good feather. It was understood that he was to be educated, even to sending to college, by Mr. Overton, who was now gone to Virginia, but would be back in good time for all purposes.

The guests all reached the house at the appointed time. The marriage was to take place by early candle-light, and in those days the night was understood to begin as the sun went down.

Mr. Bill had on a blue coat, buff pants and vest, a white stock, pumps, and silk stockings. No taking up of waist-coats now. He was never so gay. He answered the preacher with a Yes so loud that you would have thought nobody had ever before taken a responsibility with a greater resolve to keep it. Miss Karline, in pure white all over, looked as if she knew it was a serious business, but she had reflected upon it, and had made up her mind to go through with it. After the ceremony was over, the shaking of hands began. How they did wring! Mr. Bill declared scores of times that he could now look ahead and see the way perfectly clear. It was a great responsibility, he admitted; but he had somebody to help him take it now, and he felt that he could now bid farewell to a vain and foolish,

but which now it were also a blessed and glorious, old world. He twitted Allen on having beaten him so far. This was done in a very jocose and friendly way, however. He knew how safe it was to run Miss Karline against anybody, even Allen's wife. Allen made no other answer to his boast than this: "Sister Karline will car' you safe, Bill, ef you foller her advice, and go to work. I never wanted a chaw o' tobacker as bad in my born days; I hain't had one sence day befo' yistiday."

The fiddling and the dancing began; and then the supper—turkey, turkey, cake and syllabub, syllabub and cake. The only thing that marred Miss Karline's happiness was that people wouldn't be everlastingly eating. Many declared that they were filled up to the very top of their throats, but Miss Karline was for stuffing in more and washing down with syllabub. It was nothin' in the world but froth, and wouldn't hurt anybody. Mr. Bill indorsed his wife fully, and it was said the number of tumblers he took couldn't be counted.

The dancing went on until nearly midnight, the older guests having departed long before that hour. The grand thing, after the Virginia reel, was a duet of some sort between Mr. Bill and Betsy Ann. The question was who could hold out the longest. Mr. Bill gave the challenge, and counted on a great triumph, at which he knew Miss Karline would be gratified. His idea was to break her down by vigorous moves in the beginning. The quantity of syllabub he had taken, together with the joyousness of the occasion, made him feel that, like old Molly's colt, he could jump over the moon.

Betsy Ann understood his little game, and called to the fiddler for a more vigorous measure. It was Morris, who belonged to Mr. Parkinson. Morris struck at once into his masterpiece, which he called Sally Goodin. My gra-

cious, how it did go! You couldn't see the bow at all; but you could hear, as well the fiddle as Morris's foot as he kept time upon the floor. Betsy Ann's feet rattled like the rain. And she was—splendid. That's all I can say for Betsy Ann that night. Mr. Bill did elegantly at first, and his heels shook the very beams of the house. "Faster!" cried Betsy Ann; "why don't you play up, Morris?" Then, taking her skirts with the tips of her thumbs and forefingers and lifting them slightly, she spun around twice, and, if the eye alone could have been trusted, people would have said that Betsy Ann had a thousand feet and ankles. Mr. Bill had started out with his shoulders set back and his arms hanging easily behind him, but he had gradually come up straight, and afterward he leaned over in front. Hitherto his arms had played an important part, as they swung back and forth to help out his legs; but it was not long before they began to hang heavily from his shoulders, and his fingers twitched as if they were getting ashamed of the probable result.

Allen was standing beside the wall holding his sister's hand, and no other two enjoyed the contest as they did. "Never give it up, Bill!" Allen cried; "don't you see she can't hold out much longer?"

Mr. Bill had never looked more serious. He had naturally a good ear for time, but he got slower and slower, making up by coming down heavy on the tonic notes of the music. He looked at Betsy Ann with a fierceness which made him seem as if he felt that his honor as a married man depended upon the result, and was in danger of being ruined at the start. His lower jaw began now to partake of his general ponderosity, and his knees to give each other confused knockings. Miss Karline was so full of laughter that she could say nothing; but, holding her handkerchief to her mouth with one hand, she gave Allen a sign and a

push with the other. Allen passed around, came up behind him, and spread out his arms. He gave a wink to Betsy Ann, who smiled, spun around again, and cried aloud to the fiddler, "Faster!"

Then she flew up to Mr. Bill and seized his hands for another turn, but those hands were limber and heavy. As she pulled them up, Mr. Bill's balance was destroyed, and he fell back into the arms of Allen. Shouts of laughter and clapping of hands followed. They put the vanquished into a chair, but he was too exhausted even to laugh, until they brought him a tumbler of syllabub.

"Ah! hah!" he ejaculated, "but hit's the fust time—time—ever I war—non—pl—plushed at that. Ah! hah!"

Allen assured him that if he had held out a minute longer Betsan would a give out; he had seed it in her looks. Betsy Ann fanned herself, and answered Allen by cutting the pigeon-wing. Mr. Bill looked up without moving his mouth from the tumbler, gave a tired smile, shook his head, and murmured:

"Thnon—thpluthed, Allen, thnon—thpluthed."

The guests all left at last, after the shaking of hands again, and the congratulations, and the wishing all sorts of good things. Everybody carried away a great bundle of cake which the two brides insisted upon loading them with. But the syllabub was not yet all gone. Allen made Mr. Bill take another tumbler.

"Won't you take one yourself?" inquired Mr. Bill.

"Yes," answered Allen, "that is, ef I can't take a chaw, but I heap ruther have a chaw."

Betsy Ann shook her head, and he took the syllabub.

Mr. Bill sipped his syllabub, and said it war a beautiful skene; all thar in the family like together. It war the beautifulest skene that ever was loed and beholded. He could now lay his hand on his bres' and say that he could

now look ahead of him and see 'em all travelin' down together on the road—

But Miss Karline took his tumbler and said it was time for her and Betsy Ann to put up the things.

“Philip,” said Mr. Bill to me, about a week after his marriage—“Philip, my young fren, I never knowed what happiness and bliss was befo'. And let me give you a piece of advice, becasse I'm a man of experence and you're yit young. When you git a man, Philip, and go to git married, you git a settled 'oman; take my advice, Philip, and marry a settled 'oman.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE winter had come and gone. It had been passed by Overton in Virginia, in arranging his matters there preparatory to his final removal to Georgia. Many a letter had come and gone. I must not recite them here. Nothing is so dependent (for the interest they excite) upon time and other accidents as love-letters. They may well be said to be glorious things, but it is in a way the least general. Every one has a certain glory of its own; yet it is never but for one being; it cannot be shed abroad. Even for that one being it passes away in the lapse of time. The missive comes, by trembling hands the seal is broken, and the words come into the heart like the rain into the thirsty earth. It dilates with ineffable sweetness. But that sweetness, just as it is then, that half stilly, half tumultuous sweetness, is gone even before the second reading. When love's course is run, and finds its fruition in the serene affections of marriage, who is there that is wont to go often to the casket that holds its written history and seeks to bring back

the feelings which its first inditing inspired? They come no more; no more than youth comes again to age. The casket and its ancient records are dutifully and reverently preserved in some secret and sacred archive. We may occasionally open and read awhile, as we curiously look over a relic of olden literature; but as in the one so in the other, we smile at what sounds as the quaint language of a time that is long past. One keeps such records as the contemporaneous history of a state which, though happy, was not more so than the present, perhaps not so much so, yet more ecstatic in the short periods of its ecstasy; but one sighs as well as smiles to feel that, for the purposes of their ancient uses, they are now obsolete, like music past:

“ ’Twas sweet, ’twas passing sweet,
But now ’tis gone away.”

The spring was opening, and it was in the evening of a bright day. Lucy Parkinson took her usual walk to the graveyard. It was on the roadside, prettily situated in the edge of the woods. It was inclosed by a fence of upright boards and hedged with cedar. There were several evergreen trees and willows on the corners of the walks. Under one of these Lucy sat upon a rustic bench. She wore a white muslin robe, which was confined at her waist by a belt of black ribbon. In her hair there were some violets and white jasmines. Her broad hat lay in her lap, and her hands toyed with its ribbons as she sat there so thoughtful.

How various must be the thoughts of a pure-minded young woman as she approaches the time when she must give herself away to the man of her choice! How ready, yet how reluctant! Who can tell her what that mysterious estate may bring along with it to her? It is sweet to love and to be loved as now: will it be more so when her life is merged into another's?

There was sadness upon her brow, but it was the sadness of a true heart, which, in its modest estimate of its own strength, was thinking upon the serious destinies of that career to which she was fast tending, and upon which she so desired, yet so feared, to enter. She had placed her arm upon the back of the bench, and her head rested upon her open hand. The latch of the little gate was gently lifted. She raised her eyes and saw Overton.

How amply that reunion repaid them for their long separation! How free from doubt and from fear was now that loving girl as she clung to the bosom of her affianced, and could not speak, but only look, and languish, and weep. Long they sat there together. When they rose to go, Lucy paused at Jack's grave, and other tears were in her eyes.

