

Ella Barnwell eBook

Ella Barnwell

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Page 1

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*** Start of this project gutenber EBOOK Ella Barnwell ***

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ELLA BARNWELL:

A Historical Romance of Border Life

BY EMERSON BENNETT,

Author of

*"Prairie flower," "LENI Leoti," "Forest rose," "Mike Fink," "Viola,"
"Clara Moreland," "Forged will," "Traitor," "Female spy," "Rosalie Du
Pont," "Fair Rebel," Etc., Etc.*

Cincinnati:

*Published by U.P. James,
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PREFACE.

In putting to press a new and revised edition of the following story, the author would state, that his original design was to combine fact and fiction, in such a way, as, while making his story move forward to a proper *denouement*, to give the reader a correct picture of the dress, customs, and social and war-like habits of the early pioneers of the west; and also embody a series of historical events which took place on the frontiers



during that revolutionary struggle by which we gained our glorious independence. For this purpose, Kentucky, in her infancy, was selected as the scene of action; and most of the existing records of her early settlements were read with care, each compared with the others, and only the best authenticated accounts presented to the reader. So much in fact did the author labor to make the present story historical, that there is scarcely a scene or character in its pages that had not its counterpart in reality.

He would only add, that, for important reasons, the original title has been changed to that which now heads its title-page. "What's in a name?" queried the great bard. Had he lived in our day, and been a novelist instead of a poet, he would either not have asked the question, or answered it very differently than he did.

ELLA BARNWELL.

CHAPTER I.

The stranger.

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That portion of territory known throughout Christendom as Kentucky, was, at an early period, the theatre of some of the wildest, most hardily contested, and bloody scenes ever placed on record. In fact its very name, derived from the Indian word Kan-tuck-kee, which was applied to it long before its discovery by the whites, is peculiarly significant in meaning—being no less than “the dark and bloody ground.” History makes no mention of its being inhabited prior to its settlement by the present race; but rather serves to aid us to the inference, that from time immemorial it was used as a “neutral ground,” whereon the different savage tribes were wont to meet in deadly strife; and hence the portentous name by which it was known among them. But notwithstanding its ominous title, Kentucky, when first beheld by the white hunter, presented all the attractions he would have envied in Paradise itself. The climate was congenial to his feelings—the country was devoid of savages—while its thick tangles of green cane—abounding with deer, elk, bears, buffaloes, panthers, wolves and wild cats, and its more open woods with pheasant, turkey and partridge—made it the full realization of his hopes—his longings. What more could he ask? And when he again stood among his friends, beyond the Alleghanies, is it to be wondered at that his excited feelings, aided by distance, should lead him to describe it as the El Dorado of the world? Such indeed he did describe it; and to such glowing descriptions, Kentucky was doubtless partially indebted for her settlement so much in advance of the surrounding territory.

As it is not our purpose, in the present instance, to enter into a history of the country, further than is necessary to the development of our story, the reader will pardon us for omitting that account of its early settlement which can readily be gleaned from numerous works already familiar to the reading public. It may not be amiss, however, to remark here, what almost every reader knows, that first and foremost in the dangerous struggles of pioneer life, was the celebrated Daniel Boone; whose name, in the west, and particularly in Kentucky, is a household word; and whose fame, as a fearless hunter, has extended not only throughout this continent, but over Europe. The birth place of this renowned individual has been accredited to several states, by as many writers; but one, more than the rest, is positive in asserting it to have been Bucks county, Pennsylvania; and the year of his birth 1732; which is sufficient for our purpose, whether strictly correct or not. At an early period of his life, all agree that he removed with his father to a very thinly settled section of North Carolina, where he spent his time in hunting—thereby supplying the family with meat and destroying the wild beasts, while his brothers assisted the father in tilling the farm—and where he afterwards, in a romantic manner, became acquainted with a settler’s daughter, whom he married; and whence, in the spring



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of 1769, in company with five others, he set out on an expedition of danger across the mountains, to explore the western wilds; and after undergoing hardships innumerable, and losing all his companions in various ways, he at last succeeded in erecting the first log cabin, and being the first white settler within the borders of Kentucky. To follow up, even from this time, a detail of his trials, adventures, captures by the Indians, and hair-breadth escapes, to the close of his eventful career, would be sufficient to fill a volume; therefore we shall drop him for the time—merely remarking, by the way, that he will be found to figure occasionally in the following pages.

From the first appearance of Boone in the wilds of Kentucky, we shall pass over a space of some ten or twelve years, and open our story in the fall of 1781. During this period, the aspect of the country for a considerable distance around the present site of Lexington, had become materially changed; and the smoke from the cabin of the white settler arose in an hundred places, where, a dozen years before, prowled the wolf, the bear, and the panther, in perfect security. In sooth, the year in question had been very propitious to the immigrants; who, flocking in from eastern settlements in goodly numbers, were allowed to domiciliate themselves in their new homes, with but few exceptions, entirely unmolested by the savage foe. So much in fact was this the case, that instead of taking up their residence in a fort—or station, as they were more generally called—the new comers erected cabins for themselves, at such points as they considered most agreeable; gradually venturing further and further from the strongholds, until some of them became too distant to look hopefully for succor in cases of extreme necessity.

Among the stations most prominent at this period, as being most secure, and against which the attacks of the Indians were most frequent and unsuccessful, may be mentioned Harrod's, Boone's, Logan's, and Bryan's, so called in honor of their founders. The first two named, probably from being the two earliest founded, were particularly unfortunate in drawing down upon themselves the concentrated fury of the savages, who at various times surrounded them in great numbers and attempted to take them by storm. These attacks not unfrequently lasted several days, in which a brisk fire was maintained on both sides, whenever a foe could be seen; until wearied out with fruitless endeavors, or surprised by a reinforcement of the whites, the Indians would raise the siege, with a howl of rage, and depart. One of the longest and most remarkable of these on record, we believe, was that of Boonesborough, which was attacked in June, 1778, by five hundred Indians, led on by Duquesne, a Frenchman, and which, with only a small garrison, commanded by Boone himself, nobly held out for eight days, when the enemy withdrew in despair. But, as we before remarked, it not being our purpose to enter into a general history of the time, we will now proceed with our story.



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It was near the close of a mild, beautiful day, in the autumn of 1781, that a young man, some twenty-two years of age, emerged from a wood into an open space or clearing, at a distance of perhaps fifteen miles eastward from Lexington. The general appearance of this individual betokened the hunter, but at the same time one who followed it for pleasure, rather than as a means of support. This was evident from his dress, which although somewhat characteristic of the time, was much superior to that generally worn by the woodsman. He had on a woolen hunting frock, of fine texture, of a dark green color, that came a few inches below the hips. Beneath this, and fitting closely around his shoulders, neck and breast, was a scarlet jacket, ornamented with two rows of round, white metal buttons. A large cape, with a deep red fringe, of about inch in width, was attached to the frock, and extended from the shoulders nearly to the elbow. Around the waist, outside the frock, passed a dark leather belt, in which were confined a brace of handsome pistols, and a long silver-hilted hunting knife. Breeches of cloth, like the frock, were connected with leggins of tanned deer skin, which in turn extended over, and partly concealed, heavy cow-hide boots. A neatly made cap of deer skin, with the hair outside, surmounted a finely shaped head. His features, though somewhat pale and haggard, as if from recent grief or trouble, were mostly of the Grecian cast. He had a high, noble forehead; a large, clear, fascinating gray eye; a well formed mouth, and a prominent chin. In height he was about five feet and ten inches, broad shouldered, straight, heavy set, with handsome proportions.

Upon the shoulder of the young man, as he emerged from the wood, rested an elegant rifle; which, after advancing a short distance, he brought into a trailing position; and then pausing, he dropped the breech upon the ground, placed his hands over the muzzle, and, carelessly leaning his chin upon them, swept with his eye the surrounding country, to which he was evidently a stranger.

The day had been one of those mild and smoky ones, peculiar to the climate and season; and the sun, large and red, was near to sinking behind the far western ridge, giving a beautiful crimson, mellow tinge to each object which came beneath his rays. The landscape, over which the stranger gazed, was by no means unpleasing. His position was on an eminence, overlooking a fertile valley, partly cleared, and partly shaded by woods, through which wound a crystal stream, whose gentle murmurs could be heard even where he stood. Beyond this stream, the ground, in pleasing undulations, took a gentle rise, to a goodly height, and was covered by what is termed an open wood—a wood peculiar to Kentucky at this period—consisting of trees in the regularity of an orchard, at some distance apart, devoid of underbrush, beneath which the earth was beautifully carpeted with a rank growth of clover,



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high grass, and wild flowers innumerable. In the rear of the young hunter, as if to form a background to the picture, was the wood he had just quitted, which, continuing the elevation spoken of, but more abruptly, rose high above him, and was crowned by a ledge of rocks. Far in the distance, to his right, could be seen another high ridge; while to the left, spreading far away from the mouth of the valley, if we may so term it, like the prairies of Missouri, was a beautiful tangle, or cane-brake, containing its thousands of wild animals. The open space wherein the hunter stood was not large, covering an area of not more than half a dozen acres. It was of an oblong form, and sloped off from his position to the right, left, and front, and reached from the wood down to the stream in the valley, where stood a rather neat log cabin, from which a light blue smoke ascended in graceful wreaths. The eye of the stranger, glancing over the scene, fell upon this latter with that gleam of satisfaction which is felt by a person after performing a long fatiguing journey, when he sees before him a comfortable inn, where he is to repose for the night; and pausing for a couple of minutes, he replaced his rifle upon his shoulder, and started forward down the hill, at a leisure pace.

Scarcely had the stranger advanced twenty paces, when he was startled by a fierce yell, accompanied by the report of a rifle, the ball of which whizzed past him, within an inch of his head. Ere he could recover from his surprise, a sharp pain in the side, followed by another report, caused him to reel like one intoxicated, and finally sink to the earth. As the young man fell, two Indians sprung from behind a cluster of bushes, which skirted the clearing some seventy-five yards to the right, and, with a whoop of triumph, tomahawk in hand, rushed toward him. Believing that his life now depended upon his own speedy exertions, the young hunter, by a great effort, succeeded in raising himself on his knees; and drawing up his rifle with a hasty aim, he fired; but with no other success than that of causing one of the savages to jerk his head suddenly aside without slackening his speed. There was still a chance left him; and setting his teeth hard, the wounded man drew his pistols from his belt, and awaited the approach of his enemies; who, when within thirty paces, discovering the weapons of death, suddenly came to a halt, and commenced loading their rifles with great rapidity.

The young hunter now perceived, with painful regret, that only an interposition of Providence could save him, for his life was hanging on a thread that might snap at any moment. It was an awful moment of suspense, as there, on his knees, far, far away from the land of his birth, in a strange country, he, in the prime of life, without a friend near, wounded and weak, was waiting to die, like a wild beast, by the hands of savages, with his scalp to be borne hence as a trophy, his flesh to be devoured by wolves, and



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his bones left to bleach in the open air. It was an awful moment of suspense! and a thousand thoughts came rushing through his mind; and he felt he would have given worlds, were they his, for the existence of even half an hour, with a friend by, to receive his dying requests. To add to his despair, he felt himself fast growing weaker and weaker; and with an unsteady vision, as his last hope, he turned his eye in the direction of the cottage, to note if any assistance were at hand; but he saw none; and nature failing to support him longer in his position, he sunk back upon the ground, believing the last sands of his existence were run.

Meantime, the Indians had loaded their rifles; and one of them, stepping a pace in front of his companion, was already in the act of aiming, when, perceiving the young man falter and sink back, he lowered the muzzle of his gun, and, grasping his tomahawk, darted forward to despatch him without further loss of ammunition. Already had he reached within five or six paces of his victim, who, now unable to exert himself in his own defence, could only look upon his savage enemy and the weapon uplifted for his destruction, when, crack went another rifle, in an opposite direction whence the Indians approached, and, bounding into the air, with a terrific yell, the foremost fell dead by the young man's side. On seeing his companion fall, the other Indian, who was only a few paces behind, stopped suddenly, and, with a yell of fear and disappointment, turned and fled.

Those only who have been placed in peril sufficient to extinguish the last gleam of hope, and have suddenly been relieved by a mysterious interposition of Providence, can fully realize the feelings with which the wounded hunter saw himself rescued from an ignominious death. True, he was weak and faint from a wound which was, perhaps, mortal; still it was a great consolation to feel that he should die among those who would bury him, and perhaps bear a message to friends in a far-off land. With such thoughts uppermost in his mind, the young man, by great exertion, raised himself upon his elbow, and turned his head in the direction whence his deliverer might be expected; but, to his surprise and disappointment, no one appeared; and after vainly attempting to regain his feet, he sunk back, completely exhausted. The wound in his side had now grown very painful, and was bleeding freely; while he became conscious, that unless the hemorrhage could be stanchd immediately, the only good service a friend could render him, would be to inter his remains. In this helpless state, something like a minute elapsed, when he felt a strange sensation about his heart—his head grew dizzy—his thoughts seemed confused—the sky appeared suddenly to grow dark, and he believed the icy grasp of death was already settling upon him. At this moment a form—but whether of friend or foe he could not tell—flitted before his uncertain vision; and then all became darkness and nonentity. He had swooned.



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When the young stranger recovered his senses, after a lapse of some ten minutes, his glance rested on the form of a white hunter, of noble aspect, who was bending over him with a compassionate look; and who, meantime, had opened his dress to the wound and stanchd the blood, by covering it with a few pieces of coarse linen, which he had torn into shreds for the purpose, and secured there by means of his belt.

As this latter personage is destined to figure somewhat in the following pages, we shall take this opportunity of describing him as he appeared to our wounded friend.

In height and proportion—but not in age—these two individuals were somewhat alike—the new comer being full five feet, ten inches, with a robust, athletic frame, and all the concomitants of a powerful man. At the moment when first beheld by the young man, after regaining his senses, he was kneeling by his side, his cap of the wild-cat skin was lying on the ground, and the last mellow rays of the setting sun were streaming upon an intelligent and manly countenance, which, now rendered more deeply interesting by the earnest, compassionate look wherewith he regarded the other, made him appear to that other, in his peculiar situation, this most noble being he had ever seen. Of years he had seen some fifty; though there was a freshness about his face, owing probably to his hardy, healthy mode of life, which made him appear much younger. His countenance was open and pleasing, with good, regular, though not, strictly speaking, handsome features. His forehead was high and full, beneath which beamed a mild, clear blue eye. His nose was rather long and angular; his cheekbones high and bold; his lips thin and compressed, covering a goodly set of teeth; his chin round and prominent; the whole together conveying an expression of energy, decision, hardy recklessness and manly courage. His dress was fashioned much like the other's, already described, but of coarser materials—the frock being of linsey-woolsey; the breeches and leggings of deerskin; and the moccasins, in place of boots of the same material. Around his waist passed a belt; wherein, instead of pistols, were confined a tomahawk and scalping knife—two weapons which were considered as indispensable to the regular white hunter of that day as to the Indian warrior himself.

So soon as the elder of the two became aware of consciousness on the part of the younger, a friendly smile succeeded to the look of anxiety with which he had been regarding him; and in the frank, cordial, familiar tone of that period, when every man's cabin was the traveler's home, and every strange guest was treated with the hospitality of an old acquaintance, he said:

“Well, stranger, I'm right glad to welcome you back to life agin; for I war beginning to fear your account with earthly matters had closed. By the Power that made me! but you've had a narrow escape on't; and ef Betsy (putting his hand on his rifle, which was lying by his side,) hadn't spoke out as she did, that thar red skin varmint (pointing to the dead Indian) would have been skulking now like a thief through yonder woods, with your crown piece hanging to his girdle.”



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“A thousand thanks,” returned the wounded man, pressing the hand of the other as much as his strength would permit, and accompanying it with a look of gratitude more eloquent than words: “A thousand thanks, sir, for your timely shot, and subsequent kindness and interest in behalf of one you know not, but who will ever remember you with gratitude.”

“See here, stranger, I reckon you’ve not been long in these parts?”

“But a few days, sir.”

“And you’ve come from a good ways east o’ the Alleghanies?”

“I have.”

“I knew it. I’d have bet Betsey agin a bushel of corn, and that’s large odds you know, that such war the fact, from the particular trouble you’ve taken to thank me for doing the duty of a man. Let me assure you, stranger, that you’re in a country now whar equality exists; and whar one man’s just as good as another, provided he is no coward, and behaves himself as he should do; and whether stranger or not, is equally entitled to the assistance of his fellows; perticularly when about being treed by such a sneaking varmint as that lying yonder. Besides, I don’t want any body to thank me for shooting Indians; for I always do it, whensomever I get a chance, as Betsey would tell you, ef she could speak English; for somehow thar’s no perticular agreement atween us, unless it’s for each to make the most he can off the other; and so far I reckon thar’s a ballance in my favor, though the wretches are ever trying desperate hard to get even. But come, stranger, it won’t do for you to be lying thar with that hole in your side; and so just have patience a minute, till I’ve secured the top-knot of this beauty here, and then I’ll assist you down to yonder cabin, whar I doubt not you’ll be well cared for.”

As he spoke, the old woodsman rose to his feet, drew his knife, and turning to the dead Indian, to the surprise of the other, who was but little familiar with Kentucky customs of that day, deliberately took off the scalp, which he attached to his belt;^[1] and then spurning the body with his foot, he muttered: “Go, worthless dog! and fill the belly of some wolf! and may your cowardly companion be soon keeping you company.” Then, as he turned to the other, and noticed his look of surprise, he added: “Well, stranger, I reckon this business looks a little odd to you, coming from away beyond the mountains as you do.”

“Why, if truth must be told, I confess it does,” answered the other.

“Don’t doubt it, stranger; but you’ll do it yourself afore you’ve wintered here two seasons.”

“I must beg leave to differ with you on that point.”



“Well, well, we’ll not quarrel about it—it arn’t worth while; but ef you stay here two year, without scalping a red-skin and perhaps skinning one, I’ll agree to pay you for your time in bar-skins at your own valuation.”

“I am much obliged to you for the offer,” answered the young man—a faint smile lighting his pale features; “but I think it hardly probable I shall remain in the country that length of time.”



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“Not unless you have good care, I reckon,” returned the other; “for that thar wound o’ yourn arn’t none o’ the slightest; though I don’t want you to be skeered, for I’ve seen many a worse one cured. But come, I’ll assist you down to yon cabin, and then I must be off—for I’ve got a good distance to travel afore daylight to-morrow;” and bending down as he spoke, the veteran hunter placed his arms under the arms of the wounded man, and gently raised him upon his feet.

Although extremely weak from loss of blood, the latter, by this means of support, was enabled to walk, at a slow pace; and the two descended the hill—the elder, the while, talking much, and endeavoring by his discourse to amuse and cheer up his companion.

“Why,” he continued, “you think your case a hard one, no doubt, stranger; but it’s nothing compared to what some of us old settlers have seen and been through with, without even winking, as one may say. Within the last few year, I’ve seen a brother and a son shot by the infernal red-skins—have lost I don’t know how many companions in the same way—been shot at fifty times myself, and captured several; and yet you see here I am, hale and hearty, and just as eager, with Betsey’s permission, to talk to the varmints now as I war ten year ago.”

“But do you not weary of this fatiguing and dangerous mode of life?” inquired the other.

“Weary, stranger? Lord bless ye! you’re but a young hunter to ax such a question as that. Weary, friend? Why I war born to it—nursed to it—had a rifle for a plaything; and the first thing I can remember particularly, war shooting a painter;[2] and it’s become as nateral and necessary as breathing; and when I get so I can’t follow the one, I want to quit the other. Weary on’t, indeed! Why, thar’s more real satisfaction in sarcumventing and scalping one o’ there red heathen, than in all the amusement you could scare up in a thick-peopled, peaceable settlement in a life time.”

“By the way,” said the other, “pray tell me how you chanced to be so opportune in saving my life?”

“Why, you must know, I war just crossing through the wood back here about a mile, on my way home from the Licks, when I came across the trail of two Indians, whom I ’spected war arter no good; and as Betsey war itching for something to do, I kind o’ kept on the same way, and happened round on the other side o’ this ridge, just as the red varmints fired. I saw you fall, but could’nt see them, on account o’ the hill; but as I knowed they’d be for showing themselves soon, I got Betsey into a comfortable position, and waited as patiently as I could, until the ugly face of that rascal yonder showed clar; when I told her to speak to him, which she did in rale backwood’s dialect, and he died a answering her. I then hurried round on the skirt of the wood, loading Betsey as I went; but finding the other varmint had got off, I hastened to you and found you senseless: the rest you know.”



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By this time the two had reached nearly to the foot of the hill, and within a hundred yards of the cabin. Here they were joined by a tall, lank, lantern-jawed, awkward young man, some twenty years of age, with small, dark eyes, a long, peaked nose, and flaxen hair that floated down over his ungainly shoulders, like weeping willows over a scrub oak, and who carried in his hand a rifle nearly as long and ugly as himself.

“Why, colonel, how are ye? good even’ to ye, stranger,” was his salutation, as he came up. “I war down by the tangle yonder, when I heerd some firing, and some yelling, and I legged it home, ahead o’ the old man, just to keep the women folks in sperets, in case they war attacked, and get a pop or so at an Injen myself; but thank the Lord, they warn’t thar; and so I venterd on, with long Nance here, to see whar they mought be.”

“Well, Isaac,” returned the one addressed as colonel, “I don’t doubt your being a brave lad, and I’ve had some opportunity o’ seeing you tried; but being is how thar’s no Indians to shoot just now, I’ll ax you to show your good qualities in another way. This young man’s been badly wounded, and ef you’ll give him a little extra care, you’ll put me under obligations which I’ll be happy to repay whensomever needed.”

“It don’t need them thar inducements you’ve just mentioned, colonel, to rouse all my sympathies for a wounded stranger. Rely on’t, he shan’t suffer for want o’ attention.”

“Rightly said, lad; rightly said; and so I leave him in your care. Tender my regards to your family, for I must be off, and can’t stay to see them.” Then turning to the wounded man, he grasped his hand and said: “Stranger, thar’s something about you I like; I don’t say it of every man I meet; and so you may put it down for a compliment or not, just as you please. Give me your name?”

“Algernon Reynolds.”

“Algernon Reynolds, I hope we shall meet again, though in a different manner from our introduction; but whether or no, ef you ever need the assistance of either Betsey or myself, just make it known, and we’ll do our best for you. Good bye, sir—good bye, Isaac!” and without waiting a reply, the speaker sprung suddenly behind a cluster of bushes near which the party stood, and the next moment was lost to view in the gathering darkness.

“A great man, that thar, sir!—a powerful great man,” observed Isaac, gazing with admiration after the retreating form of the hunter. “Always doing good deeds, and never looking for pay nor thanks; may God give him four-score and ten.”

“Amen to that!” returned Reynolds. “But pray tell me his name.”

“And you don’t know him?”

“I do not.”



“And you didn’t inquire his name?”

“I did not.”

“And ef you had, sir, ten to one but he’d a given you a fictitious one, to keep clar o’ your surprise and extra thanks. Why that, sir, war the great white hunter, Colonel Daniel Boone.”



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“Indeed!” exclaimed Reynolds, in no feigned surprise—“the very man I have so longed to behold; for his fame has already extended far beyond the Alleghanies. But come, friend Isaac, my wound grows painful; my exertions thus far have weakened me exceedingly; and with your permission, I will proceed to the cottage. Ah! I feel myself growing faint—fainter—fa-i-n-t;” and he sunk senseless into the other’s arms; who, raising him, apparently without an effort, bore him into the house.