"He is not here," said Overton—"he is not here, but is risen."

Two weeks from that day they were married. None were present besides the family, except Mr. Sanford, Mrs. Glisson and Brinkly.

"This son will take the other one's place now," said the widow to Mrs. Parkinson. And they both wept, but smiled through their tears.

THE EXPENSIVE TREAT OF COLONEL MOSES GRICE.

“ It’s hardly in a body’s power
To keep at times frae being sour,
To see how things are shar’d.”—*Burns.*

CHAPTER I.

BESIDES an incipient ventriloquist who had included it in a limited provincial tour which he was making in some hope of larger development of his artistic powers, the only show that had visited Dukesborough thus far was the wax figures. The recollection of that had ever been unsatisfactory. I can just remember that one of the figures was William Pitt, and another the Sleeping Beauty; that the former was the saddest and yellowest great statesman that I had had opportunity, thus far, to look upon, and the latter—well, it is not pleasant, even now, to recall how dead, how long time dead, she appeared. When Aggy, my attendant, seeing me appalled at the sight, repeatedly asseverated, “ De lady is jes’ a-tired and a-takin’ of a nap,” I cried the louder, and plucked so at Aggy that she had to take me away. Though not thus demonstrative, yet even elderly country people acknowledged to disappointment, and there was a general complaint that if what had been was the best that could be done by Dukesborough in the

way of public entertainment, it might as well take itself away from the great highway of human travel, suspend its school, sell out its two stores at cost, abolish its tavern and post-office, tear down its blacksmith's and shoe shops, and, leaving only its meeting-house, resolve itself into the elements from which it had been aggregated. Not that these were the very words; but surely their full equivalents were employed when William Pitt, the Sleeping Beauty, and their pale associates had silently left the town.

As for a circus, such an institution was not known, except by hearsay, even to Colonel Moses Grice, of the Fourteenth Regiment Georgia Militia, though he was a man thirty-five years old, over six feet high, of proportional weight, owned a good plantation with about twenty negroes, and had seen the theater as many as three times in the city of Augusta. The ideas the colonel received there were such, he said, as would last him to the end of his days—a period believed to be remote, barring, of course, all contingencies of future wars. To this theatrical experience, however, he had been desirous, for some time, to add that of the circus, assured in his mind, that, from what he had heard, it was a good thing. It happened once, while on a visit to Augusta, whither he had accompanied a wagon-load of his cotton, that he met at Collier's tavern, where he sojourned, a circus forerunner, who was going the rounds with his advertisements. Getting soon upon terms of intimacy with one who seemed to him the most agreeable, entertaining, and intelligent gentleman that he had ever met, Colonel Grice imparted to him such information about Dukesborough that, although that village was not upon the list of appointments—Dukesborough, in point of fact (to his shame the agent confessed it), not having been even heard of—yet a day was set for its visitation, and, when visited, another was set for the appearance there of the Great

World-renowned Circus, which claimed for its special homes London, Paris, and New York.

It would be entertaining to a survivor of that period to make even small boys, from families of most limited means in this generation, comprehend the interest excited by those advertisements, in huge black and red letters, that were tacked upon the wall of Spouter's tavern. From across Beaver Dam, Shoulderbone, Fulsom's, the Ogeechee, from even the head-waters of streams leading to the Oconee, they came to read over and spell over the mighty words. Colonel Grice, who had been found, upon his own frank admission, to be the main mover, was glad to answer all inquiries concerning its magnitude, its possible influences upon the future of Dukesborough, and kindred subjects. There would have been a slight drawback to the general eager expectation on grounds moral and religious; but the World-renowned had anticipated and provided against that, as will hereafter appear. Then Colonel Grice had signified his intention of meeting the impending institution on the occasion of at least two of its exhibitions before its arrival, and he should take it upon himself to warn it of the kind of people it was coming among.

The colonel resided five miles south of the village. He had a wife, but no child (a point on which he was, perhaps, a little sore), was not in debt, was hospitable, an encourager (especially in words), of public and private enterprises, and enthusiastically devoted, though without experience in wars, to the military profession, which—if he might use the expression—he would call his second wife. Off the muster-field he habitually practiced that affability which is pleasant because so rare to see in the warrior class. When in full uniform and at the head of the regiment, with girt sword and pistol-holster, he did indeed look like a man not to be fooled with; and the sound of his voice in utter-

ance of military orders was such as to show that he intended those orders to be heard and obeyed. When the regiment was disbanded, the sternness would depart from his mien, and, though yet unstripped of weapons and regalia, he would smile blandly, as if to reassure spectators that, for the present, the danger was over, and persons might approach without apprehension.

He met the circus even farther away than he at first had intended. He had determined to study it, he said, and he traveled in all some seventy miles on horseback, attending daily and nightly exhibitions. Several times during this travel and afterward, on the forenoon of the great day in Dukesborough, he was heard to say that, if he were limited to one word with which to describe what he had seen, that word would be—*gorgerous*. “As for what sort of a people them circus people are,” he said, “in a moral and in a religious sense, now—ahem! you know, gentlemen and ladies, especially ladies—ah, ha! I’m not a member, but I’m as great a respecter of religion as can be found in the whole State of Georgy. Bein’ raised to that, I pride myself on that. Now these circus people, they ain’t what I should call a highly moral, that is, they ain’t a strictly *religious* people. You see, gentlemen, that ain’t, not religion ain’t, so to speak, their business. They ain’t goin’ about preachin’, and havin’ camp-meetin’ revivals, and givin’ singin’-school lessons. They are—I wish I could explain myself about these circus people. These circus people are a-tryin’—you know, gentlemen, different people makes their livin’ in different ways; and these circus people are jes’ a-tryin’ to do exactly the same thing in jes’ exactly the same way. Well, gentlemen, *gorgerous* is the word I should say about their performances. I should not confine myself to the word *religion*. Strictly speakin’, that word do not embrace all the wariuous warieties, so to speak, of a circus. *My* word

would be GORGEROUS; and I think that's the word you all will use when that tent is up, that door is open, and you are rushin' into its—its—I don't know whether to use the word *jaws* or *departiments*. But, for the sake of decency, I'll say—*departiments*. As for moral and religious, gentlemen—and 'specially, ladies—I tell you, it ain't neither a camp-meetin', a 'sociation, a quarterly meetin', nor a singin'-school. I'm not a member, but I'm a respecer; and as to all that, and all them, Dukesborough may go further and fare worse. That's all I got to say."

On the day before, Colonel Grice, by this time grown intimate with the manager, and as fond of him as if he had been his own brother (some said even fonder), in the fullness of his heart had invited the whole force to breakfast with him on the way to Dukesborough, and the invitation had been accepted. What was consumed was enormous; but he could afford it, and his wife, especially with distinguished visitors, was as hospitable and open-hearted as himself.

CHAPTER II.

OTHER persons besides boys believed in their hearts that they might not have been able to endure another day's delay of the show. For a brief period the anxiety of schoolchildren amounted to anguish when the master expressed doubts as to a holiday; for holidays then were infrequent, and schoolmasters had to be over-persuaded. But the present incumbent yielded early, with becoming reluctance, to what seemed to be the general desire. The eagerly expected morning came at last. Many who knew that the circus was lingering at Colonel Grice's went forth to meet it, some on foot, some on horseback. Some started even in

gigs and other carriages, but, being warned by old people, turned, unhooked their horses, and hitched them to swinging limbs in the very farthest part of the graveyard grove, and then set out on foot. The great show had put foremost its best wagon, but nobody had any sort of idea what things those were which the military gentlemen who rode in it carried in their hands. One person, known generally to carry a cool head, said that one of these things looked to him like a drum, though of a size comparatively enormous, but the idea was generally scorned.

“Where you goin’ there, Poll Ann?” said Mrs. Watts to her little daughter, who was opening the gate. “My Lord!” exclaimed the mother instantly afterward, as the band struck up. Then she rushed out herself and ran over Polly Ann, knocking her down. Polly Ann got up again and followed. “Stay behind there, you, Jack, and you, Susan! You want to git eat up by them camels and varmints? I never see sich children for cur’osity. They’ve got as much cur’osity as—as—”

“As we have,” said Mrs. Thompson, laughing, as she attempted in vain to drive back her own little brood.

The effect of the music in the long, covered wagon, drawn by six gray horses slowly before the long procession, no words can describe. It put all, the aged and the young, into a tremor. Old Mr. Leadbetter, one of the deacons, who had been very “jubous,” as he said, about the whole thing, was trying to read a chapter somewhere in Romans, when, at the very first blast, his spectacles jumped off his nose, and he told a few of the brethren afterward, confidentially, that he never could recollect, afterward, where he had left off. As for Mrs. Bland, she actually danced in her piazza for, probably, as many as a dozen bars, and, when “had up” in church about it, pleaded in abatement that she did it entirely unbeknownst to herself, and that she

couldn't have help it if it had been to save her life. It might have gone hard with the defendant had not some of her triers been known to march in time to the band, and, besides, they had stayed after the close of the animal show, contrary to the special inhibition against the circus. For the World-renowned had provided against the scruples of the straitest sects by attaching to itself a small menagerie of animals, whose exhibition had been appointed for the opening. There were a camel, a lion, a zebra, a hyena, two leopards, a porcupine, six monkeys, a bald eagle, and some parrots. By some means, never fully known, the most scrupulous of the spectators had gotten (late during this first act) to the very loftiest and remotest seats in the amphitheater, and when the animals were shut from the view, these persons, though anxious, were unable to retire without stepping over the shoulders of those beneath—a thing that no decent person could be expected to do. So Mrs. Bland got off with a mild rebuke.

As the cavalcade proceeded, it was a sight to see those who came in late in vehicles hastily turning in, apprehensive of the effect upon their horses of the music and the smell of the wild animals. For the first and only time in the history of Dukesborough there was momentary danger of a blockade of wheels in its one street.

“A leetle more,” said old Tony to the other negroes at home that night—he was the driver of the Booker carriage—“a leetle more, and I'd a driv' right inter the camel's mouth.”

For some reason, possibly its vast size and the peculiar dip of its under-lip in the pictures, the camel seemed to be regarded as the most carnivorous of the wild beasts, and especially fond of human flesh.

The place selected for the tent was the area west of Sweep's shoe-shop, at the foot of the hill on which the

Basil mansion stood. When the door was opened at last, the crowd surged in. Colonel Grice waited long, in order to see that no one of any condition was excluded for want of the entrance-fee. For at last this was regarded by him rather as a treat of his own to his neighbors, and he wanted it to be complete. Then he walked in with the deliberateness of an owner of the establishment, and contemplated everything with benignant complaisance. Those ladies and gentlemen who were within the sound of his voice, as he went the rounds of the boxes containing the animals, were fortunate.

“Be keerful there, boys—be keerful,” he said kindly but seriously to some little fellows who were leaning against the rope and studying the porcupine. “Be keerful. That’s the cilibrated pockapine. You see them sharp things on him? Well, them’s his quills, and which, wen he’s mad, he shoots ’em like a bow-’narrow, and they goes clean through people.”

The boys backed, although the little creature looked as if his quiver had been well-nigh exhausted in previous wars.

“That’s the hyner,” said the colonel, moving on, “and they say he’s the most rhinoceros varmint of ’em all. Of all victuals he loves folks the best, though he some rather that somebody or something else would kill ’em, and then him come on about a week or sich a matter arfterward. They scratches up graveyards, and in the countries where they raise, people has to bury their kinfolks in stone coffins.”

“Oh, goodness gracious, colonel! Let’s go on!”

This exclamation was made by Miss Angeline Spouter, the thinnest of the party, who was locked arm in arm with Miss Georgiana Pea, the thickest.

“No danger, Miss Angeline—no danger at all,” answered the colonel, briskly raising his arm aloft that all

might see what was between them and the beast, at which he looked as if it were his own pet hyena and would not think of leaving its lair without his order. "No danger whatsoever. Even if he could git out, he'd have to ride over me, and, besides, it's mostly corpses that he'd be arfter, and—ah—I don't think, anyway, that *you'd* be in the slightest danger."

As he said this, the colonel looked rather argumentatively, and at Miss Pea more than Miss Spouter.

"Oh," said Miss Pea gayly, "if the creetur could git out, and then took a notion for live folks, I'd be the one he'd make for, certain sure."

The hyena, though ugly and ferocious, did not look at his spectators once, but continued pacing up and down in his narrow cage, at either end of which, when reaching it, he thrust his snout against the roof, as if his thoughts were tending upward rather than downward. I have never forgotten how unhappy seemed that poor beast. To all the other animals there was some relief of captivity in their various degrees of domestication and affiliation with man. The lion evidently loved his keeper; even the leopards seemed rather fond of him. But the hyena, more narrowly caged than all, conquered, not subdued, wholly untamed, constantly rolling his fiery gray eyes, appeared to have his thoughts ever upon revenge and escape to his native wilds. I, a young child, could not but pity him; and it occurred to me then that if ever he should become free, and be tempted, at least, to an appetizer of living human flesh before reaching the graveyard, he most likely would fasten upon the manager of the Great World-renowned.

Just as the party was about to pass on, the wretched beast, stopping for a moment, his snout pressed to the roof, uttered several short, loud, hoarse, terrific howls. Miss Spouter screamed, Miss Pea laughed hysterically,

and Colonel Grice, before he knew it, was on the outside of his knot of followers. Recovering himself—for he was without his sword and pistol-holster—he stepped quickly back to the front, looked threateningly, and afterward disdainfully, at the hyena, who had resumed his walks, and said:

“You rhinoceros varmint, you! Thinkin’ of them graveyards you’ve robbed, and hungry for some more of ’em, ah! These is live folks, my boy; and they ain’t quite ready for you yit, nor won’t be for some time, I hope.” Then he led on to the monkeys.

CHAPTER III.

“HELLO, Bill! I knowed you’d be here; got your boys with you, too, I see.”

The person addressed by Colonel Grice was a tall, stout young farmer. Over his other clothes he wore a loosely fitting round jacket, of thick, home-made stuff, with capacious pockets. In each of these were one foot and a considerable portion of a leg of a child about two years old. Their other feet rested easily in the man’s hands, which were tucked up for that purpose, while one arm of each was around his neck. The children were exactly alike, except a shade’s difference in the color of their eyes. This was Mr. Bill Williams, who, three years before, had been married to Miss Caroline Thigpen. At this double birth, Mr. Williams was proud and even exultant. Out of the many names suggested for the twins, he early selected those of the renowned offspring of Mars and Rhea Sylvia. Modifying them, however, somewhat for his own reasons, he called and so wrote them in his Bible, “Romerlus” and “Remerlus.”

“*Remus*, Mr. Bill,” urged the friend who had suggested the names. “*Remus*, *not* *Remulus*: *Romulus* and *Remus* are the names.”

“No, Philip,” he answered, “it’s *Romerlus* and *Remerlus*. One’s jest as old as t’other, or nigh and about; and he’s as big, and he’s as good-lookin’, and his brother’s name shan’t be no bigger’n hisn.”

As soon as they were able to stand without harm, he accustomed them to this mode of travel, and he was never so contented as when he and they went out thus together.

“I knowed you’d be here, Bill, and your boys.”

“Yes, kurnel, I thought comin’ to see the beastesses and varmints might sort o’ be a start to ’em in jography. You, Rom—you, Reme, you needn’t squeeze me so tight. They ain’t no danger in *them* things.”

The children, plucky for their age, and with considerable experience in travel, had gone easily enough thus far; but when they looked upon these creatures, so like, yet so unlike, mankind, they shrank from the view, and clung closely to their father. Colonel Grice, recovered from the embarrassment occasioned by the hyena, was pleased at the apprehension of the twins.

“Natchel, Bill, perfec’ly natchel. You know some folks says monkeys is kin to us, and the boys, mebbe, don’t like the looks of their relations.”

“They ain’t no kin o’ mine, kurnel, nor theirn,” answered Mr. Bill. “Ef you think they’re humans, supposin’ you—as you hain’t no children of your own—supposin’ you adop’ one of ’em?”

Mr. Bill suspected that he might be alluding to the fabled she-wolf. The colonel, however, had never heard of the distinguished originals of Roman story. His remark was a mere *jeu d’esprit*, springing naturally from the numerous sources of satisfaction of the occasion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE wild beasts were finally hidden from view, and all repaired to their seats. Colonel Grice sat high, and near the entrance of the rear tent from which the circus performers were to emerge. Mr. Williams sat on the lowest tier, near the main entrance. He had taken his boys out of his pockets and held them on his knees. The colonel, when he could get an opportunity, quietly, and in a very pleasant way, called the ringmaster's attention to him, who smiled and nodded. Then the curtain was pushed aside from the rear tent, the band struck up, and the piebald horses came marching in with their silent riders, who, at first, looked as if they had just come from the bath, and had had time for only a limited toilet. Old Miss Sally Cash, cousin and close neighbor of Colonel Grice, exclaimed:

"Lor'-a-mercy, Mose! Them ain't folks, is they? Them's wax figgers, ain't they?"

"I assure you, Cousin Sally, that they're folks," answered the colonel, with marked candor. He had great respect for his cousin Sally, and some awe.

"I thought they was wax figgers, sot on springs. They ain't like no folks that I've ever saw, and I've saw a good many people in my time, both here and in Augusty." It was one of Miss Cash's boasts, which few countrywomen of that generation could make, that she had once been to that famous city. After a short interval, she added: "I b'lieve yit they're wax figgers."

At that moment the clown, all spotted and streaked, bringing up the rear, shouted:

"Here we all are, my masters."