[Footnote 1: However barbarous such a proceeding may appear to thousands in the present day of civilization and refinement, we can assure them, on the authority of numerous historians of that period, that it was a general custom with the early settlers of the west, to take the scalp of an Indian slain by their hand, whenever opportunity presented.]

[Footnote 2: Backwoods name for a panther.]

CHAPTER II.

New characters.

When young Reynolds again regained his senses, it was some minutes before he could sufficiently recover from the confusion of ideas consequent upon his mishap, to follow up the train of events that had occurred to place him in his present situation. His first recollection was of the attack made upon him by the Indians; and it required considerable argument with himself, to prove conclusively, to his own mind, that he was not even now a captive to the savage foe. Gradually, one by one, each event recurred to his mind, until he had traced himself to the moment of his swooning in the arms of a tall, ungainly young man, called Isaac; but of what, had taken place since—where he now was—or what length of time had intervened—he had not the remotest idea. He was lying on his back, upon a rude, though by no means uncomfortable, bed; and, to the best of his judgment, within the four walls of some cabin—though to him but two of the walls were visible—owing to the quantity of skins of the buffalo, bear, and deer, which were suspended around the foot and front of his pallet. He was undressed; and, as he judged, upon applying his hand to the wounded part, had been treated with care; for it came in contact with a nicely arranged bandage of cloth, which was even now moist with some spirituous liquid. But what perplexed him most, was the peculiar light, with the aid of which, though dim, he could discern every object so distinctly. It could not proceed from a candle—it was too generally diffused; nor from the fire—it was too gray, and did not flicker; nor from the moon—it was not silvery enough: from what then did it proceed? It appeared the most like daylight; but this it could not be, he reasoned, from the fact that he was wounded just before night-fall—unless—and the idea seemed to startle him—unless he had lain in a senseless state for many hours, and it was indeed again morning. Determined, however, to satisfy himself on this point, he attempted to rise for the purpose; but found, to his no small surprise and regret, that he



had not even strength sufficient to lift his body from the bed; and, therefore, that nothing was left him, but to surmise whatever he chose, until some one should appear to solve the riddle; which, he doubted not, would be ere long.

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While these reflections and surmises were rapidly passing through the mind of our hero—for such we must acknowledge him to be—he heard no sound indicating the immediate vicinity of any other human being; and turning his thoughts upon this latter, he was beginning to doubt whether, at the moment, he was not the only individual beneath the roof; when he heard a step, as of some one entering another apartment; and, directly following, a female voice addressed to some person within.

“Have ye looked to the stranger agin, Ella, and moisted his bandage?”

“I have, mother,” was the answer, in a sweet and silvery voice, which caused our wounded hero to start with a thrill of pleasing astonishment.

“And how appeared he, Ella?” continued the first speaker.

“Why, I thought a little better,” answered the same soft, musical voice; “he seemed asleep, and entirely tranquil.”

“God send it, gal, for he’s had a tougher, sartin. Three days, now, nater’s bin tugging away for him; and I’d hate to see him die now, arter all; and being the colonel’s recomind, too; for Isaac says the colonel injuncted him strongly to take car o’ him; and I’d do any thing to oblege sech a man as him. He didn’t appear to have his senses, I reckon?”

“I judged not,” answered Ella; “though, from his tranquil sleep, I argued favorably of his case.”

“Well,” rejoined the other, “it’s my opine the crisis is at hand; and that he’ll ayther come out o’ this *lethargick*—as they calls it—a rational, or die straight off. ’Spose you look at him agin, Ella; or, stay, I’ll look myself. Poor feller! how he did rave and run on ’bout his troubles at home, that’s away off, until I all but cried, in reckoning how I’d feel ef it war Isaac as war going on so.”

As the speaker concluded, she advanced to where the object of her remarks was lying; and, drawing aside in a gentle manner, some of the skins near his head, gazed upon him.

As will be surmised by the reader, not a syllable of the foregoing colloquy had been lost upon Reynolds; who heard, with unbounded astonishment, of his narrow escape from that dark valley whence none who enter again return, and that three days had elapsed since he had fallen into an unconscious state. He learned, too, with regret, that he had been communicating matters—to what extent he knew not—to others, which he wished safely locked in his own breast; and judging it best, in the present instance, to dissemble a little, that his informant might not be aware of his having overheard her, he feigned to be asleep on her approach.



“He’s sleeping yit, poor creater,” continued the hostess, as she bent over the bed of our hero, until he felt her breath upon his face. “I hope it arn’t a going to be his final sleep—so young, and so handsome too! but, O dear, thar’s no telling what them Injen bullets will do, for folks does say as how they have a knack o’ pizening them, that’s orful to tell on! O Lord o’ marcy, Ella, child, do come here!” cried the dame suddenly: “I do believe he’s coming to, for sartin.”



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This latter speech was occasioned by a movement of the pretended sleeper, and the gradual opening of his eyes, with the rude stare of bewildered surprise natural to one in his supposed situation, and such as he would have exhibited without feigning, had the hostess been present some ten minutes sooner. Discovering, as already intimated, a returning consciousness on the part of her guest, the good woman drew back her head, but still kept her position by the bed, and her eyes fixed upon him, with an expression which betrayed a fear lest her hopes of this important event should prove entirely fallacious. Behind her, with timid step, stole up Ella, and, peeping over her shoulders, encountered the eyes of the young man beaming upon her, with a look which her acute perception told her was any thing but insane; and instantly starting back, the blood rushed upward, crimsoning her neck and face with a beautiful glow. As for Reynolds—in whom, as already stated, the voice of Ella alone was sufficient to awaken a thrill of pleasure—no sooner did he behold her, though but for an instant, than he felt that thrill revived with a sensation, which, in spite of himself, he knew was expressed in his own countenance; and he hastened to speak, in order as much as possible to conceal it.

“Will you have the goodness, madam, to inform me where I am?”

“Thar, thar, Ella, child!” exclaimed the matron, joyously; “I told ye so—I know’d it—he’s come to, for sartin—the Lord be praised!” Then addressing herself to Reynolds, she continued: “Whar are you, stranger, do you ax? Why you’re in the cabin o’ Ben Younker—as honest a man as ever shot a painter—who’s my husband, and father of Isaac Younker, what brought ye here, according to the directions of Colonel Boone, arter you war shot by the Injens, the varmints, three days ago; and uncle of Ella Barnwell here, as I calls daughter, ’cause her parents is dead, poor creators, and she hadn’t a home to go to, but come’d to live with us, that are fetching her up in a a dutiful way;” and the good woman concluded her lucid account of family matters with a sound that much resembled a person taking breath after some laborious exertion.

“And is it possible,” answered Reynolds, who hastened to reply, in order to conceal a strong inclination he felt for laughing, “that I have lain here three whole days?”

“Three days, and four nights, and part o’ another day, jest as true as buffaloes run in cane-brakes, and Injen varmints shoot white folks whensomever they git a chance,” replied Mrs. Younker, with great volubility. “And Ella, the darling, has tended on ye like you war her own nateral born brother; and Isaac, and Ben, and myself ha’ tended on ye too, while you war raving and running on at an orful rate, though you’ve had the best bed, and best o’ every thing we’ve got in the house.”

“For all of which I am at a loss for terms to express my gratitude,” returned Reynolds, coloring slightly as he thought of the assiduous attentions he had unconsciously received from Ella Barnwell, who already began to be an object in his eyes of no little importance.



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“Don’t mention about gratitude,” rejoined the kind hearted Mrs. Younker; “don’t talk about gratitude, for a lettle favor sech as every body’s got a right to, what comes into this country and gits shot by savages. We havn’t done no more for you than we’d a done for any body else in like sarcumstances; and, la, sir, the pleasure o’ knowing you’re a going to git well agin, arter being shot by Injen’s pizen bullets,[3] is enough to pay us twenty times over—Eh! Ella, child—don’t you say so?”

“No one, save the gentleman himself, or his dearest friends, can be more rejoiced at his favorable symptoms than myself,” responded Ella, timidly, in a voice so low, sweet and touching, that Reynolds, who heard without seeing her—for she kept the rude curtain of skins between them—felt his heart beat strangely, while his eyes involuntarily grew moist.

“That’s truly said, gal—truly said, I do believe,” rejoined Mrs. Younker; “for she’s hung over you, sir, (turning to the wounded man) night and day, like a mother over her child, until we’ve had to use right smart authority to make her go to bed, for fear as how she’d be sick too.”

“And if I live,” answered Reynolds, in a voice that trembled with emotion, “and it is ever in my power to repay such disinterested attention and kindness, I will do it, even to the sacrificing that life which she, together with you and your family, good woman, has been the means, under God, of preserving.”

“Under God,” repeated the matron; “that’s true; I like the way you said that, stranger; it sounds reverential—it’s just—and it raises my respect for you a good deal; for all our doings is under God’s permit;” and she turned her eyes upward, with a devout look, in which position she remained several seconds; while Ella, with her fair hands clasped, followed her example, and seemed, with her moving lips, engaged in prayer.

“But come,” resumed the dame, “it won’t do for you, stranger, to be disturbed too much jest now; for you arn’t any too strong, I reckon; and so you’ll jest take my advice, and go to sleep awhile, and you’ll feel all the better for’t agin Ben and Isaac come home, which’ll be in two or three hours.”

Saying this, Mrs. Younker again disposed the curtains so as to conceal from Reynolds all external objects; and, together with Ella, withdrew, leaving him to repose. Whether he profited by her advice immediately, or whether he meditated for some time on other matters, not excluding Ella, we shall leave to the imagination of the reader; while we proceed, by way of episode, to give a general, though brief account, of the Younker family.



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Benjamin Younker was a man about fifty-five years of age—tall, raw-boned and very muscular—and although now past the prime, even the meridian of life, was still possessed of uncommon strength. His form, never handsome, even in youth, was now disfigured by a stoop in the shoulders, caused by hard labor and rheumatism. His face corresponded with his body—being long and thin, with hollow cheeks, and high cheek bones,—his eyes were small and gray, with heavy eye-brows; his nose long and pointed; his mouth large and homely, though expressive; and his forehead medium, surmounted by a sprinkling of brown-gray hair. In speech he was deliberate, generally pointed, and seldom spoke when not absolutely necessary. He was a good farmer—such being his occupation; a keen hunter, whenever he chose to amuse himself in that way; a sure marksman; and, although ignorant in book learning, possessed a sound judgment, and a common-sense understanding on all subjects of general utility. He was a native of Eastern Virginia, where the greater portion of his life had been spent in hunting and agricultural pursuits—where he was married and had been blessed with two children—a son and a daughter—of whom the former only was now living, and has already been introduced to the reader as Isaac—and whence, at the instance of his wife and son, he removed, in the spring of 1779, into the borders of Kentucky—finally purchased and settled where he now resided; and where, although somewhat exposed, he and his family had thus far remained unmolested.

The dame, Mrs. Younker, was a large, corpulent woman of forty-five, with features rather coarse and masculine, yet expressive of shrewdness and courage, and, withal, a goodly share of benevolence. She was one of that peculiar class of females, who, if there is any thing to be said, always claim the privilege of saying it; in other words, an inveterate talker; and who, if we may be allowed the phrase, managed her husband, and all around her, with the length of her tongue. In the country where she was brought up and known, to say of another, that he or she could compete with Ben Younker's wife in talking, was considered the extreme of comparison; and it is not recorded that any individual ever presumed on the credulity of the public sufficient to assert that the vocal powers of the said Mrs. Younker were ever surpassed. Unlike most great talkers, she was rarely heard to speak ill of any, and then only such as were really deserving of censure; while her rough kind of piety—if we may so term it—and her genuine goodness of heart, known to all with whom she came in contact, served to procure her a long list of friends. She possessed, as the reader has doubtless judged from the specimen we have given, little or no education; but this deficiency, in her eyes, as well as in most of those who lived on the frontiers, was of minor consequence—the knowledge of hunting, farming, spinning and weaving, being considered by far the more necessary qualifications for discharging the social duties of life.



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Of Isaac, with whom the reader is already, acquainted, we shall not now speak, other than to say, he could barely read and write—rather preferring that he develop his character in his own peculiar way. But there is another, and though last, we trust will not prove least in point of interest to the reader, with whom we shall close, this episodic history—namely—Ella Barnwell.

The mother of Ella—a half sister to the elder-Younger—died when she was very young, leaving her to the care of a kind and indulgent father, who, having no other child, lavished on her his whole affections. At the demise of his wife, Barnwell was a prosperous, if not wealthy merchant, in one of the eastern cities of Virginia; and knowing the instability of wealth, together with his desire to fit his daughter for any station in society, he spared no expense necessary to educate her in all the different branches of English usually studied by a female. To this was added drawing, needle-work, music and dancing; and as Ella proved by no means a backward scholar in whatever she undertook, she was, at the age of fifteen, to use a familiar phrase, turned out an accomplished young lady. But alas! she had been qualified for a station which fate seemed determined not to let her occupy; for just at this important period of her life, her father became involved in an unfortunate speculation, that ended in ruin, dishonor, and his own bodily confinement in prison for debts he could never discharge. Naturally high spirited and proud, this misfortune and persecution proved too much for his philosophy—and what was more, his reason—and in a state of mental derangement, he one night hung himself to the bars of his prison window—leaving his daughter at the age we have named, a poor, unprotected, we might almost add friendless, orphan; for moneyless and friendless are too often synonymous terms, as poor Ella soon learned to her mortification and sorrow.

Ella Barnwell, the young, the beautiful, and accomplished heiress, was a very different personage from poor Ella Barnwell the bankrupt's daughter; and those who had fawned upon and flattered and courted the one, now saw proper to pass the other by in silent contempt. It was a hard, a very hard lesson for one at the tender age of Ella, who had been petted and pampered all her life, and taught by her own simplicity of heart to look upon all pretenders as real friends—it was a hard lesson, we say, for one of her years, to be forced at one bold stroke to learn the world, and see her happy, artless dreams vanish like froth from the foaming cup; but if hard, it was salutary—at least with her; and instead of blasting in the bud, as it might have done a frailer flower, it set her reason to work, destroyed the romantic sentimentalism usually attached to females of that excitable age, taught her to rely more upon herself, and less upon others, more upon actions and less upon words, and, in short, made a strong minded woman of her at once. Yet this was not accomplished without many a heart-rending pang, as the briny tears of chagrin, disappointment, and almost hopeless destitution, that nightly chased each other down the pale cheeks of Ella Barnwell to the pillow which supported her feverish head, for weeks, and even months after the death of her father, could well attest.

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The father of Ella was an Englishman, who had emigrated to this country a few years previous to his marriage; and as none of his near relations had seen proper to follow his example, Ella, on his side, was left entirely destitute of any to whom she could apply for assistance and protection. On her mother's side, she knew of none who would be likely to assist her so readily as her half uncle, Benjamin Younker, whom she remembered as having seen at the funeral of her mother; and who then, taking her in his brawny arms, while the tears dimmed his eyes, in a solemn, impressive manner told her, that, in the ups and downs of life, should she ever stand in need of another's strong arm or purse, to call on him, and that, while blest with either himself, she should not want. This at the time had made a deep impression on her youthful mind, but subsequently had been nearly or quite obliterated, until retouched by feeling the want of that aid then so solemnly and generously tendered. Accordingly, after trying some of her supposed true-hearted friends—who had more than once been sharers in her generosity; and who, in return, had professed the most devoted attachment; but who now, in her distress, unkindly treated her urgent requests with cold neglect,—Ella hastened to make her situation known to her uncle; the result of which had been her adoption into a family, who, if not graced with that refinement and education to which she had been accustomed, at least possessed virtues that many of the refined and learned were strangers to—namely—truth, honesty, benevolence, and fidelity.

Ella, in her new situation, with her altered views of society in general, soon grew to love her benefactor and his family, and take that sincere pleasure in their rude ways, which, at one time, she would have considered as next to impossible. With a happy faculty, belonging only to the few, she managed to work herself into their affections, by little and little, almost imperceptibly, until, ere they were aware of the fact themselves, she was looked upon rather as a daughter and sister, than a more distant relation. In sooth, the former appellation the reader has already seen applied to her during the recorded conversation of the voluble Mrs. Younker—an appellation which Ella ever took good care to acknowledge by the corresponding title of mother.

About a year from the period of Ella's becoming a member of the family, the Younkers had removed, as already stated, to what was then considered the "Far West," and had finally purchased and settled where we find them in the opening of our story. In this expedition, Ella, though somewhat reluctantly, had accompanied them—had remained with them ever since—and was now, notwithstanding her former lady-like mode of life, through the tuition of Mrs. Younker, regularly installed into all the mysteries of milking, churning, sewing, baking, spinning and weaving. With this brief outline of her past history, we shall proceed to describe her personal appearance, at the time of her introduction to the reader, and then leave her to speak and act for herself during the progress of this drama of life.

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Eighteen years of sunshine and cloud, had served to mould the form of Ella Barnwell into one of peculiar beauty and grace. In height she was a little above five feet, had a full round bust, and limbs of that beautiful and airy symmetry, which ever give to their possessor an appearance of ethereal lightness. Her complexion was sufficiently dark to entitle her to the appellation of brunette; though by many it would have been thought too light, perhaps, owing to the soft, rich transparency of her skin; through which, by a crimson tint, could be traced the “tell-tale-blood,” on the slightest provocation tending to excitement. Her features, if examined closely, could not be put down as entirely regular, owing to a very slight defect in the mouth, which otherwise was very handsome, and which was graced with two plump, pretty, half pouting lips. This defect, however, was only apparent when the countenance was in stern repose; and, as this was seldom, when in company with others, it was of course seldom observed. The remainder of her features were decidedly good, and, seen in profile, really beautiful. Her eye was a full, soft, animated hazel, that could beam tenderly with love, sparkle brilliantly with wit, or flash scornfully with anger; but inclining more to the first and second qualities than the last. Her eye-brows were well defined, and just sufficiently arched to correspond with the eyes themselves. Her forehead was prominent, of a noble cast, and added dignity to her whole appearance. Her hair was a rich, dark brown, fine and glossy, and although neatly arranged about the head, evidently required but little training to enable it to fall gracefully about her neck in beautiful ringlets. The general expression of her face, was a soft, bewitching playfulness, which, combined with the half timid, benevolent look, beaming from her large, mild, hazel eye, invariably won upon the beholder at the first glance, and increased upon acquaintance. Her voice we have already spoken of as possessing a silvery sweetness; and if one could be moved at merely seeing her, it only required this addition to complete the charm. To all of the foregoing, let us add an ardent temperament—capable of the most tender, lasting and devoted attachment, when once the affections were placed on an object—a sweet disposition, modest deportment, and graceful manners—and you have the portrait in full of Ella Barnwell, the orphan, the model of her sex, and the admiration of all who knew her.

[Footnote 3: Mrs. Younker is the only authority we have for supposing Indians poison their bullets, although we have read of poisoned arrows, and hence infer such a proceeding to be rather a supposition with her than a certainty.]

CHAPTER III.

The tale and fatal secret.

The dwelling of Benjamin Younker, as already mentioned, stood at the base of a hill, on the margin of a beautiful valley, and within a hundred feet of a lucid stream, whose waters, finding their source in the neighboring bills, rushed down, all gleesome and sparkling, over a limestone bed, and

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“From morn till night, from night till morn,”

sung gentle melodies for all who chose to listen.

The building itself though rough, both externally and internally, was what at that period was termed a double cabin; and in this respect was entitled to a superiority over most of its neighbors. As this may serve for a representative of the houses or cabins of the early settlers of Kentucky, we shall proceed to describe its structure and general appearance somewhat more minutely than might otherwise be deemed necessary.

The sides of the cottage in question, were composed of logs, rough from the woods where they had been felled, with the bark still clinging to them, and without having undergone other transformation than being cut to a certain length, and notched at either end, so as to sink into each other, when crossed at right angles, until their bodies met, thereby forming a structure of compactness, strength and solidity. Some ten or twelve feet from the ground, the two upper end logs of the cabin projected a foot or eighteen inches beyond the lower, and supported what were called *butting poles*—poles which crossed these projections at right angles, and, extending along the front and back of the building, formed the eaves of the roof. This latter was constructed by gradually shortening the logs at either end, until those which crossed them, as we said before, at right angles, came together at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the last one formed the ridge-pole or comb of the whole. On these logs, lapping one over the other, and the lower tier resting against the butting poles, were laid slabs of clapboard—a species of plank split from some straight-grained tree—about four feet long, and from three to four wide. These were secured in their places by logs in turn resting on them, at certain intervals, and answering the purpose of nails; necessity requiring these latter articles of convenience to be dispensed with in the early settlements of the West. As the cabin was double, two doors gave entrance from without, one into either apartment. These entrances were formed by cutting away the logs for the space of three feet by six, and were closed by rude doors, made of rough slabs, pinned strongly to heavy cross bars, and hung on hinges of the same material. These, like the rest of the building, were rendered, by their thickness, bullet proof—so that when closed and bolted, the house was capable of withstanding an ordinary attack of the Indians. With the exception of one window, opening into the apartment generally occupied by the family, and flanked by a heavy shutter, the doors and chimney were the only means through which light and air were admitted. These were all firmly secured at night—the unsettled and exposed state of the country, and the dangerous proximity of the pioneers to the ruthless savage, particularly those without the forts, rendering necessary, on their part, the most vigilant caution.



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The internal appearance of the cabin corresponded well with the external. The apartment occupied by the family during the day, where the meals were cooked and served, and the general household affairs attended to, was very homely; and might, if contrasted with some of the present time, be termed almost wretched; though considered, at the period of which we write, rather above than below the ordinary. The floor was composed of what by the settlers were termed puncheons; which were made by splitting in half trees of some eighteen inches in diameter, and hewing the faces of them as regular as possible with the broad-axe. These were laid, bark side downwards, upon sleepers running crosswise for the purpose, and formed at least a dry, solid and durable, if not polished, floor. At one end of the cabin was the chimney, built of logs, outside the apartment, but connecting with it by a space cut away for the purpose. The back, jambs, and hearth of this chimney were of stone, and put together, in a manner not likely to be imitated by masons of the present day. A coarse kind of plaster filled up the surrounding crevices, and served to keep out the air and give a rude finish to the whole.

The furniture of the Younkers, if the title be not too ambiguous, would scarcely have been coveted by any of our modern exquisites, even had they been living in that age of straight-forward common sense. A large, rough slab, split from some tree, and supported by round legs set in auger holes, had the honor of standing for a table—around which, like a brood of chickens around their mother, were promiscuously collected several three-legged stools of similar workmanship. In one corner of the room were a few shelves; on which were ranged some wooden trenchers, pewter plates, knives and forks, and the like necessary articles, while a not very costly collection of pots and kettles took a less dignified and prominent position beneath. Another corner was occupied by a bed, the covering of which was composed of skins of different animals, with sheetings of home-made linen. In the vicinity of the bed, along the wall, was a row of pegs, suspending various garments of the occupants; all of which—with the exception of a few articles, belonging to Ella, procured for her before the death of her father—were of the plainest and coarsest description. A churn—a clock—the latter a very rare thing among the pioneers of Kentucky—a footwheel for spinning flax—a small mirror—together with several minor articles, of which it is needless to speak—completed the inventory of the apartment. From this room were two exits, besides the outer door—one by a ladder leading above to a sort of attic chamber, where were two beds; and the other through the wall into the adjoining cabin, whither our hero had been borne in a state of insensibility on the night of his mishap, and where he was for the second time presented to the reader. This latter place was graced with a bed, a loom for weaving, a spinning-wheel, a large oaken chest, and a few rough benches.