“My Lord-a’mighty!” exclaimed Miss Cash and some three hundred other females. Only Colonel Grice, and a very few others, who had been at yesterday’s exhibition, could preserve any amount of coolness. The rest abandoned themselves to unlimited wonder.

“I’m sixty-nine years old,” said old Mr. Pate, “and I never see sich as that before, and I never ’spected to see sich as that.”

As they made their involutions and evolutions, destined, apparently, to be endless in number and variety, the old man looked on as if in his age he was vouchsafed the witness of the very last and highest achievement of human endeavor.

“Do you think that’s decent, Mose?” asked Miss Cash. The performers were then in the act of the “ground and lofty tumbling,” turning somersaults forward, backward, over one another, lying on their backs, throwing up their legs, and springing to their feet, etc., until they were panting and blue in the face.

“I shouldn’t say it was *ondecent*, Cousin Sally.”

“I don’t say it is,” said Miss Cash.

“You know,” said the colonel, winking slyly to his wife, and other friends of both sexes, “nobody is obleeged to stay and see the show. Anybody can go that wants to. They ain’t no law agin goin’, if anybody’s desires is to git away.”

“No,” answered Miss Cash, downright. “I’ve paid my half a dollar, and they sha’n’t cheat me out of it, nor nary part of it.”

The next scene was one which Colonel Grice had eagerly anticipated. A steed rushed into the ring. He was as wild, apparently, as Mazeppa’s, and the clown, when the ring-master inquired for the rider, answered, in a pitiful tone, that he was sick, and none other of the *troupe* would dare to take his place. Then followed the usual fun

of the master ordering the clown to ride the horse, and the clown, after vain remonstrance, trying to catch the horse, and the horse refusing to be caught; and, finally, the giving up the chase, and the master lashing the recusant beast around the ring, and wishing in vain for a rider to set him off properly. In the midst of this an extremely drunken young man, homely clad, came through the main entrance, after a dispute and a scuffle with the door-keeper, and, staggering to where Mr. Bill Williams sat, looked down upon him.

“Two babies. One (*hic*) yours, s’pose.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Bill.

“And (*hic*) t’other—”

“My wife’s; but that ain’t nobody’s business but ourn. You pass on.”

The stranger declined, and fixing his muddled attention on what was going on in the ring, said:

“I can (*hic*) ride that horse—”

The words were no sooner uttered than the man stumbled upon the track, just after the horse had dashed past. The whole audience, except Colonel Grice and the select few, rose and cried out in horror.

“Take him out, Bill! Take him out!” cried Colonel Grice. Indeed, Mr. Bill had already slid his babies into his wife’s lap, and was dragging the man out of the ring.

He insisted upon returning.

“Look a-here, my friend,” said Mr. Bill, “I don’t know you, nor nobody else don’t seem to know you; but if I didn’t have Rom and Reme—”

The fellow made another rush. Mr. Bill took hold of him, but, receiving a trip, he fell flat, and the stranger sprawled into the ring, rolling out of the track in lucky time. The ring-master seemed much embarrassed.

“Oh, give him a little ride, captain!” cried out Colonel Grice. “If he falls, he’s too drunk to git badly hurt.”

“It’s a shame, Mose!” remonstrated Miss Cash. “I didn’t come here and pay my money to see people killed. Notwithstandin’ and never o’-the-less the poor creeter’s drunk, and not hardly fitten to live, he ought by good rights to have some time to prepar’ for the awful change that—”

But by this time Mazeppa was mounted and dashing away; and, but that Miss Cash had made up her mind not to be cheated out of any portion of her money, she would have shut her eyes, or veiled her face, as the maddened animal sped along, while the infatuated inebriate clung to his mane. An anxious time it was. Kind-hearted people were sorry they had come. In the struggle between life and death, the stranger seemed to be beginning to sober. Sooner than could have been expected, he raised himself from the horse’s neck (Miss Cash twisting her mouth and screwing her neck as he reeled back and forth from side to side), gathered up the reins, shook from his feet the thick shoes he was clad with, flung aside his old hat, brushed up his curly hair, and, before Miss Cash could utter a word, was on his feet. Then began that prolonged metamorphosis which old Mr. Pate was never satisfied with recounting, whether to those who saw it or those who saw it not.

“Coat arfter coat, breeches arfter breeches, gallis arfter gallis, shirt after shirt, ontwell he shucked hisself nigh as clean as a ear o’ corn.”

When everybody saw that the stranger was one of the showmen, the fun rose to a height that delayed for full five minutes the next scene. As for Colonel Grice, his handkerchief was positively wet with the tears he shed. Even Mr. Bill forgot his own discomfiture in the universal glee.

“It’s a shame, Mose,” said Miss Cash, “to put such a trick on Bill Williams, and that right where his wife is. It would be a good thing if he could put it back on you.”

Even at this late day, a survivor of that period can

scarcely recall without some exaltation of feeling that young girl of eleven (who had been advertised as "Mademoiselle Louise, the Most Celebrated Equestrienne in the World"), as she ran out with the daintiest of frocks, the pinkest of stockings, the goldenest of flounces, the bluest of belts, the curliest of hair, the peachiest of cheeks, kissed her hand to the audience, put one foot into the clown's hand, and flew into the saddle. As she went around, dancing upon that horse in full gallop, hopping over her whip and jumping through rings, and, when seated, smoothed down her skirt and waved her sleeveless arms—well, there was one boy (his name was Seaborn Byne) that declared he "would be dinged if it wasn't enough to melt the hearts clean outen a statchit." Other boys cordially indorsed this speech. As for Jack Watts, just turned of his tenth year, he ran away from home the next morning, and followed for three miles the circus, begging to be taken into its employ, stipulating for only board and clothes. When caught, brought back, and properly attended to by his mother, the villain was suspected, and almost as good as confessed, that his purpose was to avail himself of an opportunity to seize upon the person of Mademoiselle Louise and her imagined vast treasures, and bear them to some distant foreign shore—on which one in special, in his exigent haste, he had not yet been able fully to determine.

CHAPTER V.

IN the interval before the last, named "The Wonderful Tooth-drawing Coffee-pot Firecracker Scene," an incident occurred that was not on the programme—an interlude, as it were, improvised by the exuberant spirits of both spectators and showmen. Colonel Grice, deeply gratified at

the success of what, without great stretch, might be called his own treat, was in the mood to receive special attention and compliment from any source. When the pretended inebriate had been lifted upon Mazeppa, the clown took a bottle from his pocket, tasted it when he had gotten behind his master, smacked his lips, set it down by the middle pole, and, being detected in one of his resortings to it, was reproached for not inviting some one to drink with him. They were on the portion of the ring next the main entrance.

“Why don’t you invite Colonel Grice?” said Mr. Bill Williams, in a low voice. “He expects it.”

The master turned to notice from whom the suggestion proceeded, and, before he could determine, the clown, though with some hesitation, said:

“If Colonel Grice—”

“Stop it!” whispered the master.

But it was too late. The colonel had already risen, and was carefully descending.

“Is you goin’ there, Mose, shore enough?” said Miss Cash. “It do look like Mose is complete carried away with them circus people and hisself.”

Having gotten safely over the intervening heads and shoulders, the colonel stepped with dignity into the ring, at the same time feeling somewhat of the embarrassment which will sometimes befall the very greatest warrior when, without his weapons, he knows himself to be the object of the attention of a large number of civilians, both male and female. This embarrassment hindered his observation of the captain’s winks, and the clown’s pouring a portion of the liquor upon the ground. He walked up rapidly and extended his hand. The clown, with an effort at mirthfulness, the more eager because he was doubtful of perfect success, withdrew the bottle from his grasp, spread out his legs, squatted his body, and, applying the thumb of his dis-

engaged hand to his nose, wriggled his fingers at the colonel's face, winking frantically the while, hoping the latter would advance the joke by insistence.

In this he miscalculated. Persons who claimed to have seen Colonel Moses Grice, on previous occasions, what was called *mad*, said that all these were mere childish fretfulness compared with his present condition of mind, when, after the withdrawal of the bottle, the whole audience, Miss Cash louder than all, broke into uproarious laughter. Fortunately the enraged chieftain had nor sword, nor pistol, nor even walking-cane. His only weapon was his tongue. Stepping back a pace or two, and glaring upon the ludicrous squatter, he shouted:

“You spotted-back, striped-legged, streaked-faced, speckled-b-breasted, p'inted-hatted son-of-a-gun!”

With each ejaculation of these successive, uncommon appellations, the poor clown lifted himself somewhat, and, by the time their climax was reached, was upright, and, dressed as he was, seemed most pitiful.

“My dear Colonel Grice—” he began.

“Shet up your red mouth,” broke in the colonel. “I didn't *want* your whiskey. I got better whiskey at home than you know anything about. But as you ast me to drink, like, as I thought, one gentleman would ask another gentleman, I didn't feel like refusin' you. I give the whole of you your breakfast, your blasted varmints and all; I put at least twenty into your cussed show, and arfter that—”

“My dear-est Colonel Grice!”

“Oh, you p'inted-hatted, streaked-fac-ed, speckled-b-breasted—” beginning, as it were, a back-handed stroke by reversing the order of his epithets.

At this moment the ring-master, who had not been able thus far to get in a single word, said in a loud but calm tone:

“Colonel Grice, don't you see that it was a mere jest,

and that the suggestion came from one of your neighbors? The bottle contains nothing but water. We beg your pardon if you are offended; but I can but think that the abusive words you have used already are quite enough."

"Come, Mose! come, Mose!" cried Miss Cash, who had just been able to stop her laughter. "Give and take, Mose. You put it on to Bill Williams, and he stood it; and he put it back on to you, and now you can't stand it, eh?" And the old lady again fairly screamed with laughter, while hundreds of others joined.

The colonel stood for a moment, hesitating. Then he suddenly turned, and, remarking that this was no place for a gentleman, walked toward the entrance.

"You goin' to let 'em cheat you out of the balance of your money that way, Mose?" asked Miss Cash. He turned again. Finding himself wholly without support, and unwilling to lose the great scene of the "Tooth-drawing," etc., he halted and stood until it was over. By that time he was considerably mollified, and the manager, approaching, apologized for himself, the clown, and all his *troupe*, and begged that he would join in a glass of the genuine at Spouter's tavern.

How could the colonel refuse? He could not, and he did not.

"Go with us, won't you, sir?" said the manager, addressing Mr. Williams. "We had some little fun at your expense also; but I hope you bear us no malice, as we never intend to hurt feelings."

"Sperrits," answered Mr. Bill, "is a thing I sildom teches—that is, I don't tech it reglar; but I'll try a squirrel-load with you—jes' a moderate size squirrel-load."

At Spouter's all was cordially made up. Mr. Bill set Rom and Reme on the counter, and the clown gave them a big lump of white sugar apiece.

"They seem to be nice, peaceable little fellows," said he. "Do they ever dispute?"

"Oh, no great deal," answered Mr. Bill. "Sometimes Rom—that's the bluest-eyed one—he wants to have all his feed before Reme gits any o' hisn, and he claws at the spoon and Reme's nose. But when he does that I jes' set *him* right down, I does, and I makes him wait ontwell Reme's fed. I tends to raise 'em to be peaceable, and to give and take, and to be friends as well as brothers, which is mighty fur from bein' always the case in families."

Mr. Bill knew that Colonel Grice and his younger brother Abram had not spoken together for years.

"Right, Bill," said the colonel. "Raise 'em right. Take keer o' them boys, Bill. Two at a time comes right hard on a fellow, though, don't it, Bill? Expensive, eh?" and the colonel winked pleasantly all around.

"Thank ye, kurnel; I'll do the best I can. I shall raise 'em to give and take. No, kurnel, not so very hard. Fact, I wa'n't a-expectin' but one, yit, when Reme come, I thought jest as much o' him as I did o' Rom. No, kurnel, it wouldn't be my desires to be a married man and have nary ar—to leave what little prop'ty I got to. And now, sence I got two instid o' one, and them o' the same size, I feel like I'd be sort o' awk'ard 'ithout both of 'em. You see, they balances agin one another in my pockets. No, kurnel, better two than nary one; and in that way you can larn 'em better to give and take. Come, Rom, come, Reme—git in; we must be a-travelin'." He backed up to the counter, and the boys, shifting their sugar-lumps to suit, stepped aboard, and away they went.

After that day Dukesborough thought she could see no reason why she might not be named among the leading towns of Middle Georgia.

KING WILLIAM AND HIS ARMIES.

“ And thus it is to reign.”

CHAPTER I.

I THINK it well to announce, right in the beginning of this story, that Miles Bunkly is not properly its hero, though some preliminary things must be told concerning him. Although Miles had loved Miss Caroline Thigpen long before Mr. Bill Williams courted her, yet he never had told her so in set words, until—well, you may say it was too late. Yet everybody was surprised. Miles was a most excellent young man, industrious, sober, thrifty, fond of laying up, and had a right good deal laid up already. Then he was quite passable as to looks. Mr. Bill could not have been said, even by Miss Thigpen, to have any advantage of Miles as to looks. As for the rest, all except Miss Thigpen and his own mother considered him the inferior. Yet Dukesborough manners, or something else, put him in the lead on his first entry upon the field. It was then, and not till then, that Miles Bunkly made one, and but one, avowed effort, and, failing, gave up the contest, and resigned himself to what he called *moloncholly*.

He had never been—at least he had never seemed to

be—a cheerful-minded person anyway. His courtship even had been a rather solemn piece of business, and the final declaration sounded somewhat as if he had invited Miss Thigpen to go with him to the graveyard instead of taking charge of his domestic affairs. The lady, after gently declining his suit, and claiming the privilege of regarding him as a friend—nay, a brother—announced her intention of ever keeping his proposal a secret, and requested him to do the same.

“No, ma’am,” said Miles; “no, Miss Karline. I shall *not* deny it, nor I *shall* not deny it. I’m much obleeged to you, and I shall be a friend to you and to yourn. The waound is in my heart, and it’ll stay thar, and it’ll be obleeged to stay thar, but I’ll be a friend to you and yourn.”

On his way home he called to his neighbor and friend Abram Grice, who was standing in his door:

“Mawnin’, Abom.”

“Mawnin’, Miles. ’Light and come in.”

“Step out here a minute, Abom, ef you please.”

Mr. Grice came out to the gate.

“Kicked, Abom.”

“Kicked, Miles? Who?”

“Me.”

“Kicked bad, Miles?”

“Powerful.”

“Your horse, Miles, or a mule, or a steer?”

“Nary one. It’s here, Abom.”

Then he laid his hand broadly on his breast.

“In the stomach, Miles? Bad place to git kicked. What in the thunder kicked you ’way up thar? Git down; come in and take a drink, and tell me about it afterward.”

“It’s not my stomach, Abom; it’s my bres. The waound’s inside—’way inside. Sperrits wouldn’t do it no good; they wouldn’t retch it.”

“My goodness gracious! Miles Bunkly, what in the dickens *is* the matter with you?”

“I’ve been yonder, Abom,” and he pointed mournfully toward the Thigpens’, “and my desires is to tell no lies. I got it from a human person over thar, and that not of the sect of a man person.”

“Who?—Miss Karline?”

“Ef I was to name the name, Abom, that were the name I should name.”

Mr. Grice shouted with laughter.

“Miles Bunkly, you skeered me out of a year’s growth. I thought you been kicked by a whole team o’ mules, or at least a yoke o’ steers. Well, look here, you ain’t a-goin’ to stand it?”

“It’s done done, Abom.”

“Yes, but I’ve knowed sich as that *ondone*. Why, Sarann kicked me three times han’ runnin’; but I told her every time she done it that sich talk as that didn’t *phaze* me. That’s women, Miles. Them’s their ways. They ain’t a-goin’ to let a fellow know, not at the first offstart, that they goin’ to have him. I don’t know what it’s for, ’itnout it’s jest natchelly to try to git the whip-hand of him at the start. It’s the natchel instinc’ of the woman sect. You go back to Karline Thigpen, and don’t let on that you ’member anything about her kickin’ of you, and that you ain’t even phazed by it. You’re sorter slow, old fellow—that is, in sich motions—but Karline Thigpen got too much sense to give up sich a chance.”

“’Nother person, Abom,” replied Miles, most mournfully—
“’nother person, of the male sect.”

“Who’s he?”

“William Williams.”

“Who? Bill Williams?” exclaimed Mr. Grice, in astonishment and disgust.

“That’s the name of the name, Abom.”

“Well, Miles Bunkly, ef you can’t whip out Bill Williams, even *with* his Dukesborough ways he got by livin’ in town six months, all I got to say is you *ought* to git kicked by a yoke o’ steers, and run over by the keart in the bargain.”

Such and similar remonstrances were ineffectual to make Mr. Bunkly continue the contest. He retired at once, leaving the field to his rival. At the wedding, though he did not join in the dance, nor even in the plays, yet he partook sufficiently, it was thought, of meats, cakes, and syllabub. Mr. Bill and Miss Karline, her brother Allen and his young bride Betsan, were specially attentive to his wants. He yielded with profound sadness to their persistent offerings of good things, and the more syllabub he took, the mournfuller grew his deportment. To several persons, mainly elderly, he said during the evening that it was the moloncholiest of all days to him.

“Yit, furthersomemore,” he would add, with touching unselfishness, “ef her who is now Missis Karline Williams, and who *were* Miss Karline Thigpen, be it her or be it hern, ef her or them might ever want for anything which it might be her and their good rights or their desires, and ef then I’m a-livin’—providin’, you understand, I’m a-livin’—they shall have it, ef it’s in my retch.”

CHAPTER II.