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Such, reader, as our description has set forth, was the general appearance of Younker's dwelling, both without and within, in the year of our Lord 1781; and, moreover, a fair representative of an hundred others of the period in question—so arbitrary was necessity in making one imitate the other. But to resume our story.

In the after part of a day as mild and beautiful as the one on which we opened our narrative, but some four weeks later, Ella Barnwell, needle-work in hand, was seated near the open door leading from the apartment first described to the reader. Her head was bent forward, and her eyes were apparently fixed upon her occupation with great intentness—though a close observer might have detected furtive glances occasionally thrown upon a young man, with a pale and somewhat agitated countenance, who was pacing to and fro on the ground without. With the exception of these two, no person was within sight—though the rattling of a loom in the other apartment or cabin, betokened the vicinity of the industrious hostess.

For some moments the young man—a no less personage than our hero—paced back and forth like one whose mind is harrowed by some disagreeable thought: then suddenly halting in front of the doorway, and in a voice which, though not intended to be so, was slightly tremulous, he addressed himself to the young lady, in words denoting a previous conversation.

“Then I must have said some strange things, Ella—I beg pardon—Miss Barnwell.”

“Have I not requested you, Mr. Reynolds, on more than one occasion, to call me Ella, instead of using the formality which rather belongs to strangers in fashionable society than to those dwelling beneath the same roof, in the wilds of Kentucky?” responded the person addressed, in a tone of pique, while she raised her head and let her soft, dark eyes rest reproachfully on the other.

“Well, well, Ella,” rejoined Reynolds, “I crave pardon for my heedlessness; and promise you, on that score at least, no more cause for offence in future.”

“Offence!” said Ella, quickly, catching at the word: “O, no—no—not offence, Mr. Reynolds! I should be sorry to take offence at what was meant in all kindness, and with true respect; but somehow I—that is—perhaps it may not appear so to others—but I—to me it appears studied—and—and—cold;” and as she concluded, in a hesitating manner, she quickly bent her head forward, while her cheek crimsoned at the thought, that she might perhaps have ventured too far, and laid herself liable to misconstruction.

“And yet, Ella,” returned Reynolds, somewhat playfully, “you resemble many others I have known, in preaching what you do not practice. You request me to lay aside all formality, and address you by your name only; while you, in that very request, apply to me the title you consider as studied, formal and cold.”



“You have reference to my saying *Mr. Reynolds*, I presume,” answered Ella; “but I see no analogy between the two; as in addressing you thus, I do but what, under the circumstances, is proper; and what, doubtless, habit has rendered familiar to your ear; while, on the other hand, no one ever thinks of calling me any thing but Ella, or at the most, Ella Barnwell—and hence all superfluities grate harshly.”



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“Even complimentary adjectives, eh?” asked Reynolds, with an arch look.

“Even those, Mr. Reynolds; and those most of all are offensive, I assure you.”

“I thought all of your sex were fond of flattery.”

“Then have you greatly erred in thinking.”

“But thus says general report.”

“Then, sir, general report is a slanderer, and should not be credited. Those who court flattery, are weak-minded and vain; and I trust you do not so consider all our sex.”

“Heaven forbid,” answered Reynolds, with energy, “that I should think thus of all, or judge any too harshly!—but there may be causes to force one into the conviction, that the exceptions are too few to spoil the rule.”

“I trust such is not your case,” responded Ella, quickly, while her eyes rested on the other with a searching glance.

“No one is required to criminate himself in law,” replied Reynolds, evasively, with a sigh; and then immediately added, as if anxious to change the topic: “But I am eager for you to inform me what I said during my delirium.”

“O, many things,” returned Ella, “the half of which I could not repeat; but more particularly you spoke of troubles at home, and often repeated the name of Elvira with great bitterness. Then you would run on incoherently, for some time, about pistols, and swords, and end by saying that the quarrel was just—that you were provoked to it, until it became almost self defence—and that if he died, his blood would be on his own head.”

“Good heavens, Ella! did I indeed say this?” exclaimed Reynolds, with a start, while his features became deadly pale. “Did I say more? did I mention further particulars?—speak! tell me—tell me truly!”

“Not in my hearing,” answered Ella, while her own face blanched at the sudden vehemence of the other.

“Well, well, do not be alarmed!” said Reynolds, evidently somewhat relieved, and softening his voice, as he noticed the change in her countenance; “people sometimes say strange things, when reason, the great regulator of the tongue, is absent. What construction did you put upon my words, Ella?”

“Why, in sooth,” replied Ella, watching his features closely as she spoke, “I thought nothing of them, other than to suppose you might formerly have had some trouble; and



that in the chaos of wild images crowding your brain, after being attacked and wounded by savages, it was natural some of these image should be of a bloody nature.”

“Then you did not look upon the words as having reference to a reality.”

“No! at the time I did not.”

“At the time?” repeated Reynolds, with a slight fall of countenance; “have you then seen or heard any thing since to make you suspicious?”

“Nothing—until—”

“Well, well,” said Reynolds, quickly, as she hesitated; “speak out and fear nothing!”

“Until but now, when you became so agitated, and spoke so vehemently on my repeating your delirious language,” added Ella, concluding the sentence.



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“Ha!” ejaculated Reynolds, as if to himself; “sanity has done more to betray me than delirium. Well, Ella,” continued he, addressing her more direct, “you have heard enough to make you doubtful of my character; therefore you must needs hear the whole, that you may not judge me worse than I am; but remember, withal, the tale is for your ear alone.”

“Nay, Mr. Reynolds, if it be a secret, I would rather not have it in keeping,” answered Ella.

“It is a secret,” returned Reynolds, solemnly, with his eyes cast down in a dejected manner; “a secret, I would to Heaven I had not myself in keeping! but hear it you must, Ella, for various reasons, from my lips; and then we part—(his voice slightly faltered) we part—forever!”

“Forever!” gasped Ella, quickly, with a choking sensation, while her features grew pale, and then suddenly flushed, and her work unconsciously dropped from her hand. Then, as if ashamed of having betrayed her feelings, she became confused, and endeavored to cover the exposure by adding, with a forced laugh: “But really, Mr. Reynolds, I must crave pardon for my silly behavior—but your manner of speaking, somehow, startled me—and—and I—before I was aware—really, it was very silly—indeed it was, and I pray you overlook it!”

“Were circumstances not as I have too much reason to fear they are,” returned Reynolds, slowly, sadly, and impressively, with his eyes fixed earnestly and even tenderly upon the other, “I would not exchange that simple expression of yours, Ella, for a mine of gold. By that alone you have spoken volumes, and told me what I already feared was true, but hoped was otherwise. Nay, turn not your head away, Ella—dear Ella, if you will allow me so to address you—it is better, under the circumstances, that we speak plainly and understandingly, as the time of our final separation draweth near. I fear that my manner and language have hitherto too much expressed my feelings, and encouraged hopes in you that can never be realized. Oh! Ella, if such be the case, I would, for your dear sake, we had never met!—and the thought hereafter, that I have caused you a pang, will add its weight of anguish to my already bitter lot. The days that I have spent beneath this hospitable roof, and in your sweet presence, are so many of bright sunshine, in a life of cloud and storm; but will only serve, as I recall them, to make the remainder, by contrast, seem more dark and dreary. From the first I learned you were an orphan, and my sympathy was aroused in your behalf; subsequently, I listened to your recital of grief, and trouble, and cold treatment by the world—told in an artless manner—and in spite of me, in spite of my struggles to the contrary, I discovered awakening in my breast a feeling of a stronger nature. Had my wound permitted, I should have torn myself from your presence then, with the endeavor, if such a thing were possible, to forget you; but, alas! fate ordered otherwise, and the consequence I fear will be to add sorrow to both. But one thing, dear Ella, before I go further, let me

ask: Can you, and will you forgive me, for the manner in which I have conducted myself in your company?"



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"I have nothing to forgive; and had I, it should be forgiven," answered Ella, sweetly, in a timid voice, her hands unconsciously toying with her needle-work, and her face half averted, whereon could be traced the suppressed workings of internal emotion.

"Thank you, Ella—thank you, for taking a weight from my heart. And now, ere I proceed with what to both of us will prove a painful revelation, let me make one request more—a foolish one I know—but one I trust you will grant nevertheless."

"Name it," said Ella, timidly, as the other paused.

"It is, simply, that in judging me by the evidence I shall give against myself, you will lean strongly to the side of mercy; and, when I am gone, think of me rather as an unfortunate than criminal being."

"You alarm me, Mr. Reynolds, with such a request!" answered Ella, looking up to the other with a pale, anxious countenance. "I know not the meaning of it! and, as I said before, I would rather not have your secret in keeping—the more so, as you say the revelation will be a painful one to both."

For a moment the young man paused, as though undecided as to his reply, while his countenance expressed a look of mortified regret really painful to behold—so much so, that Ella, moved by this to a feeling of compassion, said:

"I perceive my answer wounds your feelings—I meant no harm; go on with your story; I will listen, and endeavor to concede all you desire."

"Thank you—again thank you!" returned the other, energetically, with emotion. "I will make my narrative brief as possible."

Saying which, he entered the apartment where the other was sitting, and seating himself a few feet distant from her, after some little hesitation, as if to bring his resolution to the point, thus began:

"I shall pass over all minor affairs of my life, and come at once to the period and event, which changed me from a happy youth, blessed with home and friends, to a wanderer—I know not but an outlaw—on the face of the earth. I was born in the state of Connecticut, A.D. 1759; and my father being a man of property, and one determined on giving his children (of whom there were two, one older than myself) a liberal education, I was at an early age sent to a neighboring school, where I remained until turned of eighteen, and then returned to my parents.

"About this period, an old, eccentric lady—a maiden aunt of my father—died, bequeathing to me—or rather to the second born of her nephew, Albert Reynolds, which chanced to be myself—the bulk of her property—in value some fifty thousand dollars, on condition, that, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, I should marry a



certain Elvira Longworth—a lady some three years my junior, for whom my great aunt had formed a strong attachment. And the will further provided, That in case the said second born of Albert Reynolds, either through the intervention of Providence, in removing



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him from off the face of the earth, (so it was worded) and from among the living, or through a mutual dislike of the parties seemed, did not between the specified ages, celebrate, with due rejoicing, the said nuptials with the said Elvira Longworth, the sum of twenty thousand dollars should be paid over to the said Elvira, if living, and the remainder of the property (or in case she was deceased the whole) should revert to the regular heirs at law.

“Such was the will—one of the most singular perhaps on record—which, whatever the design of its author, was destined, by a train of circumstances no one could foresee, to result in the most terrible consequences to those it should have benefited. On the reading thereof, no little dissatisfaction was expressed in regard to it, by numerous relatives of the deceased; each of whom, as a matter of course, was expecting a considerable share of the old lady’s property; and all of whom, with but few exceptions, were nearer akin than myself; and therefore, in that respect, more properly entitled to it. As a consequence of the will, I, though innocent of its construction—for none could be more surprised at it than myself—became a regular target for the ridicule, envy, and hate of those who chanced to be disappointed thereby. At the outset, I had no intention of seeking a title to the property by complying with the specification set forth at the instance of its late owner; and only looked upon it as a piece of crack-brained folly, that would serve for a nine days’ comment and jest, and then be forgotten; but when I saw, that instead of being treated with the courtesy and respect no conscious act of mine had ever forfeited, I was ridiculed, sneered at, and looked upon with jealousy and hate by those whose souls were too narrow to believe in a noble action—and who, measuring and judging me by their own sordid standards of avaricious justice, deemed I would spare no pains to legally rob them, as they termed it,—when I saw this, I say, my blood became heated, my fiercer passions were roused, and I inwardly swore, that if it were now in my power to accomplish what they feared, I would do it, though the lady in question were a fright to look upon. In this decision I was rather encouraged by my father, who being at the time somewhat involved, thought it a feasible plan of providing for me, and then, by my aid, recovering from his own pecuniary embarrassments.

“As yet I had never seen Elvira—she living in an adjoining county, some thirty miles distant, where my aunt, on a visit to a distant relative, had first made her acquaintance, and formed that singular attachment, peculiar to eccentric temperaments, which had resulted in the manner already shown. Accordingly, one fine spring morning, I mounted my horse, and set forth to seek my intended, and behold what manner of person she was of. Late at night I arrived at the village where she resided—stabled my beast—took lodging at a hotel—inquired



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out her residence—and, betimes, the morning following, made my obeisance in her presence, and with that bashful, awkward grace—if I may be allowed so paradoxical a term—which my youth present purpose, and former good breeding combined, were calculated to produce. I was more embarrassed still a minute after, when, having given my name, and hinted at the singular document of the old lady deceased, I found my fair intended, as well as her family, were in total ignorance of my meaning; and could I at the moment have been suddenly transferred to my horse, I do not think I should have paused to make the necessary explanation. As it was, there was no alternative; and accordingly begging a private interview with Elvira, I disclosed the whole secret; which she listened to for a time with unfeigned surprise; and then bursting into a wild, ringing laugh, declared it to be 'The funniest and most ridiculous thing she ever heard of.'

“She was a gay, sprightly, beautiful being—fresh in the bloom of some fifteen summers—with a bright, sparkling, roguish eye—long, floating, auburn ringlets—a musical voice—a ringing laugh—the latter frequent and long,—so that I soon felt it needed not the stimulating desire of wealth and revenge to urge me on to that, which, under any circumstances, would have been by no means disagreeable. To make a long story short, I called upon her at stated periods; and, within a year from our first acquaintance, we were plighted to each other. About this time my father, together with some influential friends, procured me a lieutenancy, to serve in our present struggle for the maintenance of that glorious independence, drawn up by the immortal Jefferson, and signed by the noble patriots some two years before. I served a two years' campaign, and fought in the unfortunate and bloody battle of Camden; which resulted, as doubtless you have heard, in great loss and defeat to the American arms. Shortly after the action commenced, our captain was killed, and the command of the company devolved on me. I fulfilled my duties to the best of my ability, and myself and men were in the hottest of the fight. But from some alleged misdemeanor, whereof I can take my oath I was guiltless, I was afterward very severely censured by one of my superior officers; which so wounded my feelings, that I at once resigned my commission and returned to my native state.

“On arriving at home, to my surprise and mortification, I learned that my intended was just on the eve of marriage with a cousin of mine—a worthless fellow—who, urged on by the relatives interested, and his own desire of acquiring the handsome competence of twenty thousand dollars, had taken advantage of my absence to calumniate me, (in which design he had been aided by several worthy assistants) and supplant me in the good graces—I will not say affections, as I think the term too strong—of Elvira Longworth.



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“The lady in question I do not think I ever loved—at least as I understand the meaning of that term—and now—that she had listened to slander against me while absent, and, without waiting to know whether it would be refuted on my return, had engaged herself to another—I cared less for her than before;—but my pride was touched, that I should be thus tamely set aside for one I heartily despised; and this, together with my desire to thwart the machinations of the whole intriguing clique arrayed against me, determined me, if feasible, to regain the favor of Elvira, and have the ceremony performed as soon as possible. This, Ella, I know you think, and I am ready to admit it, was wrong—very wrong; but I make no pretensions to be other than a frail mortal, liable to all the errors appertaining thereto; and were this is the only sin to be laid to my charge, my conscience were far less troublesome than now.

“I determined, I say, to regain my former place in her favor or affection—whichever you like—and, to be brief, I apparently succeeded. The day was set for our marriage; which, for several reasons unnecessary to be detailed, was to take place at the residence of my father; and, as the will specified it should be with all due rejoicings, great preparations were accordingly made, and a goodly number of guests invited.

“At length the day came—the eventful day. Never shall I forget it; nor with what feelings, at the appointed hour, I entered the crowded hall, where the ceremony was to take place, with Elvira leaning tremblingly on my arm, her features devoid of all color, and approached the spot where the divine stood ready to unite us forever. All eyes were now fixed upon us; and the marriage rite was begun amid that deep and almost awful solemnity, which not unfrequently characterizes such proceedings on peculiar occasions, when every spectator, as well as the actors themselves, feel a secret awe steal over them, as though about to witness a tragic, rather than a civil, performance.

“I have mentioned that Elvira trembled violently when we entered the hall; but this trembling increased after the divine commenced the ritual; so that when I had answered in the affirmative the solemn question pertaining to my taking the being by my side as mine till death, her trepidation had become so great that it was with difficulty I could support her; and when the same interrogative was put to her, a silence of some moments followed; and then the answer came forth, low and trembling, but still sufficiently distinct to be generally understood; and was, to the unbounded astonishment of all, in the negative!”

“In the negative!” exclaimed Ella, suddenly, who had during the last few sentences been unconsciously leaning forward, as though to devour each syllable as it was uttered, and who now resumed her former position with a long drawn breath. “In the negative say you, Alger—a—a—Mr. Reynolds?”



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“Call me Algernon, Ella, I pray you; it sounds more sweet and friendly. Ay, she answered in the negative. Heavens! what a shock was there for my proud nature! To be thus publicly insulted and rejected—to be thus made the butt and ridicule of fools and knaves—a mark for the jests and sneers of friend and foe! Oh! how my blood boiled and coursed in lava streams through my heated veins! I saw it all. I was the dupe of some artful design, intended to stigmatize me forever; and wild with a thousand terrible brain-searing thoughts, I rushed from the hall to my own apartment, seized upon my pistols, and was just in the act of putting a period to my existence, when my arm was suddenly grasped, and my hated rival and cousin stood before me.

“‘Fiend!’ cried I in frenzy; ‘devil in human shape!—do you seek me in the body? What want you here?’

“His features were pale with excitement, and his lips quivered as he made answer: ‘Be calm, Algernon, be calm; it was meant but in jest!’

“‘Jest!’ screamed I; ‘do you then own to a knowledge of it, villain?—were you its author?—then take that, and answer it as you dare!’—and as I spoke, with the breech of my undischarged pistol, I stretched him senseless at my feet. Under the excitement of the moment, I was about to take a more terrible revenge; when others suddenly rushed in—seized and disarmed me—bore my rival from my sight—and, to conclude, placed me in bed, where I was confined for three weeks by a delirious fever, and then only recovered as it were by a miracle.

“During my convalescence, I learned that my cousin, soon after my return, had been privately married to Elvira; and prompted by his evil genius, and some of my enemies, had induced his wife to enter into the plot, the result of which has already been briefly narrated. I do not think she did it through malice, and doubtless little thought of the consequences that were destined to follow; but whether so or not, her punishment has, I think, been fully adequate to her crime; for the last I heard of her, she was an inmate of a mad-house—remorse for her conduct, the abuse heaped upon her by society, and her own severe fright at the termination of the stratagem, having driven her insane. Now comes the most tragic part of my narrative.

“When so far recovered as to again be abroad, I was cautioned by my parents against my rash act; and for their sakes, I promised to be temperate in all my movements; but, alas! how little we know when we promise, what we may be in sooth destined to perform. On my father’s estate, about a mile distant from his residence, was a beautiful grove—whither, for recreation, I was in the habit of repairing at all periods of my life; and where, so soon as my strength permitted, after my sickness, I rambled daily. About ten days from my recovery, as I was taking my usual stroll through these grounds, I was suddenly confronted by my cousin. His cheeks were hollow and pale, and his whole appearance haggard in the extreme. His eyes, too, seemed to flash, or burn, as it were,

with an unearthly brightness; and his voice, as he addressed me, was hoarse, and his manner hurried.



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“We meet well,’ he said, ‘well! I have watched for you long.’

“Away!’ cried I; ‘tempt me no more—or something will follow I may regret hereafter!’

“Ha, ha, ha!’ laughed he, in derision, with that peculiar, hollow sound, which even now, as I recall it, makes my blood run cold:—‘Say you so, cousin?—I came for that;’ and again he laughed as before. ‘See here—see here!’ and he presented, as he spoke, with the butts toward me, a brace of pistols. ‘Here is what will settle all our animosities,’ he continued; ‘take your choice, and be quick, or perchance we may be interrupted.’

“Are you mad,’ cried I, ‘that you thus seek my life, after the wrongs you have done me?’

“Mad!—ha, ha!—yes!—yes!—I believe I am,’ he answered; ‘and my wife is mad also. I did you wrong, I know—went to apologise for it, and you struck me down. Whatever the offence, a blow I never did and never will forgive; so take your choice, and be quick, for one or both of us must never quit this place alive.’

“Away!’ cried I, turning aside; ‘I will not stain my hands with the blood of my kin. Go! the world is large enough to hold us both.’

“Coward!’ hissed he; ‘take that, then, and bear what I have borne;’ and with the palm of his hand he smote me on the cheek.

“I could bear no more—I was no longer myself—I was maddened with passion—and snatching a pistol from his hand, which was still extended toward me, without scarcely knowing what I did, I exclaimed, ‘Your blood be on your own head!’—and—and—Oh, Heaven!—pardon me, Ella—I—shot him through the body.”

Ella, who had partly risen from her seat, and was listening with breathless attention, now uttered an exclamation of horror, and sunk back, with features ghastly pale; while the other, burying his face in his hands, shook his whole frame with convulsive sobs. For some time neither spoke; and then the young man, slowly raising his face, which was now a sad spectacle of the workings of grief and remorse, again proceeded:

“Horror-stricken—aghast at what I had done—I stood for a moment, gazing upon him weltering in his blood, with eyes that burned and seemed starting from their sockets—with feelings that are indescribable—and then rushing to him, I endeavored to raise him, and learn the extent of his injury.

“Fly!’ said he, faintly, as I bent over him—‘fly for your life! I have got my due—I am mortally wounded—and if you remain, you will surely be arrested as my murderer. Farewell, Algernon—the fault was mine—but this you can not prove; and so leave me—leave me while you have opportunity.’



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“His words were true; I felt them in force; if he died, I would be arraigned as his murderer—I had no proof to the contrary—circumstances would be against me—I should be imprisoned—condemned—perhaps executed—a loathsome sight for gaping thousands—I could not bear the thought—I might escape—ay, would escape—and bidding him a hasty farewell, I turned and fled. Not a hundred rods distant I met my father; and falling on my knees before him, I hurriedly related what had taken place, and begged advice for myself, and his immediate attendance upon my cousin. He turned pale and trembled violently at my narration; and, as I concluded, drew forth a purse of gold, which he chanced to have with him, and placing it in my hand, exclaimed:

“Fly—son—child—Algernon—for Heaven’s sake, fly!”

“Whither, father?”

“To the far western wilds, beyond the reach of civilization—at least beyond the reach of justice—and spare my old eyes the awful sight of seeing a beloved son arraigned as a criminal!”

“And my mother?”

“You can not see her—it might cost you your life,—farewell!” and with the last word trembling on his lips, he embraced me fondly, and we parted—perchance forever.

“I fled, feeling that the brand of Cain was on me; that henceforth my life was to be one of remorse and misery; that I was to be a wanderer upon the face of the earth—mayhap an Ishmael, with every man’s hand against me. To atone in a measure to my conscience for the awful deed I had committed, I knelt upon the earth, and swore, by all I held sacred in time and eternity, that if the wound inflicted upon my cousin should prove mortal, I would live a life of celibacy, and become a wandering pilgrim in the western wilds of America till God should see proper to call me hence.”

“And—and did the wound prove mortal?” asked Ella, breathlessly.