SOME four years passed. Mr. Bunkly, though plunged in his dear melancholy, yet attended punctually to his business in a gloomy, slow, sure way, made good crops, sold at good times, added to his land and plantation stock, and, claiming to despise wealth, heaped it up more and more,

as if to show, evidently, how vain are earthly goods for the happiness of a man in whose breast is an incurable wound.

Mr. Bill Williams was getting along, too, better than had been expected and prophesied. Much of the exuberant vivacity contracted by several months' residence in town had subsided in these four years of living with a wife (a settled 'oman, he styled her) who was probably the most industrious in the neighborhood. He well knew that everybody believed Miss Thigpen to have made a mistake in preferring himself to Miles Bunkly, and he had said at the beginning of his conjugal career that he should take it upon himself to convince the world that it was mistaken. When his twin sons, Romerlus and Remerlus, were born and named, he felt that he was making reasonable headway on that ambitious road. Then he too had added somewhat to his estate, and his wife had picked up many a dollar by her extra work. They did not rise as rapidly as Miles, but Miles remained but one, while Mr. Bill, so to speak, had been two, and now he was four. People cannot ignore figures in such calculations, especially when they represent mouths. Never mind, thought Mr. Bill—never mind. Thus the contemplation of a former rival, with whom, however, he was on the friendliest of terms, spurred a nature that otherwise might have been wanting in the energy becoming the head of a family.

Only one thing interfered with the happiness of that rising family, and that was becoming serious. It would sting the wife painfully sometimes when she would hear of the practical jokes put upon her husband, who had become rather liable thereto by what was considered in the neighborhood his too great forwardness of speech and other deportment. Too great a talker, as from the very first she had told him he was, she would tell him further that a man who got into scrapes ought to get out of them. In these

four years he had sobered much under that benign influence. Yet when a man has once been the butt of neighborhood ridicule, it requires time to release him even when he has ceased to deserve it. Sometimes it seems that the only way to obtain such release is to fight for it. That exigency, in the opinion of Mrs. Williams, had now arrived.

One night, when the children had been put to bed, she said, "William, you've got to whip somebody."

She spoke pointedly.

Mr. Bill looked behind him at the trundle-bed, and asked himself, "Is it Rom, or is it Reme?"

"Nary one," was the audible answer. "It's somebody bigger'n them, harder to whip, and a more deservin' of it."

Then Mr. Bill peered through the window into the outer darkness, and speculated if there were insubordination among his little lot of negroes.

"Nor them neither. It's white folks; it's MOSE GRICE, that's who it is, and it's nobody else—that is, to *start* with."

Mr. Bill was startled. Colonel Grice had, indeed, been extremely rough with Mr. Bill on several occasions, and especially since the day of the circus repeatedly ridiculed the father of the twins. Yet he was a man of means, a considerable fighter, and colonel of the regiment. So Mr. Bill was obliged to be startled, and he looked at his wife.

"You've been joked by Mose Grice, William, and poked fun at, and made game of by him, until *I* don't feel like standin' of it no longer, nor I don't think Rom and Reme would feel like standin' of it, not if they were big enough and had sense enough to understan' his impudence."

"Why, Karline—" remonstrated Mr. Bill.

"Oh, you needn't be a-Karlinin' o' me!" she said. And never before had Mrs. Williams addressed her husband in precisely that language. But her feelings had been hurt, and allowance ought to be made. She cried somewhat,

but tears did not serve at once to produce the softening influence that is their legitimate result.

“There’s brother Allen,” she continued, “and which Betsan told me herself that Allen told her that the fact of the business was, if you didn’t make Mose Grice keep his mouth shet, ’specially about Rom and Reme, *he would*; and then there’s Miles Bunkly—”

“Oh, Lordie!” exclaimed Mr. Bill.

“There’s Miles Bunkly, and which Betsan say is about as mad as brother, and which, ef he *ain’t* any fighter, yit, when Mose Grice was one day a-makin’ game of him about his moloncholy, Miles told him that his moloncholy was his business and not hisn, and that if he kept on meddlin’ with it, he mout ketch the disease, and Mose Grice let Miles Bunkly’s moloncholy alone, he did.”

“And then,” Mr. Bill said afterward, “Karline sot up a cry, she did, and it woke up Rom and Reme, and they sot up a howl apiece, and I says to myself, I’ll stan’ a whippin’ from Mose Grice rather’n run agin sich as this.”

CHAPTER III.

AFTER that night Mrs. Williams did not again allude to its matter of conversation, and was as affectionate to her husband as always. Mr. Bill gloried in the possession of her, and he had good reason. He brooded and brooded. The allusion to Miles Bunkly stung him deeply, usually imperturbable as his temper was, though not a jot of jealousy was in the pang. He would have known himself to be the greatest of fools to feel that. Yet, easy-going, self-satisfied as he was, he knew that other people, including his brother-in-law, still regarded his wife less fortunate than she might have been. The more Mr. Bill brooded, the

more serious appeared to him the relation of his case to that of several others, especially Colonel Grice.

Superadded to a general disposition to impose upon whomsoever would endure him, Colonel Grice had a spite against Mr. Bill on account of the friendship that, since the intermarriage with Miss Thigpen, had grown up between him and Abram Grice, the colonel's younger brother, whose relations with himself were not only not fraternal, but hostile. The colonel was a fighter, and had managed somehow always to come victorious out of combat; for he was a man of powerful build, and of great vigor and activity. Some, indeed, had often said that he knew whom to encounter and whom not. His position of head of the regiment had been obtained at a time when military ardor, after a long peace, had subsided, and leading citizens cared not for the *éclat* of the office. He had sought it eagerly, and obtained it because there was no strong competitor, and especially because his election was expected and intended to ridicule and discourage regimental parades. He was greatly exalted by his election, and became yet more overbearing whenever he could do so with safety.

"That's Mose," said his brother Abram one day to Miles Bunkly—"that's jest him. He'll impose on anybody that'll let him, and he'll try it with anybody that he thinks likes me. He's been so from a boy. He imposed on me till I got big enough to whip him, which I done a time or two, and then he quit it. But he took his revenge on me by cheatin' me out of part o' the prop'ty, and he done that the quicker because he knowed I, bein' of his brother, wouldn't prosecute him for it. That's Mose—that's jest him."

"I hate the case, Abom," answered Miles, "because I has that respects of Karline Williams that it mortify me, and make me, so to speak, git moloncholier than what I

natchelly am, to see a man that's her husband, and the father, as it were, o' them two far pinks of boys, runned over in the kind o' style that Mose run over him, nigh and in and about every time he come up along of William Williams. I never keered no great deal about *him*, with them town ways o' his'n, untell he were married to Miss Karline, and then I knowed that there was obleeged to be that in William Williams which people in general never supposed.

"Ah, Miles, old fellow," said Abram, "you ought to took that prize, and you'd a done it ef you'd a listened to me, and been peerter in your motions, and hilt on longer."

"No, no, Abom," answered Miles, his arm giving a mournful deprecatory wave. "It were not my lot. I tried, and I tried honest and far. I were not worth of Miss Karline, Abom. I didn't know it, but she did. And yit I could see it hurt her to put the waound where she knowed it were obleeged to stay. I wasn't a-supposenen, though, as to that, that William were worth of Miss Karline neither. But Karline Thigpen—I ain't a-speakin' o' your wife now. Abom, and a-leavin' of her out o' the case—Karline Thigpen, but which she is now Missis Karline Williams, is the smartest woman, and got the best jedgment, *I* ever saw. And sence she have choosed William Williams, I been certain in my mind that there were that in William Williams that the balance of us never supposed, and which'll show itself some day if William can ever git farly fotch to a right pint."

Thus that nature, upright, unselfish, simple, fond to persuade itself that it was unhappy, took its chief solace in contemplating and magnifying its own disappointments, and in sympathizing with those who had been their chief occasion.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was muster-day for the battalion. Colonel Grice always felt it his duty to be at these occasions, preparatory to the great regimental parade. The exercises, after many hours, were coming to an end, as the companies marched, with short intervals between, down the one street of the village, preparatory to disbandment. Alternately had the colonel been complimentary and censorious, as he rode, sometimes in a walk, other times at full gallop, up and down the lines.

“Peerter, peerter, major,” he remonstrated with Major Pounds, respectfully indeed, but with a warmth that seemed difficult to repress—“peerter; make them captains peerten up them lines. My blood and thunder! my Juberter and Julius Cæsar! if the enemy was to come upon us with fixted bannets— Oh, you’ve done your part admarrably, major. It’s them captains.”

It was just before the final halt that the colonel addressed Captain Collins, whose company was in the center, and then immediately in front of Bland’s store. “Ah, Cap’n Collins, look to your rar. It’s so fur behind that it look like two companies ’stid o’ one. That sergeant o’ yourn you’ll have to talk to and drill in private. He’s arfter makin’ *twins* out o’ your company. Sergeant Williams is a great man for twins, you know, cap’n. But you better tell him to make ’em keep his cubs at home. We want solid columes when we come to the field of battle.”

The warrior enjoyed his jest, that had been heard by all in the company, and others besides. But he did not allow himself even to smile when at the head of the military forces

of his country, in order to keep himself ever on the alert against sudden attacks of her enemies. His gloomy brow indicated indignation at the thought that a petty subaltern, from some vain notion of making his own domestic status the model of the nation's principal means of defense, sought to demoralize it, and actually invite invasion.

"My Lord!" said Allen Thigpen, when they told him, "if Bill don't fight him for that, I will! To think that sister Karline's feelin's is to be hurt by hearin' of sich as that!"

"I don't think, Abom," said Miles (who overheard the remark), "that it can be put off any longer. Ef there's that in William Williams which I been a-supposen is obleeged to be thar, he'll fetch it out now. Now you go right on home, Abom."

Miles said, afterward, "My respects of Abom was that as he wouldn't stand up *to* his brother, it wouldn't look right to be agin' him."

When the battalion was dismissed, Allen walked rapidly to Mr. Bill. The latter was wiping the tears from his eyes with his handkerchief. Having finished this operation, he went with a resolute step toward Bland's piazza, whither Colonel Grice, after dismounting and giving his horse to a servant to hold, had repaired.

"Ah, Mr. Bland," said the colonel, about to light a cigar, "you peaceful men, you who follow in the peaceable ways—departments, I might ruther say—of dry-goods, and hardwar', and molasses, and blankets, and trace-chains, and other sich departments, so to call all o' the warieties of a sto'-keeper's business—you don't know—I may say you don't dream—Mr. Bland, of the responsuability of a military man whose country's enemies may be at the very gates—"

"Colonel Grice!" said Mr. Bill Williams, in a tone no-

body had ever heard from him before. The colonel turned to see who called. Mr. Bill was standing on the ground, Allen Thigpen and Miles Bunkly by his side.

“Hello, Bill!” said the colonel, with careless cordiality. “What’ll you have, my dear fellow?”

“I’ll have satisfaction, sir. I’m not a fightin’ man, and I know I have sometimes been keerness in my talk, yit I never went to hurt people’s feelings a-purpose, and I always helt myself more of a gentleman than to insult women and little childern, and which you can’t say for yourself without tellin’ a lie, and a fightin’ lie at that.”

Those words operated the greatest surprise that ever befell Colonel Moses Grice. Partly in astonishment, partly in wrath, and partly in deprecation, he exclaimed:

“What in this wide omnipotent world! Is the Colonel of the Fourteenth Regiment got to study his langwidges—”

“Come, Mose,” said Miles, slowly but distinctly, “the muster’s over now, and William Williams is your ekal, and he is liable to have his satisfaction, onlest you apologizes for your langwidges.”

“I don’t *want* his apologies,” said Mr. Bill. “I won’t *have* his apologies. He’s got to fight, ’ithout he gits on his horse and runs away.”

“I can’t stand that,” said the colonel. Throwing off his coat, he came rapidly down the steps to where Mr. Bill, similarly stripped, awaited him.

CHAPTER V.

WHOEVER has not seen a combat between two powerful, irate men, with no weapons other than those supplied by nature, has missed the sight, though he may not regret it,

of a thrilling scene. The blows, the grapplings, the struggles of every kind are as if each combatant had staked every dear thing upon the result, and set in to save it or die. The advantages on this occasion, except the right, were with the colonel. Taller by an inch, though perhaps not heavier, agile, practiced, and in the full maturity of his physical powers, he had, besides, a contempt for his adversary, and expected to prevail speedily. Mr. Bill himself rather counted upon this result; but he had made up his mind that such was preferable to what he would endure without an attempt to punish this persistent insulting railery. He had never been a participant in a fight of any sort; but he had labored habitually at the heaviest work upon his farm, and he had broken, unassisted, many a colt, horse, and mule of his famous Molly Sparks—the most willful and indocile of dams. He had now the special disadvantage of having been upon his feet during several hours of tiresome exercises.

“He’ll try to ride you, Bill,” said Allen hastily, “but you keep him off. He can fling you, I expect; but you can outlast him in licks. Don’t let him ride you.”

As the colonel advanced, Mr. Bill—

But alas! I am not an epic bard, nor even a Pindaric, nor is there one whom I can command to duly celebrate this combat. Mr. Bowden, the village postmaster, was a person somewhat addicted to poetry (reading it, I mean), and he was heard to say several times afterward that it reminded him, he thought, more than any fight he had ever witnessed, of the famous one between Diomedes and Mars on the plain of Troy. But the schoolmaster, who was a Homeric scholar, rather intimated to some of the advanced pupils that Mr. Bowden did not seem quite clear in his mind which was Mars and which Diomedes. For a first fight, and that with an experienced antagonist, Mr. Bill

conducted himself with surprising dexterity in the giving and evasion of blows, and, when evasion was not successful, with becoming fortitude. It was, however, a tiresome business. He showed that, and once, after putting in one of his best, when he was attempting to withdraw himself from the return, he had the misfortune to tread upon a corn-cob that happened to be lying in his rear. This turning beneath him, he lost his balance, and the colonel rushing upon him, he fell to the ground upon his left side.

“There, now!” said Miles Bunkly. “Hadn’t been for that cornfound corn-cob—”

Unable to finish what he would have said, he raised his hands on high, and clasped them in intense grief. Whispering to Allen a few words, he took out his handkerchief and covered his eyes for several moments.

“Bill,” said Allen, “Miles says, hold on as long as you can. If you git too badly used up, he’ll help you take care o’ Rom and Reme.”

Then Mr. Bill Williams was worth seeing, though prostrate on the field. These words fell upon his ear with a force irresistible. But for Mr. Bowden’s incertitude as to the impersonation of those combatants of the heroic age, he might have compared these words of Miles to those of the goddess, when

“Raged Tydides, boundless in his ire:

‘Pallas commands, and Pallas lends thee force.’”

As it was, Mr. Bill pronounced the names “Rom” and “Reme” once, then he gave a groan that sounded less a groan than a roar. And then, in spite of the superincumbent weight, he suddenly reached his arm around the colonel’s neck, and drew his head to the ground.

It was said of Miles Bunkly by people of veracity, and those who had known him longest and most intimately, that

this was the only occasion during life whereon he was known to shout. Then, with the mildness yet the solemnity of an experienced good man whose admonitions thereto have gone unheeded, he remarked to the colonel, as the latter's body was slowly but inevitably following his head beneath Mr. Bill, like the stag in the anaconda's mouth, "You see how it is, Mose; I told you, if you didn't mind, you'd ketch the moloncholy yourself some day."

The colonel, apparently concluding that the time had come, said, as distinctly as he could, "Stop it, Bill; I give it up."

"Let him up, Bill," said Allen; "you got his word."

"No, sir, not till he's 'poligized. He's jest acknowledged hisself whipped; he hain't 'poligized."

"I'm sorry, Bill, for havin' hurted your feelin's and your wife's," said the colonel.

"So fur so good," answered Mr. Bill, leisurely stretching himself at ease on his foe, as if he would repose after his fatigue—"so fur so good; but what about Romerlus Williams and Remerlus Williams?" He never called the full names of his boys except on impressive occasions.

"Come, Bill," said Allen, taking him by the arm, "enough's enough."

Mr. Bill rose with the reluctant air of a man roused from a luxurious couch whereon he had been indulging, though not to the full, in sweet sleep and sweeter dreams. The colonel arose, and, unpitied of all, slunk limping away. Miles Bunkly, the tears in his eyes, laid his hands on Mr. Bill's shoulders, and said:

"I knowed it were obleeged to be in you, William, ef it could be fotch out; and my respects of a certain person was that, that I knowed she'd fetch it out in time. It's done fotch out, and from this time forrards you and yourn may go 'long your gayly way down the hill o' life, and all

I got to say to you and them, William, is, Go IT! And now go wash your face and hands, and go 'long home to happiness and bliss. I don't say you never deserved 'em before, but I do say you deserve 'em now."

CHAPTER VI.

"MY!" said Mr. Bill, when he had washed, and was feeling the knots and bruises on his face, and trying to open his eyes—"my! but ain't it tiresome? I ruther maul rails all day 'ithout my dinner, or break two o' old Molly's colts, mules at that, than to have to go through sich as that agin. Thanky, Miles, and come and see a fellow." He bade all adieu, and went on home, where something in the bosom of his family awaited him that is worth relating. The news having preceded him, his wife, a pious woman, was a little troubled in her mind at first for having given to her husband the spur to a feeling that was not entirely consistent with duty; yet when they had told her the whole story, she rose, laid aside her work, went to her chest, got out her very best frock, and every thread of her children's Sunday clothes, including many a ribbon that had survived its ancient use, and arrayed herself and them to greet the hero upon his return. The whicker of old Molly at the foot of the lane, and the answer of the colt in the lot, announced the joyous moment. Dismounting at his gate, Mr. Bill would fain have indulged his eyes with that goodly sight; but one of them was entirely and the other partially closed. He became aware of the rushing into his arms of a person of about the size of his wife, and justly guessed to be her, and the cries of two children which he rather thought were familiar to his ears. For the boys, when they saw their

father all battered and bruised, set up a yelling, and retreated.