“Alas! I know not, Ella, and I fear to know. Four months have passed since then; and after many adventures, hardships, sufferings, and hair-breadth escapes, you see me here before you, a miserable man.”

“But not one guilty of murder, Algernon,” said Ella, energetically.

“I know not that—Heaven grant it true!”

“O, then, do not despair, Algernon!—trust in God, and hope for the best. I have a hope that all will yet be well.”



“Amen to that, dear Ella; and a thousand, thousand thanks, for your sweet words of consolation; they are as balm to my torn and bleeding heart; but until I *know* my fate, we must not meet again; and if, oh Heaven! and if the worst be true—then—then farewell forever! But who comes here?”

CHAPTER IV.

The stranger.

The closing sentence of the preceding chapter was occasioned by the glimpse of a man's shadow, that for a moment swept along in the sunlight, some twenty paces distant from the speaker, and then suddenly disappeared by being swallowed up in the larger and more stationary shade thrown from the cottage by the sinking sun. Scarcely were the words alluded to uttered, ere the sound of a step was heard close by the door, and the next moment the cause of the shadow and remark divided the light of the entrance.



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The individual in question, was a stout built, broad-shouldered, athletic man—some five feet nine inches in height—whose age, judging from his general appearance, as well as his features, might range from twenty-seven to thirty years. At the moment when he appeared before our acquaintances of the foregoing chapter, his right arm was held in a manner so as to screen the lower portion of his face; while a hat, not very much unlike those of the present day, pressed down upon his forehead, left but little of his countenance, and that mainly about the eyes, visible. With the latter he gave a quick, searching, suspicious glance at the two before him; and then, as if satisfied he had nothing to fear, lowered his arm and raised his hat from his forehead, exposing a physiognomy by no means pleasing to one skilled in reading the heart thereby. His complexion was swarthy—his skin coarse—and the general expression of his features repulsive in the extreme; this expression arising from the combination of three distinct parts of his countenance—namely: the forehead which was low and receding from two dark-red, shaggy eye-brows,—the eyes themselves, which were small, bloodshot and very fiery; and the mouth, which was narrow, thin-lipped, and habitually contracted into a sneering, sinister smile. In this general expression, was combined cunning, deceit, treachery, and bloodthirsty ferocity—each one of which passions were sufficiently powerful, when fully excited, to predominate over the whole combination. The hair of his head was short, thick, coarse and red, grew low upon his forehead, and, in its own peculiar way, added a fierceness to his whole appearance. Nature had evidently designed him for a villain of the darkest die; and on the same principle that she gives a rattle to a certain venomous snake, that other creatures may be warned of the deadly fang in time to avoid it—so had she stamped him with a look wherein his passions were mirrored, that those who gazed thereon might know with whom and what they had to do, and be prepared accordingly. The costume too of the stranger was rather singular, and worthy of note—being composed, for the most part, of an extraordinary long frock or overcoat—more like the gown of some monk than either—which reached almost down to the moccasins covering his feet, and was laced together in front, nearly the whole length, by thongs of deerskin. Around the waist passed a rude belt of the same material—carelessly tied at one side—in which, contrary to the usual custom of that period, there was not confined a single weapon, not even so much as a knife; and this fact, together with the general appearance of the individual and his own suspicious movements, led Algernon, almost at the first glance, to consider the long frock or gown an article of disguise, beneath which the stranger was doubtless doubly armed and costumed in a very different manner.



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As the eyes of the new comer, after closely scanning Reynolds, rested for the first time upon Ella, there flashed across his ugly features an expression of admiration and surprise—while the look of suspicion which he had previously exhibited, seemed entirely to disappear. Turning to the young man, who on his appearance had risen from his seat, and now stood as if waiting to know his commands, in a voice evidently much softened from its usual tones, but still by no means pleasant and harmonious, he said:

“Will you be kind enough to inform me, sir, to whom this dwelling belongs?”

“It is owned, I believe, by one Benjamin Younker,” answered Algernon, in a cavalier manner, still eyeing the other closely.

“May I ask his occupation?”

“He is a farmer, sir—a tiller of the soil.”

“Will you favor me with a description of his personal appearance?”

“I can do so,” replied Algernon, somewhat surprised at the question, “provided I know the motive of inquiry to be a good one.”

“It is no other, I assure you,” returned the stranger. “It was simply prompted by curiosity.”

“Well, then, the individual in question is a man who has seen more than fifty years—is tall, raw-boned, muscular, has a stoop in the shoulder, a long, thin face, small eyes, and hair slightly gray.”

“Has he any sons?” inquired the stranger.

“One, a youth of twenty, who bears a strong resemblance to his father.”

“Daughters?”

“He has no other child.”

“Then this young lady”—slightly bowing to Ella.

“Is a more distant relation—a niece,” answered Ella, rising as she spoke and disappearing from his sight.

“A beautiful creature!” said the stranger, musingly, as if to himself—“a beautiful creature! Pardon me,” added he, again addressing Algernon; “but may I inquire concerning yourself?”



“I am a guest here, sir.”

“Aha—yes; a hunter I presume?”

“I sometimes hunt.”

“Pardon me again—but are there more indwellers here than you have mentioned?”

“One, sir—the good dame of the cottage.”

For a moment or two the stranger mused, as if running over in his mind all that had been said; and then observed:

“Doubtless you think me very inquisitive; but I had a reason for all my questions; and I thank you sincerely, sir, for your prompt replies. It is now growing late; the sun will presently be down; and as I am a traveler—a stranger in this region—I would rather not pursue my journey further, providing I could be entertained here for the night.”

“As to that, I am unable to answer,” said Algernon; “but if you will step within, I will make the necessary inquiries.”

“Thank you,” replied the stranger, with a show of cordiality; “thank you;” and he immediately entered the cottage.



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Those days, as before said, were the good old days of hospitality—and, as far as population went, of social intercourse also—when every man's cabin was the stranger's home, and every neighbor every neighbor's friend. There were no distinct grades of society then as now, from which an honest individual of moral worth must be excluded because of poverty—a good character for upright dealing being the standard by which all were judged; and whoever possessed this, could rank equally with the best, though poor as the beggar Lazarus. Doubtless intellect and education then, as well as at the present day, held in many things a superiority over imbecility and ignorance; but there were no distinct lines of demarcation drawn; and in the ordinary routine of intercourse one with another, there was no superiority claimed, and none acknowledged. And this arose, probably, from the necessity each felt for there being a general unity—a general blending together of all qualifications, as it were, into one body politic—by which each individual became an individual member of the whole, perfect in his place, and capable of supplying what another might chance to need; as the man of education might be puny in stature and deficient of a strong arm; the man of strong arm deficient in education; the imbecile man might be a superior woodman—the man of intellect an inferior one:—so that, as before remarked, each of these qualities, being essential to perfect the whole, each one of course was called upon to exercise his peculiar talent, and take his position on an equality with his neighbor. There has been great change in society since then; those days of simple equality have gone forever; but we question if the present race, with all their privileges, with all their security, with all their means of enjoyment, are as happy as those noble old pioneers, with all their necessities, with all their dangers, with all their sufferings.

According, therefore, to the established custom of the early settlers, the stranger for whom Algernon proceeded to make inquiries, was entitled to all the rights of hospitality; and whether liked or disliked, could not consistently be smiled away, nor frowned away, as doubtless he would have been, had he lived in this civil, wonderworking age of lightning and steam; and though his appearance was any thing but agreeable to Mrs. Younker, who surveyed him through her spectacles (being a little near sighted) from the adjoining cabin, whither Algernon had repaired to learn her decision; and though it would prove inconvenient to herself to grant his request; yet, as she expressed it, “He war a stranger, as hadn't no home and didn't know whar to go to; and prehaps war hungry, poor man; and it wouldn't be right nor Christian-like to refuse him jest a night's lodging like;” and so the matter was settled, and Algernon was deputed to inform him that he could stay and would be welcome to such fare as their humble means afforded.



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Some half an hour later, a loud hallooing announced the arrival of the two Younkers with the domestic cattle—consisting of the kine and some pet sheep which ran with them—from their labors in a distant field, where they had been engaged in harvesting corn. A few minutes after, the elder Younker entered the cabin, bearing upon his shoulder a rifle, from which depended a large, fat turkey that he had shot during his absence. With a slight but friendly nod to the stranger, he proceeded to deposit his game on the hearth—where it was presently examined and commented on at considerable length by the good dame—and then carefully placing his rifle on a couple of horn hooks depending from the ceiling for the purpose, he seated himself on a stool, his back to the wall, with the air of one who is very much fatigued, and does not wish to mingle in conversation of any kind.

The sun by this time was already below the horizon; twilight was fast deepening into night; and the matron, having finished her remarks on the turkey, and “Wondered ef sech birds wouldn’t git to being scaser arter a while, when all on, ’em war shot?” proceeded to the cow-yard, to assist Isaac in milking; while Ella hurried hither and thither, with almost noiseless activity, to prepare the evening repast. A bright fire was soon kindled in the chimney, over which was suspended a kettle for boiling water; while in front, nearly perpendicular, was placed a large corn loaf, whose savory odor, as it began to cook, was far from being disagreeable to the olfactory organs of the lookers on. The table, of which we have previously given a description, was next drawn into the middle of the apartment and covered with a home-made cloth of linen; on which were placed a medley of dishes of various sizes and materials—some of wood, some of pewter, some of earthen, and one of stone—with knives and forks to correspond. Three of these dishes were occupied—one with clean, fresh butter, another with rich old cheese, and the third with a quantity of cold venison steak. In the course of another half hour, the cake was baked and on the table—Isaac and his mother had entered with the milk—the announcement was made by Ella that all was ready; and the whole party, taking seats around the humble board, proceeded to do justice to the fare before them.

A light, placed in the center of the table, threw its gleams upon the faces of each, and exhibited a singular variety of expressions. That of the stranger was downcast, sinister, and suspicious, combined with an evident desire of appearing exactly the reverse. Occasionally, when he thought no eye was on him, he would steal a glance at Ella; and some times gaze steadily—like one who is resolved upon a certain event, without being decided as to the exact manner of its accomplishment—until he found himself observed, when his glance would fall to his plate, or be directed to some other object, with the seeming embarrassment of one caught in some guilty



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act. This was noticed more than once by Algernon; who, perhaps, more than either of the others, felt from the first that strong dislike, that suspicious repugnance to the stranger, which can only be explained as one of the mysteries of nature, whereby we are sometimes warned of whom we should shun, as the instinct of an animal makes known to it its inveterate foe; and though he strove to think there was nothing of evil meant by a circumstance apparently so trifling—that the glance of the stranger was simply one of admiration or curiosity—yet the thought that it might be otherwise—that he might be planning something wicked to the fair being before him—haunted his mind like some hideous vision, made him for the time more distrustful, more watchful than ever, and was afterward reverted to with a painful sensation. The features of Algernon also exhibited an expression of remorse and hopeless melancholy; the reason whereof the reader, who has now been made acquainted with the secret, will readily understand. The face of Ella, too, was paler than usual—more sad and thoughtful—so much so, that it was remarked by Mrs. Younker, who immediately instituted the necessary inquiries concerning her health, and explained to her at some length the most approved method of curing a cold, in case that were the cause. In striking contrast to the sober looks of the others—for Younker himself was a man who seldom exhibited other than a sedate expression—was the general appearance and manner of Isaac. He seemed exceedingly exhilarated in spirits, yet kept his eyes down, and appeared at times very absent minded. Whatever his thoughts were, it was evident they were pleasing ones; for he would smile to himself, and occasionally display a comical nervousness, as though he had some very important secret to make known, yet was not ready to communicate it. This had been observed in him through the day; and was so different from his usual manner, and so much beyond any conjecture his mother could form of the cause, that at last her curiosity became so excited, that to restrain it longer was like holding down the safety-valve to an over-heated steam boiler; and, accordingly, taking advantage of another mysterious smile, which Isaac chanced to display while looking at a large piece of corn bread, already on its way to his capacious jaws, she exclaimed:

“Why, what on yarth *is* the matter with you, Isaac, that you keep a grinning, and grinning, and fidgetting about all to yourself so much like a plaguy nateral born fool for?”

So loudly, suddenly and unexpectedly was this question put—for all had been silent some minutes previous—that Isaac started, blushed, dropped the bread—already near enough to his teeth to have felt uncomfortable, had it been capable of feeling—endeavored to catch it—blundered—and finally upset his plate and contents into his lap, in a manner so truly ridiculous, that Ella and Mrs. Younker, unable to restrain their mirth, laughed heartily, while the stranger and Algernon smiled, and the stern features of the father relaxed into an expression of quiet humor seldom seen on his countenance.



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“Pon my word,” continued Mrs. Younker, so soon as she could collect breath enough after laughing to go on; “I do raley believe as how the boy’s ayther crazy, or in love, for sartin. What does ail ye, Isaac?—do tell!”

“Perhaps he was thinking of his dear Peggy,” said Ella, archly; who was, by the way, very fond of teasing him whenever opportunity presented; and could not even now, despite her previous low spirits, forbear a little innocent raillery—her temperament being such, that wit and humor were ever ready on the slightest provocation to take the ascendancy, as old wine when stirred ever sends its sparkling beads upward. “I wonder, Isaac, if you looked as amiable and interesting in the eyes of dear Peggy, and made as graceful an appearance, when you popped the question?”

“Why, how in the name o’ all Christen nater did you find out I’d done it?” asked Isaac, in reply; who having, meantime, regained his former position, and restored the plate, minus some of its contents, now sat a perfect picture of comical surprise, with his mouth slightly ajar, and his small eyes strained to their utmost and fastened seriously upon the querist as he awaited her answer.

“Murder will out, dear Isaac,” replied Ella, with a ringing laugh; in which she was joined by most of the others; and particularly by the subject of the joke; who perceiving, too late for retreat, that he had been betrayed into an acknowledgment of his secret, deemed this his wisest course for defence.

“And so, Isaac, you have really proposed to darling Peggy, then? and we are to have a wedding shortly?” continued his tormentor. “And pray which did look the most foolish of the two?—or was it a drawn-game, as we sometimes say of draughts?”

“Why,” rejoined Isaac, changing color as rapidly as an aurora borealis, and evidently much embarrassed; “I ’spect I mought as well own up, being’s I’ve got cotched in my own trap; and besides, it won’t make no great difference, only as I war intending it for a surprise. You see I axed Peggy the question last night; and it’s all settled; and we’re going to be married in less nor a week, ef nothing unforeseen don’t happen; and as Mr. Reynolds ar a stranger in these diggins, I thought prehaps as how he’d like a little amusement like, and so I’ve fixed on him for my groomsman.”

“I am much obliged for your kind intentions, and the honor you would confer on me,” answered Reynolds, sadly; “but I am sorry to say, I shall be under the necessity of declining your invitation; as on the morrow I design taking a farewell leave of you all, and quitting this part of the country forever.”

Mr. Younker, his wife, and son, all started, with looks of surprise, at this announcement, while Ella again grew deadly pale; and rising, with some little trepidation, retired from the table. The stranger was the only one unmoved.

“To-morrow!” ejaculated Mrs. Younker.

“Take leave o’ us!” said the host.



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“Quit the country forever!” repeated Isaac.

“Such, I assure you, is my determination,” rejoined Algernon.

“But your wound, Mr. Reynolds?” suggested Younker.

“Is not entirely healed,” returned Algernon; “yet I trust sufficiently so to allow me to pursue my journey. The wound, as you are aware, was only a flesh one—the ball having entered the right side, glanced on the lower rib, and passed out nearly in front—and though very dangerous at the time from excessive hemorrhage, has of late been rapidly healing, and now troubles me but little if any.”

“Well, now, Mr. Reynolds,” rejoined Mrs. Younker, “I’m a considerable older woman nor you ar—that is, I mean to say, I’m a much older individule—and I ’spect I’ve had in my time some lettles experience in matters that you don’t know nothing about; and so you musn’t go to thinking hard o’ me, ef I give you a lettles advice, and tell you to stay right whar you ar, and not stir a single step away for three weeks;—’cause ef you do, your wound may get rupturous agin, and in some lone place jest carry you right straight off into the shader o’ the valley of death—as our good old Rev. Mr. Allprayer used to say, when he wanted to comfort the sick. O, dear good man he war, Preacher Allprayer,”—continued the voluble old lady, with a sigh, her mind now wholly occupied with his virtues—“dear good man he war! I jest remember—Lor bless ye, I’ll never forgit it—how he come’d to me when I war sick—with tears a running out o’ his eyes like he’d been eating raw inyuns, poor man—and told me that I war going to die right straight away, and never need to hope to be no better; and that I’d most likely go right straight to that orful place whar all bad folks goes to. O, the dear man! I never could help always liking him arter that—it made me feel so orful narvous and religious like. Why, what on yarth be you grinning at agin, Isaac?—jest for all the world like a monkey for?”

“Nothing, mother,” answered Isaac, nearly choking with smothered laughter; “only I war jest kind o’ thinking what a kind comforter Mr. Allprayer war, to tell you you couldn’t live any longer; and that when you died you’d jest go right straight to—to—”

“Silence! you irrelevant boy, you!” (irreverent was doubtless meant) interrupted the dame, angrily: “How dare you to go making fun o’ the pious Rev. Mr. Allprayer?—him as used to preach all Sunday long, and pray all Sunday night, and never did nothing wrong—though he did git turned out o’ the meeting house arterward for getting drunk and swearing; but then the poor man cried and said it were nothing but a accident, which hadn’t happened more nor ten times to him sence he’d bin a preacher of the everlasting gospel. Thar, thar, the crazy head’s a giggling agin! I do wish, Ben, you’d see to Isaac, and make him behave himself—for he’s got so tittery like, sence he’s axed Peggy, thar’s no use o’ trying to do nothing with him.”



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“Isaac! Isaac!” said his father with a reproving glance; and, as though that voice and look possessed a spell, the features of the young man instantly became grave, almost solemn. Then turning to Algernon, the old man continued: “As to leaving us, Mr. Reynolds, you of course know your own business best, and it arn’t my desire to interfere; but ef you could put up with our humble fare, say a week or ten days longer, I think as how it would be much better for you, and would give us a deal of pleasure besides.”

“Why, I’ll jest tell you what tis,” put in Isaac: “I’ve fixed on you for groomsman, and I arn’t a going to gin in no how; so unless you want to quarrel; you’ll have to stay; and more’n that, it’s spected you’ll see to takin Ella thar; for I know she don’t like to go with any o’ the fellers round here; and I shall gin out she’s going with you; which may be won’t hurt your feelings none—at any rate, I know it won’t hers.”

At the mention of Ella, Algernon crimsoned to the eyes, and became so exceedingly confused, that he could with difficulty stammer forth, by way of reply, the query as to the time when the important event was expected to take place.

“Let me see,” answered Isaac, telling off the days on his fingers: “to-morrow’s Friday; then Saturday’s one, Sunday’s two, Monday’s three, and Tuesday’s four—only four days from to-morrow morning, Mr. Reynolds.”

“Then, as you so urgently insist upon it,” rejoined Reynolds, “I will postpone my departure till after the wedding.”

Isaac thanked him cordially, and the father and mother looked gratified at the result; Ella he could not see—she having withdrawn from the table, as previously noted. Some further conversation ensued relative to the manner in which weddings were conducted in that country, and the design of proceeding with the one in question; but as we intend the reader to be present at the wedding itself, we shall not detail it. We will remark here, by the way, that the stranger seemed to take a singular interest in all that was said concerning the residence of the intended bride, the road the party were expected to take to reach there, their probable number, manner of travel, and the time when they would be likely to set forth and return. In all this it was observed by Algernon, that whenever he asked a question direct, it was put in such a careless manner as would lead one not otherwise suspicious to suppose him perfectly indifferent as to whether it were answered or not; but he somehow fancied, he scarce knew why, that there was a strong under current to this outward seeming. And furthermore he observed, that the stranger in general avoided putting a question at all—rather seeking his information by conjecturing or supposing what would immediately be contradicted or confirmed. This mode of interrogation, so closely followed up to every particular, yet apparently with such indifference, together with the stranger’s treacherous look and several minor things all bearing a suspicious cast, more than half convinced Algernon that the other

was a spy, and that some foul play was assuredly meditated; though what, and to whom, or for what purpose, he was at a loss to determine.



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From the particulars of the coming wedding, the stranger, after a little, adroitly turned the conversation upon the wound of Reynolds; asked a number of questions, and appeared deeply interested in the whole narration concerning it—the attack upon him by the Indians and his providential escape through the assistance of Boone—all of which was detailed by Isaac in his own peculiar way. From this case in particular, the conversation gradually changed to other cases that had happened in the vicinity; and also to the state of the country, with regard to what it had been and now was—its settlements—its increase of inhabitants—the many Indian invasions and massacres that had occurred within the last five years on the borders—and the present supposed population of the frontiers.

“As to myself,” said Younker, in reply to some observation of the stranger, “as to myself and family, we’ve been extremely fortunate in ’scaping the red foe—though I’ve bin daily fearful that when I went away to my work in the morning, I’d may be come back agin at noon or night and find my women folks gone, or murdered, and my cot in ashes; but, thank the Lord! I’ve been so far spared sech a heart rending sight.”

“And had you no personal fears?” asked the stranger.

“I don’t know’s I understand you.”

“Had you no fears for yourself individually?”

“Well, I can’t say’s I had,” answered the other. “I’m an old man—or at least I’m in my second half century—and I’ve so endeavored to live, as not to fear to go at any moment when God sees fit, and by whatsoever means he may choose to take me.”

“I suppose you now consider yourself in a measure safe from Indian encroachments?” observed the other.

“No man, stranger—I beg pardon, but I’d like to know your name!”

“Certainly, sir,” answered the other, a little embarrassed. “My name is—is—Williams.”

“Thank you! No man, Mr. Williams, ar justified in considering himself safe from Injens, in a country like this; but to tell the truth, I don’t feel so fearful of ’em, as when I first come out here with my family, two year ago; though thar’s no telling what may hap in the course o’ two year more.”

“And did you venture here at once on your arrival in this western country?”

“Not exactly; for the land laws o’ Virginna, passed the year I come out, made it rayther difficult gitting hold o’ land, about which thar war a great deal o’ disputing; and which war kept up till the commissioners came out and settled the matter; and so while this war agitating, I took my family to Boonesborough, whar they remained, excepting Isaac, who



went along with me, until we'd got all matters fixed for moving 'em here. But as you've axed considerable many questions, pray may I know ef you're from the east?—And ef so, what news thar is with respect to this here war with the Britishers?" "Why," replied the other, hesitatingly, "though not strictly speaking from the east, yet I've been eastward the past season, and have some news of the war; and, as far as I am able to judge, think it will result in the total subjugation of the colonies."



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“Heaven forbid!” exclaimed Younker.

“Heaven forefend!” said Reynolds, with a start.

“Lord presarve us!—marsy on us!” cried Mrs. Younker, with vehemence. “What on yarth shall we do, ef them plaguy Britishers git uppermost? They’ll take away all our lands, for sartin!—and Ben’s bin and bought four hundred acres, poor man, at forty cents a acre, under the new laws of Varginna^[4]—which comes to one hundred and sixty dollars, hard money; and now maybe he’ll have to lose it all, and not git nothing for it; and then what in the name o’ the whole univarsal creation will become on us?”

“Well, well, Dorothy—don’t fret about it till it happens—thar’ll be plenty o’ time then,” said Younker, gravely; “and perhaps it won’t happen at all.”

“Don’t talk to me about fretting, Mr. Younker!” rejoined the now irritated dame, a la Caudle: “I reckon I don’t fret no easier nor you do, nor half so much nother; but I’d like to know who wouldn’t fret, when they know they’re going to lose all thar property by them thar good for nothing red-coated Britishers, who I do believe is jest as mean as Injens, and they’re too mean to live, that’s sartin. Fret, indeed! I reckon it wouldn’t do for you to be letting Preacher Allprayer hear ye say so; for he said one time with his own mouth—and to me too, mind that!—that I’d got the bestest disposition in the whole universal yarth o’ creation under the sun!” and the voluble old lady paused to take breath.

“It’s my opine, that ef Preacher Allprayer had lived with you as long as I have, he wouldn’t repeat that thar sentence under oath,” returned Younker, quietly. Then perceiving that a storm was brewing, he hastened to change the conversation, by addressing the stranger: “What cause have you, Mr. Williams, for speaking so discouragous o’ the war?”

“The failure of the American arms in battle, the weakness of their resources, and the strength of their opponents,” replied the other. “I presume you have heard of the battles of Guilford and Camden, in both of which General Greene was defeated?”

“General *Gates* commanded at Camden, sir!” interposed Reynolds somewhat haughtily.

“I beg pardon, sir!” retorted the other, in a sneering, sarcastic tone; “but I was speaking of the defeat of General *Greene!*”

“At Camden?”

“At Camden, sir!”



“I am sorry you are no better informed,” rejoined Algernon, with flashing eyes. “I repeat that General Gates commanded at Camden; and as, unfortunately, I chanced to be in the fight, I claim the privilege of being positive.”

“The youth is doubtless speaking of the battle fought a year or two ago,” rejoined Williams, turning to Younker, in a manner the most insulting to Reynolds; who clenched his hand, and pressed his nether lip with his teeth until the blood sprang through, but said nothing. “I have reference to the two engagements which took place at Guilford Court House and Camden, in March and April last; whereby, as I said before, General Greene, who commanded at both, was twice defeated, and retreated with great loss; although in the former action his forces outnumbered those of his opponent, Lord Cornwallis, as two to one; and in the latter, far exceeded those of Lord Rawdon, his opponent also.”



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"This is indeed startling news," answered Younker, "and I'm fearful o' the result!"

"You may depend on't, them thar four-hundred acres is all gone clean to smash," observed Mrs. Younker; "and its my opine, Ben, you'd better sell right straight out immediately, afore the news gits about any further, for fear o' accidents and them things."

"I suppose in reality the present war with England does not trouble you here?" said the stranger, interrogatively.

"Why not in reality," answered Younker, "only so far as the Britishers and thar accursed renegade agents set on the Injens agin us."

"To what renegade agents do you allude?" inquired the other, with a degree of interest he had not before exhibited.

"Why, to the Girtys, McKee, and Elliot—and perticularly to that thar scoundrel, Simon Girty the worst o' all on 'em."

"Ha! Simon Girty," said the other, with a slight start and change of countenance; "what know you of him?"

"Nothing that's good, you may be sartin, and every thing that's evil. He's leagued with the Injens, purposely to excite 'em agin his own white brethren—to have them murder women and children, that he may feast his eyes on thar innocent blood. I'm not given to be o' a revengeful speret, Mr. Williams; but I never think o' that thar renegade, Simon Girty, but I inwardly pray for the curse o' an avenging God to light upon him; and come it will, ayther soon or late, you may depend on't!"

"Amen to that thar sentiment!" responded the dame; while the stranger became very much agitated, on account, as he said, of a violent pain in his side, to which he was subject.

Mrs. Younker was on the point of bringing down her invectives on the head of the renegade in a speech of some considerable length, when, perceiving the distressful look of the other, the kind-hearted woman suddenly forgot her animosity in sympathy for her suffering guest; and forthwith proceeded, with all the eloquence of which she was master, to recommend a certain essence that chanced to be in the house, as a never failing remedy for all griping and other pains with which unfortunate humanity was oftentimes afflicted.

"It's one o' the bestest things as ever war invented," continued the good woman, in her eulogy of the article in question; "and has did more good in it's time, nor all the doctors on the univarsal yarth put together could do, in the way of curing sprains, and bruises, and stomach-pains, and them things; and ef you don't believe it, Mr. Williams, you can



see it all in print, ef you can read, and I spect you can, on the bottle itself, jest as plain as any thing; and besides, I've got the testament (testimony, doubtless) of the good and pious Rev. Mr. Allprayer, who tuk some on't once for the gout; and he said as how the contracting (counteracting?) pains war so many, that he didn't no more feel the gout for a long time to come afterwards. I've no doubt it'll sarve you jest the same way, and I'll go and fetch it right straight off."



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But the mission of the good woman was prevented by the complainant's insisting that he was much better, would presently be well, and wished to retire for the night. His request was granted—but little more was said—and all shortly after betook themselves to bed—to think, or sleep, or dream, as the case might be with each.

When the family arose on the following morning, they found the stranger had departed; but when or whither none could tell.

[Footnote 4: It may be proper to note here, for the benefit of those unfamiliar with the early history of Kentucky, that, at the period of which we write, it was claimed and held by Virginia as a portion of her territory, for which she legislated accordingly.]

CHAPTER V.

The wedding.

The year 1781 was remarkable in the history of Kentucky for the immense emigration from the east into its territory of unmarried females. It appears, in looking over the records of the time, as though some mighty barrier had hitherto kept them in check, which, being removed, allowed them to rush forward in overwhelming force, like to the pent up waters of some stream when its obstruction suddenly gives way. Whatever this hitherto obstruction or barrier may have been, we do not pretend to say; but the fact itself we record as we find it chronicled in history. The result of this influx of females into a region almost wholly populated by the opposite sex was one, as will readily be perceived, of great importance to the well-being of the embryo state; and was duly celebrated by the rising generation, in a general jubilee of marriages—one following fast upon another, like drops of rain in a genial summer shower; and, to extend the simile, with an effect by no means less productive of fertility, in a long run, to the country round about.

A wedding in those days was an affair of great importance to the neighborhood of its location; and was looked forward to by old and young—the latter in particular—as a grand holiday of feasting, dancing, and general rejoicing. Nor can this be wondered at, when we take into consideration the fact, that, in the early settlement of the country, a wedding was almost the only gathering, as they were called, which was not accompanied with some laborious employment—such as harvesting, log-rolling, and the like. Occasionally there might be some dissatisfaction felt and expressed by some, who, from some cause or another, chanced to be left out of the almost general invitation; in which case a special resentment not unfrequently followed. This was accomplished in various ways—sometimes by felling trees, or placing other obstacles across some narrow portion of the horse-path by which the wedding party were advancing, thereby causing considerable delay for their removal—sometimes by ambushing and firing a volley of blank cartridges at the party in question, so as to



frighten the horses, by which means more or less were frequently injured, by being thrown to the ground—and sometimes by shearing the manes and tails of the horses themselves, while their owners were being occupied with the feast, and the dance, and the gay carousal of the occasion. But to proceed.



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The morning of the day set apart by Isaac Younker, as the one which was to see him duly united to Peggy Wilson, came in due time—as many an important one has both before and since—without one visible sign in the heavens, or otherwise, to denote that any thing remarkable was about to happen. In fact it might be put down to the reverse of all this; for, unlike the generality of wished-for days, it was exceedingly fair, balmy, and beautiful. The sun rose at the expected time, large and red, and saluted the hills and tree-tops, and anon the vales, with a smiling light, as though he felt exceedingly happy to greet them again after a calm night's repose. The dew sparkled on blade and leaf, as if with delight at his appearance; a few flowers modestly uncovered their blooming heads; a few warblers of the forest—for although autumn had nearly half advanced, some had delayed their journey to the sunny south—sung gleesome songs; and altogether the morning in question was really a delightful one.

The family of the Younkers were stirring betimes, making the necessary preparations for their departure, and looking out for the expected guests; who, according to the custom of the period, first assembled at the residence of the groom, to proceed thence in company with him to the mansion of the bride, which place they must always reach in time to have the ceremony performed before partaking of the dinner prepared for the occasion. For this purpose, as the distance to the house of the fair intended was not unfrequently considerable, they generally came at an early hour; and as Isaac's fair Peggy was not likely to be visible short of a ten miles' ride, his companions for the journey accordingly began to appear in couples before his father's dwelling, ere the sun was an hour above the hills.

Isaac, on the present occasion, stood ready to receive them as they rode up, arrayed in his wedding garments; which—save a few trifling exceptions in some minor articles, and the addition of five or six metal buttons displayed on his hunting frock in a very singular manner, and a couple of knee buckles, all old family relics—presented the same appearance as those worn by him during his ordinary labors. And this, by the way, exhibits another feature of the extreme simplicity of the time—and one too highly praiseworthy—when the individual was sought for himself alone, and not for the tinsel gew-gaws, comparatively speaking, he might chance to exhibit. Necessity forced all to be plain and substantial in the matter of dress; and consequently comfort and convenience were looked to, rather than ostentatious display. All at that day were habited much alike—so that a description of the costume of one of either sex, as in the case of their habitations, previously noted, would describe that of a whole community.



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“Let the reader,” says a historian, in speaking of the manners and dress of those noble pioneers, “imagine an assemblage of people, without a store, tailor, or mantuamaker within an hundred miles; and an assemblage of horses, without a blacksmith or saddler within an equal distance. The gentlemen dressed in shoepacks, moccasins, leather breeches, leggins, linsey hunting-shirts, and all home-made. The ladies dressed in linsey petticoats, and linsey or linen bed-gowns, coarse shoes, stockings, handkerchiefs, and buckskin gloves, if any. If there were any buckles, rings, buttons or ruffles, they were the relics of old times—family pieces from parents or grandparents. The horses were caparisoned with old saddles, old bridles or halters, and packsaddles, with a bag or blanket thrown over them—a rope or string as often constituting the girth as a piece of leather.”

But to our story:

Since leaving Isaac in the preceding chapter, after his important announcement, as therein recorded, he had been by no means idle. The two days immediately following had been spent by him in riding post-haste through the surrounding country, to inform his friends that he was on the point of becoming a married man, and require their presence at the appointed hour and place of ceremony. The rest of the time (Sunday of course exempted) had been carefully husbanded by him in making all due preparation; and he now stood before his expected guests with the air one, to use a common phrase, who has not been caught napping. For each, as they rode up, he had a friendly salutation and familiar word; and inviting them to dismount and enter, until the whole number should be arrived, he led away and secured their horses to the neighboring trees.

In due time the last couple made their appearance; and having partaken of some refreshment, which was highly recommended and presented by Mrs. Younker herself—whose tongue, by the way, had seen no rest for at least two hours—the whole party, in gleeful spirits, prepared to mount and set forth on their journey. Even Algernon, as he assisted the graceful Ella into her saddle, and then sprung lightly himself upon the back of a high mettled, beautiful steed by her side, could not avoid exhibiting a look of cheerfulness, almost gaiety, in striking contrast to his habitual gloom. And this too produced a like effect upon Ella; who, mounted upon a fine spirited, noble animal, and displaying all the ease and grace of an accomplished rider, with her flushed cheek and sparkling eyes, seemed the personification of loveliness. Her dress was exceedingly neat, of the fashion and quality worn in the east—being one she had brought with her on her removal hither. A neat hood, to which was attached a green veil, now thrown carelessly back and floating down behind, covered her head and partially concealed a profusion of beautiful ringlets.



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The company at length being all mounted, Isaac took it upon himself to lead the way; for the reason, as he alleged, that having traveled the ground oftener than either of the others, he of course knew the best and nearest path to the abode of Peggy Wilson. Algernon as groomsman rode next with Ella; followed in turn by the father and mother of the groom; and then in double file by the whole company—talking, laughing and full of glee—to the number of some fifteen couples. Turning the corner of the house, they forded the streamlet previously mentioned, crossed the valley, and ascended by a narrow horse-path the opposite hill, leaving the canebrake some distance away to the left.

In those days a road—or at least such a highway as we of the present so denominate—was a something unknown; a few horse-paths, so termed, traversing the country in various directions—narrow, oftentimes obstructed, and sometimes dangerous. Over one of this latter class, as before said, our wedding party now wended their way, in high spirits; sometimes riding at a brisk trot or gallop, where their course lay open and clear, sometimes walking their horses very slow, in single file, where the path, winding across craggy bluffs, among rocks and trees, became very narrow and unsafe. Twice, on this latter account, did the gentlemen of the company dismount and lead the horses of their partners for some considerable distance past the stony and dangerous defile, by which means all accidents were avoided. When they had reached within a mile of their destination, Isaac drew rein and all came to a halt. Turning upon his saddle, with the air of a commander of some important expedition, he sang out in a loud, shrill voice;

“Well, boys and gals, here we ar—this here’s the spot—who’s agoing to run for the bottle?”

“Whoop! yaho! give way thar!” was the answer from a couple of voices in the rear; and at the same instant, two young men, separating from their partners, came bounding forward, on two blood horses, at break-neck speed.

“Stop!” thundered Isaac, as they came tearing up to where he was sitting astride his beast; and obedient to his command, the two individuals in question reined in their impatient steeds, hard abreast, close by his side. “Well, ef you arn’t a couple o’ beauties, then jest put it down that I don’t know,” continued Isaac, eying them coolly from head to heel, with a quizzical, comical look. “You’d both on ye average two decent looking fellars—for whar Seth Stokes is too long, Sam Switcher arn’t long enough; and whar Sam Switcher’s got too much, Seth Stokes han’t got nothing.”

A roar of laughter, in which both Seth and Sam joined, followed Isaac’s closing remarks; for besides partaking of the ludicrous, none could deny that his description was correct. The two worthies in question were certainly two very singular looking beings to be brought together for a race, and presented a most laughable appearance. The one bearing the poetical appellation of Seth Stokes, was long, thin and bony, with sharp features, and legs that reminded one of a carpenter’s compass; while his companion,

Sam Switcher, was round-featured, short in limbs and stature, and fat almost to corpulency—thus forming a contrast to the other of the most striking kind.



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As soon as the laugh at their expense had subsided, Isaac again sang out: "Squar your hosses' heads thar—get ready, boys—now clippet, and don't keep us long waiting the bottle! for I reckon as how some on us is gitting dry. Yehep! yaho!" and ere the sound of his voice had died away, down came the switches, accompanied by a terrible yell, and off went horses and bottle-riders—over stumps, logs and rocks—past trees and brush, and whatever obstacle might lie in their course—with a speed that threatened them with death at every moment; while the others remained quietly seated on their ponies, enjoying the sport, and sometimes shouting after them such words of encouragement as, "Go it, Seth!" "Up to him, Sammy!" "Pull up, legs!" "Jump it, fatty!" so long as the racers were in sight.

This race for the bottle, as it was called, was a peculiar feature for displaying the horsemanship and hardy recklessness of the early settlers; as a more dangerous one, to both horse and rider, could not well be imagined. That the reader may form a clear conception of what it was in reality—and also to destroy the idea if any such may have been formed, that it existed only in our imagination—we shall take the liberty of giving a short extract from the author already quoted. In speaking of the foregoing, he says:

"The worse the path—the more logs, brush, and deep hollows, the better—as these obstacles afforded an opportunity for the greater display of intrepidity and horsemanship. The English fox-chase, in point of danger to the riders and their horses, is nothing to this race for the bottle. The start was announced by an Indian yell; when logs, brush, muddy hollows, hill and glen, were speedily passed by the rival ponies. The bottle was always filled for the occasion, so that there was no use for judges; for the first who reached the door was presented with the prize, with which he returned in triumph to the company. On approaching them, he announced his victory over his rival by a shrill whoop. At the head of the troop he gave the bottle first to the groom and his attendants, and then to each pair in succession to the rear of the line, giving each a drachm; and then putting the bottle in the bosom of his hunting shirt, took his station in the company."

In something like a quarter of an hour, the clatter of horses' feet was heard by the company, the rival-racers presently appeared in sight, and all became anxious to learn who was the successful runner. They were not long kept in suspense; for advancing at a fast gallop, the riders were, soon within speaking distance; when a loud, shrill whoop from Seth Stokes, announced that in this case success had at least been with the long, if not with the strong.

"How's this, Sammy?" cried a dozen voices, as the rivals rode up to the party.

"I don't exactly know," answered the individual addressed, shaking his head with a serio-comical expression; "but stifle me with the night-mar, if ever I'm cotched riding a race with death on horseback agin."



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This allusion to the bony appearance of his companion, caused a roar of laughter at the expense of the winner, in which he good-humoredly joined. According to custom, as previously mentioned, the bottle was presented first to Isaac, and then passed in regular order through the lines—Algernon and Ella merely putting it to their lips without drinking. When this ceremony was over, the party resumed their journey—no less merry on account of the whiskey—and by half an hour past eleven o'clock, all drew rein before the door of Abijah Wilson, the father of the fair intended.

Here another party, the friends of the bride, were waiting to receive them; and after some few introductions, much shaking of hands, and other demonstrations of joy, the announcement was made, that the squire was ready to perform the ceremony. Instantly all talking was suspended, the company proceeded to form into a half circle, and then all became silent and solemn as the house of death. Isaac presently appeared from behind a coarse, temporary screen of cloth, hung up for the occasion—the house having no division save a chamber over head—leading the blushing Peggy by the hand, (a rosy cheeked, buxom lass of eighteen) both looking as frightened and foolish as could reasonably be expected. Behind the bride and groom came Algernon, in company with a dark-eyed, pretty brunette, who performed the part of bridesmaid. Taking their several places, the Squire, as he was termed—a man of forty—stepped forward, and said a few words concerning the importance of the present event, asked the necessary questions, joined their hands, and pronounced them man and wife. Then followed the usual amount of congratulations, good wishes for the future happiness of the married pair, kissing of the bride, and so forth, in all of which proceedings they differed not materially from their successors of the present day.

About half an hour from the close of the ceremony, the guests were invited to partake of a sumptuous dinner, prepared expressly for the occasion. It was placed on rough tables made of large slabs, supported by small, round legs, set in auger holes; and though there was a scantiness of dishes—and these in the main consisting of a few pewter-plates, several wooden trenchers, with spoons of like material, interspersed with some of horn—and though the scarcity of knives required many of the gentlemen to make use of those carried in their belts—yet the food itself was such as might have rejoiced an epicure. It consisted of beef, roasted and boiled—pork, roasted and fried—together with chicken, turkey, partridge, and venison—well flanked on every side by bread, butter, and cheese, potatoes, cabbage, and various other vegetables. That it was both acceptable and palatable, was sufficiently proved by the hearty, joyous manner, in which each individual performed his or her part, and the rapidity with which it disappeared. The dessert was composed of two or three kinds of pies and puddings, washed



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down (at least by those who chose so to do) with whiskey. Great hilarity prevailed—particularly after the introduction of the bottle. Immediately dinner was over, the tables were removed, the fiddler was called for, and the dance commenced, which was to last till the following morning. The dance was opened by Isaac and the bridesmaid, with another couple—beginning with a square four, and ending with what was termed a jig. From this time forth, until the party separated, the poor fiddler experienced but little relaxation or comfort—unless in being encouraged, occasionally, by a refreshing salute from the lips of Black Betty; a being of no greater intellect, reader, than a bottle of whiskey.

Some two hours after dinner, the father and mother of Isaac announced their intention of forthwith returning home; and, although seriously pressed to tarry longer, shortly after took their leave of the company—Mrs. Younker adding, as a farewell speech, “That she hoped to gracious Peggy’d jest make Isaac as good a wife nor she had Ben, and then thar wouldn’t never be no need o’ having trouble;” and wound up by quoting the Rev. Mr. Allprayer as the best authority on the subject. Younker stood by her side, calmly heard her through, and then shrugging his shoulders with a very significant expression, walked away without saying a word, to the great amusement of the whole assemblage.

As to Algernon, he seemed to take no delight in what was going forward; and though he participated somewhat in the dance, yet it was evident to all observers that his mind went not with his body, and that what he did was done more with a design of concealing his real feelings, than for any amusement it afforded himself. When not occupied in this manner, or in conversation, he would steal away, seat himself where he was least likely to be observed, and fall into a gloomy, abstracted mood; from which, when suddenly roused by some loud peal of laughter, or by the touch and voice of some person near, he would sometimes start and look around as one just awakened from a frightful vision. This gloomy abstraction, too, appeared to grow upon him more and more, as the day settled into night and the night wore on, as though he felt some dreaded calamity had been hanging over, and was now about to fall upon him. So apparent was this toward the last, that even the most careless began to observe, and make remarks, and ask questions concerning him; and some even proceeded to inquire of him regarding the state of his health. His answers to all interrogatives now became so brief and abrupt, that but few ventured to address him the second time. Whatever the cause of his present gloomy state of mind, it was evidently not the ordinary one—at least not wholly that—for never before had Ella (who was in the habit, since their acquaintance, of observing him narrowly) seen him in such a mood as now. It was, perhaps, one of those strange mental foresights, peculiar to certain temperaments, whereby the individual is sometimes warned of impending danger, and feels oppressed by a weight of despondency impossible to shake off.



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This serious change in the appearance of Algernon, was not without its effect upon Ella. Naturally of a tender, affectionate, and sympathetic disposition, she could not feel at ease when another was suffering, and particularly when that other was one standing so high in her estimation as Algernon Reynolds. Naturally, too, possessing light and buoyant spirits—fond of gaiety where all were gay—she exhibited on the present occasion the effect of two strong but counteracting passions. Her features, if we may be allowed the comparison, were like the noon-day heavens, when filled with the broken clouds of a passing storm. Now all would be bright and cheerful, and the sun of mirth would sparkle in her eyes; and anon some dark cloud of dejection would sweep along, shut out the merry light, and cast its shadow drearily over the whole countenance,—or, to use language without simile, she would one moment be merry and another sad. Toward the last, however, the latter feeling gained the ascendancy; she appeared to take no further share in the merriment of the dance; and had any watched her closely, they might have guessed the cause, from the manner in which she from time to time gazed at the pale face of Algernon.

Meantime the dance went bravely on, Black Betty circulated somewhat freely, and the mirth of the revelers grew more and more boisterous. Taking advantage of a slight cessation in the general hilarity, about nine o'clock in the evening, and while the fiddler with some of the party were engaged in partaking of refreshment, Seth Stokes, encouraged doubtless by the inspiration he had received from the whiskey, stepped boldly into the middle of the apartment with the bottle in his hand, and said:

“Jest allow me, my jollies, to give a toast.”

“Harken all! A toast—a toast—from the long man o’ the bony frame!” cried the voice of Sam Switcher. A laugh, and then silence followed.

“Here’s to—to Isaac and Peggy Younker—two beauties!” continued Seth. “May thar union be duly acknowledged by the rising generation o’ old Kaintuck;” and the speaker gravely proceeded to drink.

“Bravo! bravo!” cried a dozen voices, with a merry shout, accompanied with great clapping of hands; while Isaac, who was sitting by his new wife, arose, blushed, bowed rather awkwardly, and then sat down again.

“Isaac! Isaac!—A toast from Isaac!” shouted a chorus of voices.

Isaac at first looked very much confused—scratched his head and twisted around in a very fidgetty manner,—but presently his countenance flushed, and a smile of triumph crossing his sharp features, announced that he had been suddenly favored with an idea apropos. This was instantly perceived by some of the wags standing near, one of whom exclaimed:



“I see it—it’s coming!”

“He’s got it!” said a second.

“I knew it—I’d ha’ bet a bar-skin he’d fetch it,” cried a third.