“You Rom! you Reme!” cried the indignant mother, laughing the while, “if you don’t stop that crying and making out like you don’t know your father, I’ll skin you both alive! Come back here, and if you as much as whimper, I’ll pull off them ribbons, strip you to your shirts, and put you to bed without a mouthful for your supper!”

They came back, did those boys.

“Look at him, sirs. Don’t tell me you don’t know him. Who is it?”

“Pappy,” said Rom, on a venture, followed by Reme.

“And ain’t he the grandest man that’s a-livin’?”

“Eth’m,” said Rom.

“Eth’m,” said Reme.

“Now git behind thar, and let’s all march in.”

“And we did march in,” said Mr. Bill, afterward—“me, and Karline, and Rom, and Reme; and as we was a-marchin’ along, I felt—blamed if I didn’t—like King William at the heads of his armies.”

CHAPTER VII.

MILES BUNKLY had become too fond of his “moloncholy” to let it depart entirely; but its severest pains subsided in spite of him, now that the rival who had been preferred to him had justified the preference.

“My respects of William Williams,” he would often say, “is that, that it riconcile me and do my moloncholy good that he’s the husband and the protector, as it were, of—well, ef I should name the name, it would be Karline Thigpen that were.”

For some weeks immediately following the day of the fight he had been observed, from time to time, in the intervals of other business, engaged with a work seeming to require much painstaking, the result of which will immediately appear. One morning Mr. Bill, standing in his door, called to his wife:

“Come here, Karline, quick! Who and what can them be yonder a-comin’ up to the gate? Somebody, ’pear like, a-leadin’ of a par o’ dogs hitched to a little waggin.”

Mrs. Williams, looking intently at the comers, cried:

“It’s brother, leading of a par o’ calves yoked to a little cart.”

She was right.

“Good gracious, brother—”

But Allen paid not the slightest attention to his sister, not even saying good-morning.

“Here, Rom; here, Reme” (his business being with them), “here’s a present for you from Miles Bunkly; and he in particklar charge me to tell you, and which ef you weren’t old enough yit to have sense enough, ’twouldn’t be long before you would be to understan’ sich langwidges, that his respects of your father was that, that he sent you the follerin’ keart and steers, which he made the keart with his own hands, the paintin’ and all, and likewise broke the steers, and which they’re jest six months old to-day, which you moutn’t believe it, but they are twin calves, them steers is, of his old cow Speckle-face, and which he say is the best and walliblest cow he ever possessioned, and which them was the very words he said.”

Then, turning to his sister and brother-in-law, he said, “Mawnin’, sister Karline; mawnin’, Bill.”

Mr. Bill roared with laughter; Mrs. Bill shed tears in silence, both in their abounding gratitude.

“And twins at that!” said Mr. Bill, “jes’ like Rom and

Reme!" An idea struck him as with the suddenness of inspiration.

"Allen," he asked vaguely, "does you know the names o' them steers?"

"No, Bill; Miles didn't—"

"Makes no odds ef he did. *I* names them steers; and you see they're adzactly alike, exceptin' that that one in the lead got the roundest—a leetle the roundest—blaze in the forrard." Going slowly to the latter, and laying his hand upon his head, he said, "This here steer here is name Mierlus." Then walking slowly down around the cart and up to the other, he laid his hand upon his head, saying, "This here steer here is name Bunkerlus." He took his boys, lifted them into the cart, contemplated all with a satisfaction that had no bottom to it, then waved his hand in preparation for a harangue that few other things could have prevented than that which presently transpired. Miles Bunkly himself appeared at the gate, and walked in, his face wreathed in melancholy smiles.

"Why, Miles, you blessed everlastin' old fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Bill.

They were people too honest and plain to feel any embarrassment. The generous donor at once took the lines into his hands, and led the procession several times about the yard and the lot, as innocent, and in many respects as much a child, as those on whom he had bestowed his gift. The ardor of Mr. Bill could not be subdued as he looked upon the scene. Tears like those in his wife's eyes came into his own, and he said, softly, to her and to Allen:

"I never spected to live to see sich a skene and sich a ewent. Thar they goes, Romerlus Williams, and Remerlus Williams, and Mierlus—ahem!—Williams, and Bunkerlus Williams, and Miles Bunkly hissself, *and* the keart and all; and I'll channelge, I don't say this county, but I'll chan-

nelge this whole State o' Georgy, to pejuce a skene and pejuce a ewent as lovely as the present skene and the present ewent on this lovely mawnin' like. It do look like, Allen—it do look like the families is united and jinded together." Mr. Bill's throat choked up with just enough space left to allow of breathing, but of not another word.

"Allen," said Miles, when, the visit being over, they were on their way home, "to think of William a-couplin' of my name along with them lovely boys! Well, I never expects to git intirely over my moloncholy, but I tell you, Allen, I were never as nigh of bein' of riconciled to it."

THE END.

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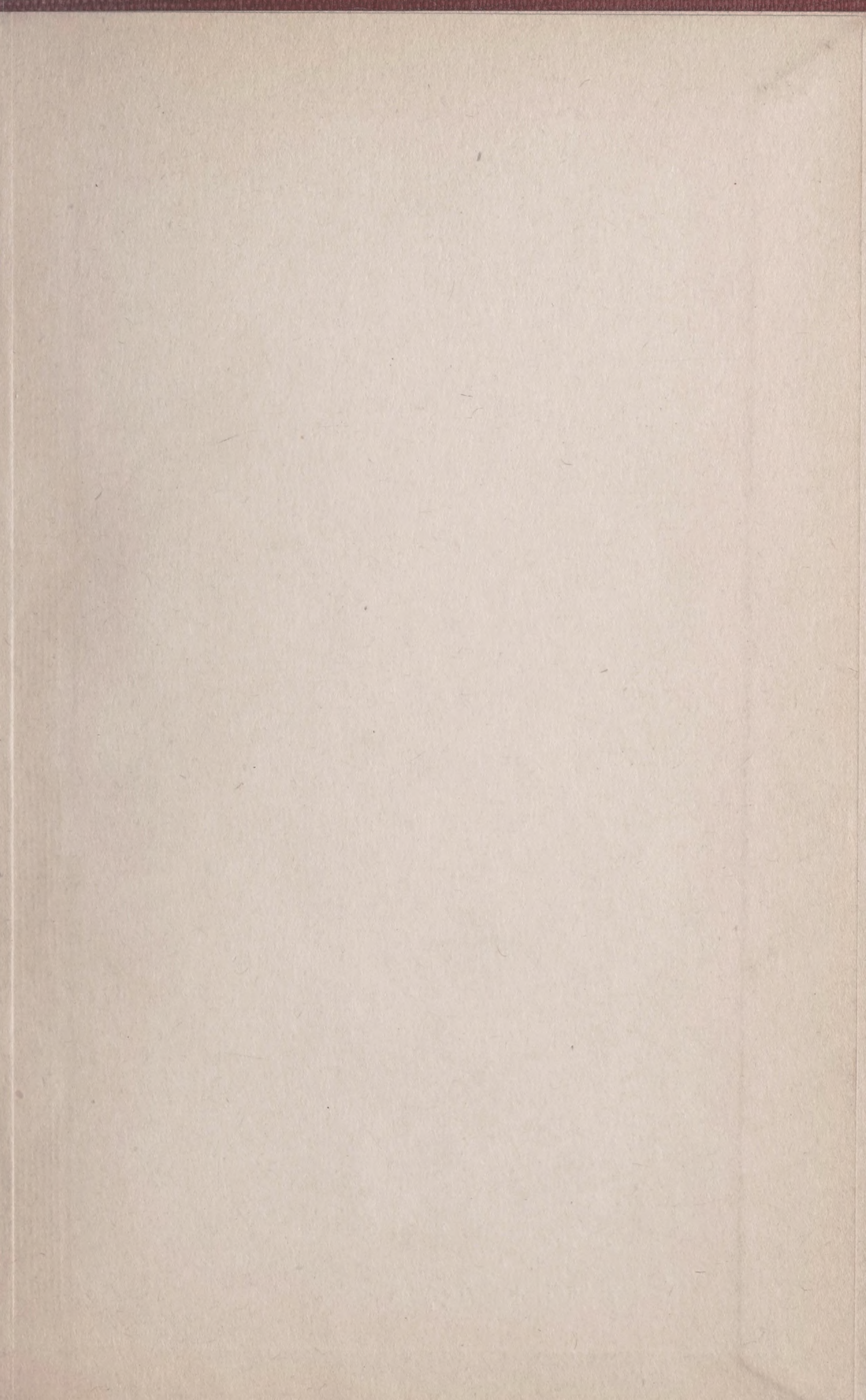
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