“Out with it, Ike, afore you forget it,” shouted the fourth.

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“Hold your jabbering tongues—!” cried Isaac, in vexation. “You’re enough to bother a feller to death. I’d like to see some o’ the rest on ye cramped up fur a toast, jest to see how *you’d* feel with all on ’em hollering like.” A hearty laugh at his expense was all the sympathy poor Isaac received.

“Give us the bottle!” resumed Isaac. “Now here goes,” continued he, rising and holding Black Betty by the neck. “Here’s to the gals o’ old Kaintuck—Heaven bless ’em! May they bloom like clover heads, be plentier nor bar-skins, and follow the example o’ Peggy, every mother’s daughter on ’em!—hooray!” And having drank, the speaker resumed his seat, amid roars of laughter and three rounds of applause.

By the time this mirth had subsided, the fiddler struck up, and the dance again went on as before. Some two hours later the bridesmaid, with two or three others, managed to steal away the bride unobserved; and proceeding to a ladder at one end of the apartment, ascended to the chamber above, and saw her safely lodged in bed. In the course of another half hour the same number of gentlemen performed a like service for Isaac—such being customary at all weddings of that period.

During the night Black Betty, in company with more substantial refreshment, was sent up to the newly married pair some two or three times; and always returned (Black Betty we mean) considerable lighter than she went; thus proving, that if lovers can live on air, the married ones do not always partake of things less spiritual. About three o’clock in the morning, Algernon and Ella took leave of the company and set out upon their return—he pleading illness as an apology for withdrawing thus early. The remainder of the party keep together until five, when they gradually began to separate; and by six the dancing had ceased, and the greater portion of them had taken their departure. Thus ended the wedding of Isaac Younker—a fair specimen, by the way, of a backwood’s wedding in the early settlement of the west.

CHAPTER VI.

The presentiment.

Deep and gloomy were the meditations of Algernon Reynolds, as, in company with Ella Barnwell, he rode slowly along the narrow path which he had traversed, if not with buoyant, at least with far lighter spirits than now, the morning before. From some, latent cause, he felt oppressed with a weight of despondency, as previously mentioned, that served to prostrate in a measure both his mental powers and physical system. He felt, though he could give no reason why, that some calamity was about to befall himself and the fair being by his side; and he strove to arouse himself and shake off the gloomy thoughts; but if he succeeded, it was only momentary, and they would again rush back with an increased power. He had been subject, since his unfortunate quarrel with his cousin, to gloomy reveries and depressions of spirits—but never before had he felt



exactly as now; and though in all former cases the event referred to had been the cause of his sad abstractions, yet in the present instance it scarcely held a place in his thoughts. Could it be a presentiment, he asked himself, sent to warn him of danger and prepare him to meet it? But the question he could not answer.



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The night, or rather the morning, though clear overhead, was uncommonly dark; and the stars, what few could be discerned, shed only pale, faint gleams, as though their lights were about to be extinguished. For some time both Algernon and Ella continued their journey without exchanging a syllable—she too, as well as himself, being deeply absorbed in no very pleasant reflections. She thought of him, of his hard fate, to meet with so many bitter disappointments at an age so young; and at last, for no premeditated, no intentional crime, be forced to fly from home and friends, and all he held dear, to wander in a far off land, among strangers—or worse, among the solitudes of the wilderness—exposed to a thousand dangers from wild savage beasts, and wilder and more savage human beings; and perhaps, withal, be branded as a felon and fugitive from justice. She thought what must be his feelings, his sense of utter desolation, with none around to sympathize—no sweet being by his side to whisper a single word of encouragement and hope; or, should the worst prove true, to share his painful lot, and endeavor to render less burdensome his remorseful thoughts, by smiles of endearment and looks of love. She thought, too, that to-morrow—perhaps today—he would take his departure, peradventure never to behold her again; and this was the saddest of the train. Until she saw him, Ella had never known what it was to love—perchance she did not now—but at least she had experienced those fluttering sensations, those deep and strange emotions, those involuntary yearnings of the heart toward some object in his presence, that aching void in his absence, which the more experienced would doubtless put down to that cause, and which no other being had ever even for a moment awakened in her breast. For something like half an hour the two rode on together, buried in their own sad reflections, when Ella broke the silence, by saying, in a low, touching voice:

“You seem sad to-night, Algernon.”

Algernon started, sighed heavily, and turning slightly on his saddle, said: “I am sad, Ella—very, very sad.”

“May I ask the cause?” rejoined Ella, gently.

“Doubtless you will think it strange, Ella, but the cause I believe to have originated in a waking vision or presentiment.”

“That does seem strange!” observed Ella, in return.

“Did it never strike you, dear Ella, that we are all strange beings, subject to strange influences, and destined, many of us, to strange ends?” inquired Reynolds, solemnly.

“Perhaps I do not understand you,” replied Ella; “but with regard to destiny, I am inclined to think that we in a measure shape our own. As to our being strange, there are many things relating to us that we may not understand, and therefore look upon them in the light of which you speak.”

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“Are there any we do understand, Ella?” rejoined Algernon. “When I say understand, I mean the word to be used in its minutest and broadest sense. You say there are many things we may not understand concerning ourselves—what ones, I pray you, do we fully comprehend? We are here upon the earth—so much we know. We shall die and pass away—so much we know also. But how came we here, and why? How do we exist? How do we think, reason, speak, feel, move, see, hear, smell, taste? All these we do, we know; but yet not one—not a single one of them can we comprehend. You wish to raise your hand; and forthwith, by some extraordinary power—extraordinary because you cannot tell where it is, nor how it is—you raise it. Why cannot a dead person do the same? Strange question you will say to yourself with a smile—but one easily answered! Why, because in such a person life is extinct—there is no vital principle—the heart is stopped—the blood has ceased to flow in its regular channels! Ay! but let me ask you *why* that life is extinct?—why that breath has stopped?—and why that blood has ceased to flow? There was just the same amount of air when the person died as before! There were the same ingredients still left to stimulate that blood to action! Then wherefore should both cease?—and with them the power of thought, reason, speech, and all the other senses? It was not by a design of the individual himself; for he strove to his utmost to breathe longer; he was not ready to die—he did not want to quit this earth so soon; and yet with all his efforts to the contrary, reason fled, the breath stopped, the blood ceased, the limbs became palsied and cold, and corruption, decay and dust stood ready to follow. Now why was this? There is but one answer: ‘God willed it!’ If then one question resolves itself into one answer,—‘the will of God’—so may all of the same species; and we come out, after a long train of analytical reasoning, exactly where we started—with this difference—that when we set out, we believed in being able to explain the wherefore; but when we came to the end, we could only assert it as a wonderful fact, whereof not a single iota could we understand.”

Algernon spoke in a clear, distinct, earnest tone—in a manner that showed the subject was not new to his thoughts; and after a short pause, during which Ella made no reply, he again proceeded.

“In this grand organ of man—where all things are strange and incomprehensible—to me the combination of the physical and mental is strangest of all. The soul and the body are united and yet divided. Each is distinct from and acts without the other at times, and yet both act in concert with a wonderful power. The soul plans and the body executes. The body exercises the soul—the soul the body. The one is visible—the other invisible; the one is mortal—the other immortal. Now why do they act together here? Why was not each placed in its separate sphere of action? Again: What is the soul? Men tell us it is a spirit. What is a spirit? An invisible something that never dies. Who can comprehend it? None. Whither does it go when separated forever from the body? None can answer, save in language of Scripture: ‘It returns to God who gave it.’”



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“I have never heard the proposition advanced by another,” continued Algernon, after another slight pause, “but I have sometimes thought myself, that the soul departs from the body, for a brief season, and wanders at will among scenes either near or remote, and returns with its impressions, either clouded or clear, to communicate them to the corporeal or not, as the case may be: hence dreams or visions, and strong impressions when we wake, that something bright and good has refreshed our sleep, or something dark and evil has made it troubled and feverish. Again I have sometimes thought that this soul—this invisible and immortal something within us—has power at times to look into the future, and see events about to transpire; which events being sometimes of a dark and terrible nature, leave upon it like impressions; and hence gloomy and melancholy forebodings. This may be all sophistry—as much of our better reasoning on things we know nothing about often is—but if it be true, then may I trust to account for my present sadness.”

“Have you really, then, sad forebodings?” inquired Ella, quickly and earnestly.

“Against my will and sober reason, dear Ella, I must own I have. Perchance, however, the feeling was only called up by a train of melancholy meditations. While sitting there to-night, gazing upon the many bounding forms—some full of beauty and grace, and some of strength—noting their joyous faces, and listening occasionally to the lightsome jest, and merry, ringing laugh—I could not avoid contrasting with the present the time when I was as happy and full full of mirth as they. I pictured to myself how they would stare and shudder and draw away from me, did they know my hand was stained with the blood of my own kin. Then I began, involuntarily as it were, to picture to myself the fate of each; and they came up before me in the form of a vision, (though if such, it was a waking one) but in regular order; and I saw them pass on one after another—some gliding smoothly down the stream of time to old age—some wretched and crippled, groping their way along over barren wastes, without water or food, though nearly dying for the want of both—some wading through streams of blood, with fierce and angry looks—and some with pale faces, red eyes, and hollow cheeks, roving amid coffins, sepulchres and bones; but of all, the very fewest number happy.”

“Oh! it was an awful vision!” exclaimed Ella, with a shudder.

“It was awful enough,” rejoined Algernon; “and despite of me, it made me more and more sad as I thought upon it. Could it indeed be a dream? But no! I was—seemingly at least—as wide awake and conscious as at the present moment. I saw the dance going on as ever—I saw the merry smiles, and heard the jest and laugh as before. Could it be some strange hallucination of the brain—some wild imagining—caused by my previous exercise and over heat? I pondered upon it long and seriously,



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but could not determine. Suddenly—I know not how nor why—that ill-looking stranger who lodged one night at your uncle's, and departed so mysteriously, came up in my mind; and almost at the same moment, I fancied myself riding with you, dear Ella, through a dark and lonely wood—when all of a sudden there came a fierce yell—several dark, hideous forms, with him among them, swam around me—I heard you shriek for aid—and then all became darkness and confusion; from which I was aroused by some one inquiring if I were ill? What I answered I know not; but the querist immediately took his leave.”

“It all seems very strange, Algernon,” observed Ella, thoughtfully; “but it was probably nothing more than a feverish dream, brought about by your exercise acting too suddenly and powerfully upon your nervous system, which doubtless has not as yet recovered from the prostration caused by your wound.”

“So I tried to think, dear Ella,” returned Algernon, with a sigh; “but I have not even yet been able to shake off the gloomy impression, that, whatever the cause, it was sent as a warning of danger. But I am foolish, perhaps, to think as I do; and so let us change the subject. You spoke a few moments since of destiny. You said, if I mistake not, you believed each individual capable of shaping his own.”

“I did,” answered Ella; “with the exception, that I qualified it by saying in a measure. No person, I think, has the power of moulding himself to an end which is contrary to the law of nature and his own physical organization; but at the same time he has many ways, some good and some evil, left open for him to choose; else he were not a free agent.”

“Ay,” rejoined Algernon, “by-paths all to the same great end. I look upon every one here, Ella, as a traveler placed upon the great highway called destiny—with a secret power within that impels him forward, but allows no pause nor retrograde. Along this highway are flowers, and briars, and thistles, and weeds, and shady woods, and barren rocks, and sterile bluffs, and glassy plots; but proportioned differently to each, as the Maker of all designs his path to be pleasant or otherwise. Beside this highway are perhaps a dozen minor paths, all running a similar course, and all finally merging into it—either near or far, as the case may be—before its termination at the great gate of death. The free agency you speak of, is in choosing of these lesser paths—some of which are full of the snares of temptation, the chasms of ruin, and the pitfalls of destruction; and some of the flowers of peace, the bowers of plenty, and the green woods of contentment. But how to follow the proper one is the difficulty; for they run into one another—cross and recross in a thousand different ways—so that the best disposed as often hit the wrong as the right one, and are entrapped before they are aware of their dangerous course. Worldly wisdom is here put at fault, and the fool as often goes right as the wise man of lore—thus showing, notwithstanding our free

agency, that circumstances govern us; and that what many put down as crime, is, in fact, oftentimes, neither more nor less than error of judgment.”



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“Then you consider free agency only a chance game, depending, as it were, upon the throw of a die?” observed Ella, inquiringly.

“I believe this much of free agency, that a train of circumstances often forces some to evil and others to good; and that we should look upon the former, in many cases—mind I do not say all—as unfortunate rather than criminal—with pity rather than scorn; and so endeavor to reclaim them. Were this doctrine more practiced by Christians—by those whom the world terms good, (but whom circumstances alone have made better than their fellows,) there would be far less of sin, misery, and crime abounding for them to deplore. Let the creed of churches only be to ameliorate the condition of the poor, relieve the distressed, remove temptations from youth, encourage the virtuous, and endeavor, by gently means, to reclaim the erring—and the holy design of Him who died to save would nobly progress, prisons would be turned into asylums, and scaffolds be things known only by tradition.”

Algernon spoke with an easy, earnest eloquence, and a force of emphasis, that made each word tell with proper effect upon his fair hearer. To Ella the ideas he advanced were, many of them, entirely new; and she mused thoughtfully upon them, as they rode along, without reply; while he, becoming warm upon a subject that evidently occupied no inferior place in his mind, went on to speak of the wrongs and abuses which society in general heaped upon the unfortunate, as he termed them—contrasted the charity of professing Christians of the eighteenth century with that of Christ himself—and pointed out what he considered the most effectual means of remedy. To show that a train of circumstances would frequently force persons against their own will and reason to be what society terms criminal, he referred to himself, and his own so far eventful destiny; and Ella could not but admit to herself, that, in his case at least, his arguments were well grounded, and she shaped her replies accordingly.

Thus conversing, they continued upon their course, until they came to the brow of a steep descent, down which the path ran in a zigzag manner, through a dark, gloomy ravine, now rendered intensely so to our travelers, by the hour, their thoughts, the wildness of the scenery around, and the dense growth of cedars covering the hollow, whose untrimmed branches, growing even to the ground, overreached and partly obstructed their way. By this time only one or two stars were visible in the heavens; and they shone with pale, faint gleams; while in the east the beautiful gray and crimson tints of Aurora announced that day was already breaking on the slumbering world. Drawing rein, Algernon and Ella paused as if to contemplate the scene. Below and around them each object presented that misty, indistinct appearance, which leaves the imagination power to give it either a pleasing or hideous shape. In the immediate vicinity, the country was uneven; rocky, and covered with cedars; but far off to the right could be discerned the even surface of the cane-brake, previously mentioned, now stretching away in the distance like the unruffled bosom of some beautiful lake. A light breeze slightly rustled the leaves of the trees, among whose branches an occasional songster piped forth his morning lay of rejoicing.



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“How lovely is nature in all her varieties!” exclaimed Ella, with animation, as she glanced over the scene.

“Ay, and in that variety lies her loveliness,” answered Algernon. “It is the constant and eternal change going forward that interests us, and gives to nature her undying charm. Man—high-souled, contemplative man—was not born to sameness. Variety is to his mind what food is to his body; and as the latter, deprived of its usual nourishment, sinks to decay—so the former, from like deprivation of its strengthening power, becomes weak and imbecile. Again: as coarse, plain food and hardy exercise add health and vigor to the physical—so does the contemplation of nature in her wildness and grandeur give to the mental a powerful and lofty tone. Of all writers for poetical and vigorous intellects, give me those who have been reared among cloud-capped hills, and craggy steeps, and rushing streams, and roaring cataracts; for their conceptions are grand, their comparisons beautiful, and the founts from which they draw, as exhaustless almost as nature herself.”

“I have often thought the same myself,” returned Ella; “for I never gaze upon a beautiful scene in nature, that I do not feel refreshed. To me the two most delightful are morning and evening. I love to stand upon some eminence, and mark, as now, the first gray, crimson and golden streaks that rush up in the eastern sky; and catch the first rays of old Sol, as he, surrounded by a reddened halo, shows his welcome face above the hills; or at calm eve watch his departure, as with a last, fond, lingering look he takes his leave, as ’twere in sorrow that he could not longer tarry; while earth, not thus to be outdone in point of grief, puts on her sable dress to mourn his absence.”

“Ah! Ella,” said Algernon, turning to her with a gentle smile, “methinks morning and evening are somewhat indebted to you for a touch of poetry in their behalf.”

“Rather say I am indebted to them for a thousand fine feelings I have not even power to express,” rejoined Ella.

Algernon was on the point of returning an answer, when, casting his eyes down into the ravine, he slightly started, his gaze became fixed, and his features grew a shade more pale. Ella noticed this sudden change, and in a voice slightly tremulous inquired the cause. For nearly a minute Algernon made no reply, but kept his eyes steadily bent in the same direction, apparently riveted on some object below. Ella also looked down; but seeing nothing worthy of note, and growing somewhat alarmed at his silence, was on the point of addressing him again, when, slightly turning his head, and rubbing his eyes with his hand, he said:

“Methought I saw a dark object move in the hollow below; but I think I must have been mistaken, for all appears quiet there now—not even a limb or so much as a leaf stirs. Lest there should be danger, however, dear Ella, I will ride down first and ascertain. If I give an alarm, turn your horse and do not spare him till you reach Wilson’s.”



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“No, no, no!” exclaimed Ella, with vehemence, laying her hand upon his arm, as he was about starting forward, her own features now growing very pale. “If you go, Algernon, you go not alone! If there is danger, I will share it with you.”

Algernon turned towards her a face that, one moment crimsoned with animation and the next became deadly pale; while his whole frame quivered with intense emotion, and he seemed vainly struggling to command contending feelings. Suddenly clasping her hand in his, he pressed it warmly, raised it to his lips, and in a trembling tone said:

“Ella—dear Ella—God bless you! If ever—but—no—no—no;” and covering his face with his hands, he wept convulsively; while she, no less deeply affected, could scarcely sit her horse.

At length Algernon withdrew his hands, and exhibited features pale but calm. Drawing forth his pistols, he carefully examined their priming, and then replaced them in his belt. During this proceeding, he failed not to urge Ella to alter her design and remain, while he went forward; but finding her determined on keeping him company, he signified his readiness to proceed, and both started slowly down the hill together. They reached the ravine in safety, and advanced some twenty yards further, when suddenly there arose a terrific Indian yell, followed instantly by the sharp report of several fire-arms, a wild, piercing shriek, some two or three heavy groans, a rustling among the trees, and then by a stillness as deep and awfully solemn as that which pervades the narrow house appointed for all living.

CHAPTER VII.

The old woodsman and his dog.

The sun was perhaps an hour above the mountain tops, when a solitary hunter, in the direction of the cane-brake, might have been seen shaping his course toward the hill whereon Algernon and Ella had so lately paused to contemplate the dawning day. Upon his shoulder rested a long rifle, and a dog of the Newfoundland species followed in his steps or trotted along by his side. In a few minutes he reached the place referred to; when the snuffling of his canine companion causing him to look down, his attention instantly became fixed upon the foot-prints of the horses which had passed there the day before, and particularly on the two that had repassed there so lately.

“What is it, Caesar?” said he, addressing the brute. “Nothing wrong here, I reckon.” Caesar, as if conscious of his master’s language, raised his head, and looking down into the ravine, appeared to snuff the air; then darting forward, he was quickly lost among the branching cedars. Scarcely thirty seconds elapsed, ere a long, low howl came up from the valley; and starting like one suddenly surprised by some disagreeable

occurrence, the hunter, with a cheek slightly blanched, hurried down the crooked path, muttering as he went, "Thar's something wrong, for sartin—for Caesar never lies."

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In less than a minute the hunter came in sight of his dog, which he found standing with his hind feet on the ground and his fore-paws resting on the carcass of a horse, that had apparently been dead but a short time. As Caesar perceived his master approach, he uttered another of those peculiar, long, low, mournful howls, which the superstitious not unfrequently interpret as omens of evil.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the hunter, as he came up; “thar’s been foul play here, Caesar—foul play, for sartin. D’ye think, dog, it war Indians as done it?”

The brute looked up into the speaker’s face, with one of those expressions of intelligence or sagacity, which seem to speak what the tongue has not power to utter, and then wagging his tail, gave a sharp, fierce bark.

“Right, dog!” continued the other, as, stooping to the ground, he began to examine with great care the prints left there by human feet. “Right, dog, they’re the rale varmints, and no mistake. Ef all folks war as sensible and knowing as you, thar would’nt be many fools about, I reckon.”

Having finished his examination of the ground, the hunter again turned to look at the carcass of the horse, which was lying on its left side, some two feet from the path, and had apparently fallen dead from a shot in the forehead, between the eyes. An old saddle, devoid of straps, lay just concealed under the branching cedars. The ground around was trodden as if from a scuffle, and the limbs of the trees were broken in many places—while in two or three others could be seen spots of blood, not even yet dry—none of which informants of the recent struggle escaped the keen observation of the woodsman. Suddenly the dog, which had been watching his master’s motions intently, put his nose to the ground, darted along the path further into the ravine, and presently resounded another of those mournful howls.

“Ha! another diskivery!” exclaimed the hunter, as he started after his companion.

About thirty yards further on, he came upon the carcass of another horse, which had been killed by a ball in the right side, and the blow of some weapon, probably a tomahawk, on the head. By its side also lay a lady’s saddle, stripped like the former of its trappings. This the woodsman now proceeded to examine attentively, for something like a minute, during which time a troubled expression rested on his dark, sunburnt features.

“I’m either mightily mistaken,” said he at length, with a grave look, “or that thar horse and saddle is the property of Ben Younker; and I reckon it’s the same critter as is rid by Ella Barnwell. Heaven forbid, sweet lady, that it be thou as met with this terrible misfortune!—but ef it be, by the Power that made me, I swar to follow on thy trail; and ef I meet any of thy captors, then, Betsey, I’ll just call on you for a backwoods sentiment.”

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As he concluded, the hunter turned with a look of affection towards his rifle, which he firmly grasped with a nervous motion. At this moment, the dog, which had been busying himself by running to and fro with his nose to the ground, suddenly paused, and laying back his ears, uttered a low, fierce growl. The hunter cast toward him a quick glance; and dropping upon his knees, applied his ear to the earth, where he remained some fifteen seconds; then rising to his feet, he made a motion with his hand, and together with Caesar withdrew into the thicket.

For some time no sound was heard to justify this precaution of the woodsman; but at length a slight jarring of the ground became apparent, followed by a noise at some distance, resembling the clatter of horses' feet, which, gradually growing louder as the cause drew nearer, soon became sufficiently so to put all doubts on the matter at rest. In less than five minutes from the disappearance of the hunter, some eight or ten horses, bearing as many riders, approached the hill from the direction of Wilson's, and began to descend into the ravine. The party, composed of both sexes, were in high glee—some jesting, some singing, and some laughing uproariously. Nothing occurred to interrupt their merriment, until they began to lose themselves among the cedars of the hollow, when the foremost horse suddenly gave a snort and bounded to one side—a movement which his companion, close behind, imitated—while the rider of the latter, a female, uttered a loud, piercing scream of fright. In a moment the whole party was in confusion—some turning their horses to the right about and riding back towards Wilson's, at headlong speed—and some pausing in fear, undecided what to do. The two foremost horses now became very refractory, rearing and plunging in a manner that threatened to unseat their riders every moment. Of the two, the one ridden by the lady was the most ungovernable; and in spite of her efforts to quiet or hold him, he seized the bit in his teeth, and, rearing on his hind legs, plunged madly forward, until he came to where the other carcass was lying, when, giving another snort of fear, he again reared, and turning aside into the thicket, left his rider almost senseless in the path he had just quitted. Fortunately the beast shaped his course to where the hunter was concealed, who, with a sudden spring, as he was rushing past, seized upon the bridle near the bit, and succeeded, after a struggle, in mastering and leading him back to the path.

By this time the companion of the lady had come up; and seeing her condition, was dismounting to render her assistance; when his eye falling upon the stranger, he started, and placed his hand quickly to his belt, as if in search of some weapon of defence. The hunter saw the movement, and said, with a gesture of command:

“Hold! young man; don't do any thing rash!”

“Who are you, sir?”

“A friend.”



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"Your name!" continued the other, as he sprang to the ground.

"Names don't matter, stranger, in cases sech as this. I said I war a friend."

"By what may I know you as such."

"My deeds," returned the other, laconically. "Think you, stranger, ef I wanted to harm ye, I couldn't have done it without you seeing me?" and as he spoke, he glanced significantly toward his rifle.

"True," returned the other; "but what's the meaning of this?" and he pointed toward the dead horse.

"It means Indians, as nigh as I can come at it," replied the hunter. "But look to the living afore the dead!" And the woodsman in turn pointed toward the lady.

"Right!" said the other; and springing to her side, he raised her in his arms.

She was not injured, other than slightly stunned by the fall, and she quickly regained her senses. At first she was somewhat alarmed; but perceiving who supported her, and nothing in the mild, noble, benevolent countenance of the stranger, who was still holding her horse by the bridle, of a sinister nature, she anxiously inquired what had happened.

"I can only guess by what I see;" answered the hunter, "that some o' your company have been less fortunate than you. Didn't two o' them set out in advance?"

"Gracious heavens!" cried the young man supporting the lady; "it is Ella Barnwell and the stranger Reynolds!"

"Then they must be quickly trailed!" rejoined the hunter briefly. "Go, young man, take your lady back agin, and raise an armed party for pursuit. Be quick in your operations, and I'll wait and join you here. Leave your horses thar, for we must take it afoot; and besides, gather as much provision as you can all easily carry, for Heaven only knows whar or when our journey'll end."

"But do you think they're still living?"

"I hope so."

"Then let us return, Henry," said the lady, "as quick as possible, so that a party for pursuit may be collected before the wedding guests have all separated."

"I fear it will be difficult, Mary, but we must try it," replied the young man, as he assisted her to mount. Then, turning to the stranger, he added: "But won't you accompany us, sir?"



“No, it can do no good; besides I’m afoot, and would only cause delay, and thar’s been too much o’ that already.”

“At least, sir, favor me with your name.”

“The first white hunter o’ old Kaintuck,” answered the other, stroking the neck of the fiery beast on which the lady was now sitting.

“What!” exclaimed the other, in a tone of surprise: “Boone! Colonel Daniel Boone?”

“Why, I’m sometimes called colonel,” returned the hunter, dryly, still stroking the horse’s neck; “but Daniel’s the older title, and a little the most familiar one besides.”

“I crave pardon for my former rudeness, Colonel,” said the other, advancing and offering his hand; “but you were a stranger to me you know.”



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“Well, well, it’s all right—I’d have done exactly so myself,” answered Boone, grasping the young man’s hand with a cordiality that showed no offence had been taken. “And now—a—how do you call yourself?”

“Henry Millbanks.”

“Now, Master Millbanks, pray be speedy; for while we talk, our friends may die, and it goes agin nater to think on’t,” said Boone, anxiously.

As he spoke, he led forward the lady’s horse past the other carcass; while Henry, springing upon his own beast, followed after. Having seen them safely out of the ravine, the noble hunter turned back to wait the arrival of the expected assistance. He had just gained the center of the thicket, when he was slightly startled again by the growl of his dog, and the tramp of what appeared to be another horse, coming from the direction of Younker’s. Hastily secreting himself, he awaited in silence the approach of the new comer, whom he soon discovered to be an old acquaintance, who was riding at a fast gallop, bearing some heavy weight in his arms. As he came up to the carcass of Ella’s horse, he slackened his speed, looked at it earnestly, then gazed cautiously around, and was about to spur his boast onward again, when the sound of Boone’s voice reached, his ear; requesting him to pause; and at the same time, to his astonishment, Boone himself emerged into the path before him.

“Ha! Colonel Boone,” said the horsemen, quickly; “I’m glad to meet ye; for now is a time when every true man’s wanted.”

“What’s the news, David Billings?” inquired Boone, anxiously, as he noticed a troubled, earnest expression on the countenance of the other.

“Bad!” answered Billings, emphatically. “The Injens have been down upon us agin in a shocking manner.”

“Heaven forbid thar be many victims!” ejaculated Boone, unconsciously tightening the grasp on his rifle.

“Too many—too many!” rejoined Billings, shaking his head sadly. “Thar’s my neighbor Millbanks’ family—”

“Well? well?” cried Boone, impatiently, as the other seemed to hesitate.

“Have all been murdered, and his house burnt to ashes.”

“All?” echoed Boone.

“All but young Harry, who’s fortunately away to a wedding at Wilson’s.”



“Why, the one you speak of war just now here,” said Boone, with a start; “and I sent him back to raise a party to trail the red varmints, who’ve been operating as you see yonder: Good heavens! what awful news for poor Harry, who seems so likely a lad.”

“Yes, likely you may well say,” returned the other; “and so war the whole family—God ha’ mercy on ’em! But what’s been done here?”

“Why, I suppose Ella Barnwell—Yunker’s niece, you know—and a likely young stranger who war along with her, called Reynolds, have been captured.”

“Ha! well it’s supposed Yunker and his wife are captives too, or else that thar bones lie white among the ashes of thar own ruins.”



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“Good heavens!” cried Boone. “Any more, David?”

“Yes, thar’s Absalom Switcher and his wife, and a young gal of twelve; and Ephraim Stokes’ wife and a young boy of five; who war left by themselves, (Stokes himself being away, and his son Seth at the wedding, as was a son o’ Switcher’s also) have all bin foully mardered—besides Johnny Long’s family, Peter Pierson’s, and a young child of Fred Mason’s that happened to be at Pierson’s house, and one or two others whose names I disremember.”

“But when did this happen, David?”

“Last night,” replied the other. “It’s suspected that the Injens ha bin warting round here, and took advantage of this wedding, when the greater part on ’em war away. It’s thought too that thar war a white spy out, who gin ’em information, and led ’em on—as a villainous looking chap war seed about the vicinity not long ago.”

“Do they suspicion who war the spy?” asked Boone.

“Why some thinks as how it war that thar accused renegade, Simon Girty.”

“Wretch!” muttered Boone, grasping his rifle almost fiercely; “I’d like to have old Bess, here, hold a short conflag with him. But what have you got thar in your arms, that seems so heavy, David?”

“Rifles, Colonel. I’ve bin riding round and collecting on ’em for this mad party of Younker’s, who went off without any precaution; and I’m now on my way to deliver ’em, that they may start instanter arter the cussed red skins, and punish ’em according to the Mosaic law.”

“Spur on then, David, and you may perhaps overtake some o’ them; and all that you do, arm and send ’em here as quick as possible—for I’m dreadful impatient to be off.”

The colloquy between the two thus concluded, the horseman—a strongly-built, hard-favored, muscular man of forty—set spurs to his horse; and bounding onward toward Wilson’s (distant some five miles—the ravine being about half way between the residence of the groom and bride,) he was quickly lost to the sight of the other, who quietly seated himself to await the reinforcement.

In the course of half an hour, Boone was joined by some three or four of the wedding party, who had been overtaken by Billings, learned the news, accepted a rifle each, bidden their fair companions adieu, and sent them and the horses back to the house of the bride, while they moved forward to meet danger, rescue the living, and seek revenge.



In the course of an hour and a half, Billings himself returned, accompanied by some seven or eight stout hearts; among whom were young Switcher, Stokes, Millbanks, and, lastly, Isaac Younker, who had been roused from the nuptial bed to hear of the terrible calamity that had befallen his friends. Isaac, on the present occasion, did not disgrace his training, the land which gave him birth, nor the country he now inhabited. When the messenger came with the direful news, although somewhat late in the morning, Isaac had been found



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in his bed, closely folded in the arms of the god of sleep. On being awakened and told of what had taken place, he slowly rose up into a sitting posture, rubbed his eyes, stared searchingly at his informant, gathered himself upon his feet, threw on his wedding garments, and made all haste to descend below; where he at once sought out his new wife, Peggy, who had risen an hour before; and grasping her by the hand, in a voice slightly tremulous, but with a firm, determined expression on his features, said:

“Peggy, dear, I ’spect you’ve heard the whole on’t. Father, mother, Ella and Reynolds—all gone, and our house in ashes, I’m going to follow, Peggy. Good bye—God bless you! Ef I don’t never come back, Peggy”—and the tears started into his eyes—“you may jest put it down I’ve been clean sarcumvented, skinned, and eat up by them thar ripscallious Injens;” and turning upon his heel, as his tender-hearted spouse burst into tears, he seized upon some provisions that had graced the last night’s entertainment, gave Black Betty a long and cordial salute with his lips, shook hands with his wife’s father and mother, kissed Peggy once again, pulled his cap over his eyes, and, without another word, set forth with rapid strides on the eastern path leading to the rendezvous of Daniel Boone.

On the faces of those now assembled, who had lost their best and dearest friends, could be seen the intense workings of the strong passions of grief and revenge, while their fingers clutched their faithful rifles with a nervous power. The greatest change was apparent in the features of Henry Millbanks. He was a fine-favored, good-looking youth of eighteen, with light hair and a florid complexion. The natural expression of his handsome countenance was an easy, dignified smile, which was rendered extremely fascinating by a broad, noble forehead, and a clear, expressive, gray eye; but now the floridity had given place to a pale, almost sallow hue, the forehead was wrinkled with grief, the lips were compressed, and the smile had been succeeded by a look of great fierceness, aided by the eye; which was more than usually sunken and bloodshot.

But little was said by any of the party; for all felt the chilling gloom of the present, so strongly contrasted with the bright hours and merry jests which had so lately been apportioned to each. Boone called to Caesar and bade him seek the Indian trail; a task which the noble brute flew to execute; and in a few minutes the whole company were on their way; with the exception of Billings; who, by the unanimous request of all, returned to Wilson’s; to cheer, console and protect the females; and, if thought advisable, to conduct them to Bryan’s Station—a strong fort a few miles distant—where they might remain in comparative security.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Indians and their prisoners.



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While the events just chronicled were enacting in one part of the country, others, of a different nature, but somewhat connected with them, were taking place in another. In a dark, lonely pass or gorge of the hills, some ten miles to the north of the scene of the preceding chapter, where the surrounding trees grew so thick with branches and leaves that they almost entirely excluded the sunlight from the waters of a stream which there rolled foaming and roaring between the hills and over and against the rocks of its precipitous bed, or, plunging down some frightful precipice, lay as if stunned or exhausted by the fall in the chasm below, mirroring in its still bosom with a gloomy reflection the craggy steeps rising majestically above it—in this dark and lonely pass, we say, was a party of human beings, to whom the proper development of our story now calls us.

The company in question was composed of eight persons, five of whom were Indians of the Seneca tribe;^[5] the others—a thin-faced, gaunt, stoop-shouldered man past the middle age—a rather corpulent, masculine looking woman, a few years his junior—a little fair-haired, blue-eyed, pretty-faced girl of six—were white captives. Four of the Indians were seated or partly reclining on the ground, with their guns beside them, ready for instant use if necessary, engaged in roasting slices of deer meat before a fire that had been kindled for the purpose. The fifth savage was pacing to and fro, with his rifle on his arm, performing the double duty of sentinel and guard over the prisoners, who were kept in durance by strong cords some ten paces distant. The old man was secured by a stick passing across his back horizontally, to which both wrists and arms were tightly bound with thongs of deer skin. To prevent the possibility of escape, both legs were fastened together by the same material, and a long, stout rope, encircling his neck, was attached to a tree hard by. This latter precaution, and much of the former, seemed unnecessary; for there was a mild look of resigned dejection on his features, as they bent toward the earth, with his chin resting on his bosom, that appeared strongly at variance with any thing like flight or strife. His female companion was fastened in like manner to the tree, but in other respects only bound by a stout thong around the wrists in front. The third member of the white party, the little girl, was seated at the feet of the old man, with her small wrists also bound until they had swollen so as to pain her, looking up from time to time into his face with a heart-rending expression of grief, fear and anxiety.



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Of the Indians themselves, we presume it would be difficult to find, among all the tribes of America, five more blood-thirsty, villainous looking beings than the ones in question. They were only partially dressed, after the manner of their tribe, with skins around their loins, extending down to their knees, and moccasins on their feet, leaving the rest of their bodies and limbs bare. Around their waists were belts, for the tomahawk and scalping knife, at three of which now hung freshly taken scalps. Their faces had been hideously painted for the war-path; but heat and perspiration had since out done the artist, by running the composition into streaks, in such a way as to give them the most diabolical appearance imaginable. On each of their heads was a tuft of feathers, some of which had the appearance of having recently been scorched and blackened by fire, while their arms and bodies were here and there besmeared with blood.

The four around the fire were in high glee, as they roasted and devoured their meat, judging from their nods, and grins, and grunts of approbation, whenever their eyes glanced in the direction of their prisoners—the effect of which was far from consoling to the matron of the latter; who, having eyed them for some time in indignant silence, at length burst forth with angry vehemence:

“Well, now, jest grin, and jabber, and grin, like a pesky set o’ natural born monkeys, that’s ten times better nor you is any day of your good for nothing, sneaking lives. Goodness, gracious, marsy on me alive!” continued the dame, whom the reader has doubtless recognized as Mrs. Younker; “I only jest wish you had to change places with me and Ben here for about five minutes; and ef I didn’t make your old daubed, nasty, villainous, unyarthly looking faces grin to another tune, I hope I may never be blessed with liberty agin in creation, as long as I live on the face o’ this univarsal yarth!”

“Ugh!” ejaculated the sentinel, turning towards the speaker, as she concluded her fierce tirade, at the same time placing his hand on the tomahawk in his belt with an angry gesture: “Ugh! me squaw kill—she no stop much talky!”

“You’d kill me, would ye? you mean, dirty, ripscallious looking varmint of the woods you, that don’t know a pin from a powder horn!” rejoined the undaunted Mrs. Younker, in a vehement tone: “You’d kill me for using the freedom of tongue, as these blessed Colonies is this moment fighting for with the tarnal Britishers? You’d kill me, would ye? Well, it’s jest my first nateral come at opinion, as I tolled Ben here, not more’n a quarter o’ an hour ago, that you war jest mean enough for any thing, as ever war invented, in the whole univarsal yarth o’ creation—so ef you do kill me, I won’t be in the leastest grain disappointed, no how.”

“Don’t, Dorothy—don’t irritate the savage for nothing at all!” said her husband, who, raising his head at the first remark of the Indian, now saw in his fierce, flashing eyes, angry gestures, and awful contortions of visage, that which boded the sudden fulfillment of his threat: “Don’t irritate him, and git murdered for your pains, Dorothy! Why can’t you be more quiet?”



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“Don’t talk to me about being quiet, Benjamin Younker, away out here in the woods, a captive to such imps an them thar, with our house all burnt to nothing like, and our cows and sheeps and hosses destructed, and—”

Here the speech of the good woman was suddenly cut short by the whizzing of a tomahawk past her head, which slightly grazed her cheek, and lodged in the tree a few feet beyond. Whether it was aimed at her life and missed its mark, or whether it was merely done to frighten her, does not appear; though the manner of the savage, after the weapon was thrown, inclines us to the latter supposition; for instead of rushing upon her with his knife, he walked deliberately to the tree, withdrew the tomahawk, and then turning to her, and brandishing it over her head, said:

“Squaw, still be! Speak much, me killum!”

Be the design of the Indian what it might, the whole proceeding certainly produced one result, which nothing had ever been known to do before—it awed to silence the tongue of Mrs. Younker, just at a moment when talking would have been such a relief to her overcharged spirit; and merely muttering, in an under tone, “I do jest believe the ripscallious varmint is in arnest, sure enough!” she held her speech for the extraordinary space of half an hour.

Meantime the other savages finished their repast; and having offered a portion of it to the prisoners, which the latter refused, they proceeded to destroy their fire, by casting the burning brands into the rushing waters of the stream below. This done, they extended their circle somewhat—each placing himself by a tree or rock—and then in the most profound silence stood like bronzed statuary, apparently awaiting the arrival of another party. At last—and just as the sun was beginning to peep over the brow of the steep above them, and let his rays struggle with the matted foliage of the trees, for a glimpse of the roaring waters underneath—one of the Indians started, looked cautiously around, dropped flat upon the earth; and then rising, and motioning with his hand for all to be silent, glided noiselessly away, like the shadow of some evil spirit, into the surrounding thicket. He had scarcely been absent three minutes, when a slight crackling among the brush was heard near at hand; and immediately after he rejoined his companions, followed by a party of eight Indian warriors, and two white prisoners, headed by a low browed, sinister, blood-thirsty looking white man, in a garb resembling that worn by a subordinate British officer. His coat was red, with facings of another color, underneath which was partially displayed a handsome vest and ruffled shirt. About his waist passed a broad wampum belt, in which were confined a brace of silver mounted pistols, another pair of less finish and value, a silver handled dirk, a scalping knife and tomahawk, on whose blades could be seen traces of blood. Around his neck was a neatly tied cravat, and dangling in front of his vest a gold

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chain, which connected with a watch hid in a pocket of his breeches, whence depended a larger chain of steel, supporting in turn three splendid gold seals and two keys. His nether garments were breeches, leggins, and moccasins, all of deer skin, and without ornament. His hat, not unlike those of the present day, was on this occasion graced with a red feather, which protruded above the crown, and corresponded well with his general appearance.

The Indian companions of this individual were not remarkable for any thing, unless it might be ferocity of expression. They were habited, with but one exception, like those previously described, and evidently belonged to the same tribe. This exception was a large, athletic, powerful Indian, rather rising of six feet, around whose waist was a finely worked wampum belt, over whose right shoulder, in a transverse direction, extended a red scarf, carelessly tied under the left arm, and in whose nose and ears were large, heavy rings, denoting him to be either a chief or one in command. His age was about thirty; and his features, though perhaps less ferocious than some of his companions, were still enough so to make him an object of dread and fear. His forehead was low, his eye black and piercing, and his nose rather flat and widely distended at the nostrils. He was called Peshewa: Anglice, Wild cat.

As the prisoners of the latter party came in sight of those of the former, there was a general start and exclamation of surprise; while the sad faces of each showed how little pleasure they felt in meeting each other under such painful circumstances. The last comers, as the reader has doubtless conjectured, were Algernon and Ella. Immediately on their entering the ravine, as previously recorded, they had been set upon by savages, their horses shot from under them, and themselves made captives. This result, however, as regards Algernon, had not been effected without considerable effort on the part of his numerous enemies. At the first fire, his horse fell; but disentangling himself, and drawing his pistols, he sprung upon the side of his dying beast, and discharged them both at his nearest foes—one of which took effect, and sent a warrior to his last account. Then leaping in among them, he drew his knife and cut madly about him until secured; though doubtless he would have been tomahawked on the spot, only that he might be reserved for the tortures, when his brutal captors should arrive at their destination. Meantime the animal which bore the lovely Ella, being wounded by the same fire which killed her companion's, bounded forward some twenty paces, when a blow on the head with a tomahawk laid him prostrate, and she was secured also. The party then proceeded to bury the dead, at some little distance, and start upon their journey, to join their companions—which latter we have just seen accomplished.

As soon as mutual recognitions had passed between the prisoners, the individual habited in the British uniform stepped forward, and said, jocosely:



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“So, friends, we all meet again, do we, eh?—ha, ha, ha!”

At the sound of his voice, the old man and his wife, both of whom had been too intently occupied with Algernon and Ella to notice him before, started, and turning their eyes suddenly upon him, simultaneously exclaimed:

“Mr. Williams!”

“*Sometimes* Mr. Williams,” answered the other, with a strong emphasis on the first word, accompanying it with a horrible oath; “but now, when disguise is no longer necessary, Simon Girty, the renegade, by ——!—ha, ha, ha!”

As he uttered these words, in a coarse, ruffianly tone, a visible shudder of fear or disgust, or both combined, passed through the frame of each of the prisoners; and Algernon turning to him, with an expression of loathing contempt, said:

“I more than half suspected as much, when I sometime since contemplated your low-browed, hang-dog countenance. Of course we can expect no mercy at such hands.”

“Mercy!” cried Girty, turning fiercely upon him, his eyes gleaming savagely, his mouth twisting into a shape intended to express the most withering contempt, while his words fairly hissed from between his tightly set teeth: “Mercy? dog! No, by h——! for none like you! Hark ye, Mr. Reynolds! Were you in the damnable cells of the Inquisition, accused of heresy, and about to be put to the tortures, you might think yourself in Paradise compared to what you shall yet undergo!”

As he uttered these words, Ella shrieked and fell fainting to the earth. Springing to her, Girty raised her in his arms; and pointing to her pale features, as he did so, continued:

“See! Mr. Reynolds, this girl loves you; I love her; we are rivals; and you, my rival, are in my power: and, by ——! and all the powers of darkness, you shall feel my vengeance!”

“You love her?” broke in Mrs. Younker, who, in spite of her previous dangerous warning, could hold her peace no longer: “You love her! you mean, contemptible, red headed puppy! I don’t believe as how you knows enough to love nothing! And so you’re Simon Girty, hey? that thar sneaking, red-coat renegade? Well, I reckon as how you’ve told the truth once; for I’ve hearn tell that he war an orful mean looking imp o’ Satan; and I jest don’t believe as how a meaner one nor yourself could be skeer’d up in the whole universal yarth o’ creation.”

“Rail on, old woman!” replied Girty, as he chafed the temples of Ella with his hands; “but in a little lower key; or I shall be under the necessity of ordering a stopper to your mouth; which, saving the tortures of the stake, is the worst punishment for you I can



now invent. As for you, Mr. Younker,” continued he, turning his face to the old man, with a peculiar expression; “you seem to have nothing to say to an old friend—ha, ha, ha!”

“Whensomever I mention the name o’ Simon Girty,” replied Younker, in a deliberate and startlingly solemn tone, “I al’ays call down God’s curse upon the fiendish renegade—and I do so now.”



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“By ——! old man,” cried Girty, casting Ella roughly from him, and starting upright, the perfect picture of a fiend in human shape; “another word, and your brains shall be scattered to the four winds of heaven!”

As he spoke, he brandished his tomahawk over the other’s head; while the child, before noticed, uttered a wild scream, and sprung to Mrs. Younker, at whose side she crouched in absolute terror.

“Strike!” answered Younker, mildly, with an unchanged countenance, his eye resting steadily upon the other, who could not meet his gaze in the same manner. “Strike! Simon Girty; for I’m a man that’s never feared death, and don’t now; besides, I reiterate all I’ve said, and with my dying breath pray God to curse ye!”

“Not yet!” rejoined Girty, smothering his rage, as he replaced his weapon. “Not yet, Ben Younker; for you take death too easy; and by ——! I’ll make it have terrors for you! But what child is this?” continued he, grasping the little girl fiercely by the arm, causing her to utter a cry of pain and fear. “By heavens! what do we with squalling children? Here, Oshasqua, I give her in your charge; and if she yelp again, brain her, by ——!” and he closed with an oath.

The Indian whom we have previously noticed as the sentinel, stepped forward, with a demoniac gleam of satisfaction on his ugly countenance, and taking the child by the hand, led her away some ten paces, where he amused himself by stripping her of such apparel as he fancied might ornament his own person; while she, poor little thing, afraid to cry aloud, could only sob forth the bitterness of her heart.

Meantime Girty turning to Ella, and finding her gradually recovering, assisted her to rise; and then motioning the chief aside, he held a short consultation with him, in the Indian dialect, regarding their next proceedings, and the disposal of the prisoners.

“Were it not, Peshewa, for his own base words,” said the renegade, in reply to some remark of his Indian ally, “I would have spared him; but now,” and his features exhibited a concentrated expression of infernal hate and revenge; “but now, Peshewa, he dies! with all the horrors of the stake, that you, a noble master of the art of torture, can invent and inflict. The Long Knife[6] must not curse the red man’s friend in his own camp and go unpunished. I commend him to your mercy, Peshewa—ha, ha, ha!” and he ended with a hoarse, fiend-like laugh.

“Ugh!” returned Wild-cat, giving a guttural grunt of satisfaction, although not a muscle of his rigid features moved, and, save a peculiar gleam of his dark eye, nothing to show that he felt uncommon interest in the sentence of Younker: “Peshewa a chief! The Great Spirit give him memory—the Great Spirit give him invention. He will remember what he has done to prisoners at the stake,—he can invent new tortures. But the squaw?”



“Ay, the squaw!” answered the renegade, musingly; “the old man’s wife—she must be disposed of also. Ha! a thought strikes me, Peshewa: You have no wife—(the savage gave a grunt)—suppose you take her?”



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Peshewa started, and his eyes flashed fire, as he said, with great energy: "Does the wolf mate with his hunter, that you ask a chief of the Great Spirit's red children to mate with their white destroyer?"

"Then do with her what you — please," rejoined Girty, throwing in an oath. "I was only jesting, Peshewa. But come, we must be on the move! for this last job will not be long a secret; and then we shall have the Long Knives after us as hot as h——l. We must divide our party. I will take with me these last prisoners and six warriors, and you the others. A quarter of a mile below here we will separate and break our trail in the stream; you and your party by going up a piece—I and mine by going down. This will perplex them, and give us time. Make your trail conspicuous, Peshewa, and I will be careful to leave none whatever, if I can help it; for, by ——! I must be sure to escape with my prisoners. If you are close pressed, you can brain and scalp yours; but for some important reasons, I want mine to live. We will meet, my noble Peshewa, at the first bend of the Big Miama."

The Indian heard him through, without moving a muscle of his seemingly blank features, and then answered, a little haughtily:

"Kitchokema[7] plans all, and gives his red brother all the danger; but Peshewa is brave, and fears not."

"And do you think it's through fear?" asked Girty, angrily.

"Peshewa makes no charges against his brother," answered Wild-cat, quietly.

"Perhaps it is as well he don't," rejoined Girty, in an under tone, knitting his brows; and then quickly added: "Come, Peshewa, let us move; for while we tarry, we are giving time to our white foes."

Thus ended the conference; and in a few minutes after the whole party was in motion. Following the course of the waters down to the base of the hills, they came to a sloping hollow of some considerable extent, where the stream ran shallow over a smooth, beautiful bed. Into this latter the whole company now entered, for the purpose of breaking the trail, as previously arranged by Girty; and here they divided, according to his former plan also.

If the unhappy prisoners regretted meeting one another in distress, their parting regrets were an hundred fold more poignant; for to them it seemed evidently the last time they would ever behold on earth each others faces; and this thought alone was enough to dim the eyes of Ella and her adopted mother with burning tears, and shake their frames with heart-rending sobs of anguish; while the old man and Algernon, though both strove to be stoical, could not look on unmoved to a similar show of grief. Since their meeting, the captives had managed to converse together sufficiently to learn the manner of each

others capture, and give each other some hope of being successfully followed and released by their friends; but now, when they saw the caution displayed by their enemies in breaking



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the trail, they began to fear for the result. Just before entering the stream, they passed through a cluster of bushes that skirted the river's bank; and Ella, the only prisoner whose hands were unbound, by a quick and sly movement succeeded in detaching a portion of her dress, which she there left as a sign to those who might follow, that she was still alive, and so encourage them to proceed, in case they were about to falter and turn back.

The separation being now speedily effected, the two parties were quickly lost to each other—Girty and his band going down the bed of the stream some two hundred yards before touching the bank; and the others, headed by Wild-cat, going up about half that distance.

Leaving each to their journey, let us now return to the band already in pursuit.

[Footnote 5: Some historians have stated that the Indians here alluded to were Mingoes, and *not* Senecas; and that they were a remnant of the celebrated Logan's tribe.]

[Footnote 6: Sometimes Big Knife—first applied to the Virginians by the Indians.]

[Footnote 7: Great Chief—a term sometimes given to Girty by the Indians.]

CHAPTER IX.

THE PURSUERS.

About a hundred yards from where Boone and his young companions set forth, the dog, which was running along before them, paused, and with his nose to the ground, set up a fierce bark. When arrived at the spot, the party halted, and perceived the body of an Indian, slightly covered with earth, leaves, and a few dry bushes. Hastily throwing off the covering from his head, they discovered hideous features, wildly distorted by the last throes of death, and bloody from a wound in his forehead made by a ball. His scalp had been taken off also, by those who buried him—from fear, probably, that he would be found by enemies, and this secured as a trophy—a matter of disgrace which the savage, under all circumstances, ever seeks to avoid, both for himself and friends.

“Well done, Master Reynolds!” observed Boone, musingly, spurning the body with his foot, turning away, and resuming his journey: “You’re a brave young man; and I’ll bet my life to a bar-skin, did your best under the circumstances; and if it’s possible, we’ll do somewhat for you in return.”



“Well, ef he arn’t a brave chap—that thar same Algernon Reynolds—then jest put it down as how Isaac Younker don’t know nothing ’bout faces,” returned the individual in question, in reply to Boone. “I never seed a man with his fore’ed and eye as would run from danger when a friend war by wanting his sarvice.”

“Ay, he is indeed a clever youth!” rejoined Boone.

“Well, Colonel, he’s all that,” again returned Isaac; “and I’ll al’ays look ‘pon’t in the light o’ a sarvice, that you jest placed him in my hands, when he war wounded; for to do sech as him a kindness, al’ays carries along its own reward. And Ella—my poor, sweet cousin, as war raised up in good sarcumstances, and lost her all—she too I reckon feels kind o’ grateful to you, Colonel, besides.”

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“As how?” asked Boone.

“Why, I don’t know’s it’s exactly right for me to tell as how,” replied Isaac, shrewdly, who was fearful of saying what Ella herself might wish kept a secret.

“I understand ye,” said Boone, in a low tone, heard only by Isaac; and the subject was then changed for one more immediately connected with their present journey.

In the course of conversation that followed, it was asked of Boone how he chanced to be in the vicinity, and learned of the calamity that had befallen Algernon and Ella, before any of the others; to which he replied, by stating that he was on his way from Boonesborough to Bryan’s Station, and coming into the path just above the ravine, had been indebted to his noble brute companion for the discovery—a circumstance which raised Caesar in the estimation of the whole party to a wonderful degree. Nor was this estimation lessened by the conduct of Caesar himself in the present instance; for true to his training, instinct, and great sagacity, he led them forward at a rapid pace, and seemed possessed of reasoning powers that would have done no discredit to an intelligent human being. One instance in point is worthy of note. In passing through a dense thicket on the Indian trail, the noble brute discovered a small fragment of ribbon, which he instantly seized in his mouth, and, turning back to his master, came up to him, wagging his tail, with a look expressive of joy, and dropped it at his feet. On examination it was recognized as a detached portion of a ribbon worn by Ella; and this little incident gave great animation and encouragement to the party—as it proved that she at least was yet alive, and had a hope of being followed by friends.

Some two hours from their leaving the ravine, they came to the dark pass, where we have seen the meeting between the two Indian parties. Here our pursuers halted a few minutes to examine the ground, and form conjectures as to what had taken place—in doing which, all paid the greatest deference to the opinions and judgment of Boone, who was looked upon by all who knew him as a master of the woodman’s craft.

After gazing intently for some time at the foot prints, Boone informed his companions that another party had been in waiting, had been joined by the others, and that all had proceeded together down the stream; and moreover, that there was an addition of white prisoners, one of which was a child. This caused a great sensation among his listeners—many of whom had lost their relatives, as the reader already knows—and Hope, the cheering angel, which hovers around us on our pathway through life, began to revive in each breast, that the friends they were mourning as dead, might still be among the living, and so made them more eager than ever to press on to the rescue.

At the river’s bank, the sagacious Caesar discovered another piece of ribbon—dropped there as the reader knows by Ella—which he carried in triumph to his master, and received in turn a few fond caresses.

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“Here,” said Boone, as himself and companions entered the streamlet, whose clear, bright waters, to the depth of some three inches, rolled merrily over a smooth bed, with a pleasing murmur: “Here, lads, I reckon we’ll have difficulty; for the red varmints never enter a stream for nothing; and calculating pretty shrewdly they’d be followed soon, no doubt they’ve taken good care to puzzle us for the trail. Ef it be as I suspect, we’ll divide on the other side, and a part o’ us go up, and a part down, till we come agin upon thar track. But then agin,” added Boone, musingly, with a troubled expression, “it don’t follow, that because they entered the stream they crossed it; and it’s just as likely they’ve come out on the same side they went in; so that we’ll have to make four divisions, and start on the sarch.”

Accordingly on reaching the other shore, and finding the trail was lost, Boone divided the party—assigning each his place—and separating, six of them recrossed the stream; and dividing again, two, headed by Isaac, went up, and two, led by Henry Millbanks, went down along the bank; while Boone and Seth Stokes, with the rest, proceeded in like manner on the opposite side; and the dog flew hither and yon, to render what service he could also. For something like a quarter of an hour not the least trace of the savages could be found, when at last the voice of Isaac was heard shouting:

“I’ve got it—I’ve got it! Here it is, jest as plain and nateral as cornstalks—Hooray!”

In a few minutes the whole company was gathered around Isaac, who pointed triumphantly to his discovery.

“That’s the trail, sure enough,” observed Boone, bending down to scan it closely; “and rather broad it is too. It’s not common for the wily varmints to do thar business in so open a manner, and I suspicion it’s done for some trickery. Look well to your rifles, lads, and be prepared for an ambush in yon thicket just above thar, while I look carefully along this, for a few rods, just to see ef I can make out thar meaning. They’ve spread themselves here considerable,” continued the old hunter, after examining the trail a few minutes in silence; “but ef they think to deceive one that has been arter ’em as many times as I, they’ve made quite a mistake; for I can see clean through their tricks, as easy as light comes through greased paper.”

“What discovery have you made now?” inquired young Millbanks, who, together with the others, pressed eagerly around Boone to hear his answer.

“Why I’ve diskivered what I war most afeard on,” answered the woodsman. “I’ve diskivered that the varmints have divided, for the sake of giving us trouble, or leading us astray from them as they cares most about. See here!” and bending down to the ground, Boone pointed out to his young companions, many of whom were entirely ignorant of that ingenious art of wood-craft, whereby the experienced hunter knows his safety or danger in the forest as readily as the sailor knows his on the ocean, and which appears to the uninitiated like a knowledge superhuman—Boone pointed out to them,

we say, three distinct foot prints, which he positively asserted were neither made by the Indians nor the captives of the ravine.



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“But I’d jest like to know, Colonel Boone, how you can be so sartin o’ what you declar, ef it would’nt be for putting you to too much trouble,” said one of the party, in surprise.

“Obsarve,” replied Boone, who, notwithstanding it would cause some little delay, was willing to gratify his young friends, by imparting to them what information he could regarding an art so important to frontier life: “Obsarve that print thar (pointing with his finger to the largest one of the three;) now that war never made by Master Reynolds, for it’s much too big; and this I know from having got the dimension o’ his track afore I left the ravine to trail him; and I know it war never made by one o’ the red heathen, for it arn’t, the shape o’ thar feet,; and besides, you’ll notice how the toe turns out’ard from the heel—a thing an Indian war never guilty on—for they larn from children to tread straight forward. The next one you’ll obsarve turns out in like manner; and though it’s smaller nor the first, it arn’t exactly the shape of Reynold’s, and it’s too big for Ella’s; and moreover I opine it’s a woman’s—though for the matter o’ that I only guess at it. The third you perceive is the child’s; and them thar three are the only ones you can find that arn’t Indian’s. Now note agin that the trail’s spread here, and that here and thar a twig’s snapped on the bushes along thar way; which the red-skins have done a purpose to make thar course conspicuous, to draw thar pursuers on arter ’em, prehaps for an ambush, prehaps to keep them from looking arter the others.”

“In this perplexity what are we to do?” inquired young Millbanks.

“Why,” answered Boone, energetically, “Heaven knows my heart yearns to rescue all my fellow creators who’re in distress; but more particularly, prehaps, them as I know’s desarving; and as I set out for Master Reynolds, and his sweet companion, Ella Barnwell, God bless her! I somehow reckon it’s my duty to follow them—though I leave the rest o’ ye to choose for yourselves. Ef you want to divide, and part go this trail and part follow me, mayhap it’ll be as well in the end.”

This plan seemed the best that could be adopted under the circumstances; and after some further consultation among themselves, it was finally agreed that Isaac, with six others—two of whom were Switcher and Stokes—should proceed on the present trail; while Millbanks and the remainder should accompany Boone. Isaac was chosen as the most suitable one to lead his party, on account of his foresight and shrewdness, and, withal, some little knowledge which he possessed of the country and the woodsman’s art, previously gained in a tour with his father, when seeking a location, together with an expedition of considerable extent shortly after made with Boone himself.

To him, as the leader, the noble old hunter now turned, and in a brief manner imparted some very important advice, regarding his mode of proceeding under various difficulties, particularly cautioned him against any rash act, and concluded by saying, “Wharsomever or howsomever you may be fixed, Isaac, and you his companions, (addressing the young men by his side) don’t never forget the injunction o’ Daniel

Boone, your friend, that you must be cool, steady and firm; and whensomever you fire at a painted varmint, be sure you don't throw away your powder!"

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He then proceeded to shake hands with each, bidding them farewell and God speed, in a manner so earnest and touching as to draw tears from many an eye unused to the melting mood. The parting example of Boone was now imitated by the others, and in a few minutes both divisions had resumed their journey.

Dividing his party again as before, Boone proceeded with them to examine closely both banks of the stream for the other trail. Commencing where they had left off on the announcement of Isaac, they moved slowly downward, taking due note of every bush, leaf and blade as they went along—often pausing and bending on their knees, to observe some spot more minutely, where it seemed probable their enemies had withdrawn from the water. Caesar, too, apparently comprehending the object of their search, ran to and fro, snuffing at every thing he saw, sometimes with his nose to the ground and sometimes elevated in the air. At length he gave a peculiar whine, at a spot about twenty yards below that which had been reached by his master, on the side opposite Isaac's discovery; and hastening to him, Boone immediately communicated to the others the cheering intelligence that the trail had been found.

Each now hurrying forward, the old hunter was soon joined by his young friends; not one of whom, on coming up, failed to express surprise that he should be so positive of what their eyes gave them not the least proof. The place where they were now assembled, was at the base of a hill, which terminated the flat or hollow in that direction, and turned the stream at a short bend off to the left, along whose side its waters ran for some twenty yards, when the arm projection of the ridge ended, and allowed it to turn and almost retrace its path on the opposite side—thus forming an elliptical bow. At the point in question, rose a steep bank of rocks, of limestone formation, against which the stream, during the spring and fall floods had rolled its tide to a height of six or eight feet; and had lodged there, from time to time, various sorts of refuse—such as old leaves, branches and roots of trees, and the like encumbrances to the smooth flow of its waters. On these rocks it was that the eyes of the party were now fixed; while their faces exhibited expressions of astonishment, that the old hunter should be able to distinguish marks of a recent trail, where they could perceive nothing but the undisturbed surface of what perhaps had been ages in forming.

“And so, lads, you don't see no trail thar, eh?” said Boone, with a quiet smile, after having listened to various observations of the party, during which time he had been carelessly leaning on his rifle.

“Why, I must confess I can see nothing of the kind,” answered Henry.

“Nor I,” rejoined another of the party.

“Well, ef thar be any marks o' a trail here, jest shoot me with red pepper and salt, ef ever I'm cotched bragging on my eyes agin,” returned a third.



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“That thar observation’ll hold good with me too” uttered a fourth.

“Here’s in,” said the fifth and last.

“You’re all young men, and have got a right smart deal to larn yet,” resumed Boone, “ afore you can be turned out rale genuine woodsmen and hunters. Now mark that thar small pebble stone, that lies by your feet on the rock. Ef you look at it right close, you’ll perceive that on one side on’t the dirt looks new and fresh—which proves it’s jest been started from its long quietude. Now cast your eyes a little higher up, agin yon dirt ridge which partly kivers them thar larger stones, and you’ll see an indent that this here pebble stone just fits. Now something had to throw that down, o’ course; and ef you’ll just look right sharp above it, you’ll see a smaller dent, that war made by the toe of some human foot, in getting up the bank. Agin you’ll observe that thar dry twig, just above still, has been lately broke, as ef by the person war climbing up taking hold on’t for assistance; but that warn’t the reason the climber broke it—it war done purposely; as you’ll see by the top part being bent up the hill, as ef to point us on. By the Power that made me!” added Boone, gazing for a moment at the broken twig intently, “ef I arn’t wondrously mistaken, thar’s a leaf hanging to it in a way nater never fixed it.”

“Right, there is!” cried Henry, who, looking up with, the rest, chanced to observe it at the same moment with Boone; and springing forward with a light bound, he soon reached the spot, and returned with it in his hand. It was a fall leaf, which had been fastened in a hasty manner to the twig in question, by a pin through its center. On one side of it was scrawled, in characters difficult to be deciphered:

“Follow—fast—for the love of Heaven!—E.”

As Millbanks, after looking at it closely, read off these words, Boone started, clutched his rifle with an iron grasp, and merely saying, in a quiet manner, “Onward, lads—I trust you’re now satisfied!” he sprang up the rocks with an agility that threatened to leave his young companions far in the rear.

All now pressed forward with renewed energy; and having gained the summit of the hill, which here rose to the height of eighty feet, they were enabled, by the aid of Caesar, to come quickly upon the trail of the Indians, who, doubtless supposing themselves now safe from pursuit, had taken little or no pains to conceal their course. Of this their pursuers now took advantage, and hurried onward with long and rapid strides; now through thick dark woods and gloomy hollows; now up steep hills and rocky barren cliffs; now through tangles and over marshy grounds—clearing all obstacles that presented themselves with an ease which showed that notwithstanding some of them might be inferior as woodsmen, none were at all events as travelers in the woods.



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By noon the party had advanced some considerable distance, and were probably not far in the rear of the pursued—at least such was the opinion of Boone—when they were again, to their great vexation, put at fault for the trail, by the cunning of the renegade, who, to prevent all accidents, had here once more broken it, by entering another small streamlet—a branch of Eagle river; and although our friends set to with all energy and diligence to find it, yet, from the nature of the ground round about, the darkness of the wood through which the rivulet meandered, and several other causes, they were unable to do so for three good hours.

This delay tended not a little to discourage the younger members of our pursuing party, who, in consequence, began to be low spirited, and less eager than before to press forward when the trail was again found; but a few words from Boone in a chiding manner, telling them that if they faltered at every little obstacle, they would be unfit representatives of border life, served to stimulate them to renewed exertions. To add to the discomfort of all—not excepting Boone himself—the sun, which had thus far shone out warm and brilliant, began to grow more and more dim, as a thick haze spread through the atmosphere overhead, foretoking an approaching storm—an event which might prove entirely disastrous to their hopes, by obliterating all vestiges of the pursued. As the gallant old hunter moved onward with rapid strides—preceded by the faithful brute, which, on the regular trail, greatly facilitated their progress, by saving the company a close scrutiny of their course—he from time to time cast his eyes upward and noted the thickening atmosphere with an anxious and troubled expression.

For some time the sun shone faintly; then his rays became entirely obscured, and his position could only be discerned by a bright spot in the heavens; this, ere he reached the horizon, became obscured also; when the old hunter, who had watched every sign closely, looking anxiously toward the west, observed:

“I don’t like it, lads; thar’s a storm a brewing for sartin, and we shall be drenched afore to-morrow morning. Howsomever,” he continued, “it arn’t the wetting as I cares any thing about—for I’m used to the elements in all thar stages, and don’t fear ’em no more’n a dandy does a feather bed—but the trail will be lost, in arnest this time; and then we’ll have to give in, or follow on by guess work. It’s this as troubles me; for I’m fearful poor Ella and Reynolds won’t get succor in time. But keep stout hearts, lads,” he added, as he noticed gloomy expressions sweep over the faces of his followers; “keep stout hearts—don’t get melancholy; for in this here world we’ve got to take things as we find ’em; and no doubt this storm’s all for the best, ef we could only see ahead like into futurity.”



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With this consoling reflection the hunter again quickened his pace, and pressed forward until the shadows of evening warned him to seek out an encampment for the gathering night. Accordingly, sweeping the adjoining country with an experienced eye, his glance soon rested on a rocky ridge, some quarter of a mile to the right, at whose base he judged might be found a comfortable shelter from the coming rain. Communicating his thoughts to his companions, all immediately quitted the trail and advanced toward it, where they arrived in a few minutes, and found, to their delight, that the experienced woodsman had not been wrong in his conjectures. A cave of no mean dimensions was fortunately discovered, after a short search among the rocks, into which all now gathered; and striking a light, they made a small fire near the entrance; around which they assembled and partook of the refreshments brought with them—Boone declaring he had not tasted a morsel of food since leaving Boonsborough early in the morning. The meal over, the young men disposed themselves about the cave in the best manner possible for their own comfort: and being greatly fatigued by their journey, and the revels of the night previous, they very soon gave evidence of being in a sleep too deep for dreams. Boone sat by the fire, apparently in deep contemplation, until a few embers only remained; then pointing Caesar to his place near the entrance, he threw himself at length upon the ground, and was soon imitating the example of his young comrades.

Early in the evening it came on to blow very hard from the east; and about midnight set in to rain, as Boone had predicted; which it continued to do the rest of the night; nor were there any signs of its abatement, when the party arose to resume their journey on the following morning.

“What can’t be cured must be endured,” said Boone, quoting an old proverb, as he gazed forth upon the storm. “We must take sech as comes, lads, without grumbling; though I do’nt know’s thar’s any sin in wishing it war a little more to our liking. Howsomever,” he added, “prehaps it won’t be so much agin us arter all; for the red varmints mayhap ’ll think as how all traces of ’em have been washed away, and, feeling safe from pursuit, be less cautious about their proceedings; and by keeping on the same course, we may chance upon ’em unawares. So come, lads, let’s eat and be off.”

Accordingly, making a hasty breakfast, and securing the remainder of their provision as well as ammunition in the ample bosoms of their hunting frocks—which were always made large for such and similar purposes—tightening the belts about their bodies, and placing their rifles, locks downward, under the ample skirts of their frocks, to shield them from the rain, the whole party sallied forth upon their second day’s adventure. Regaining the spot they had quitted the evening before, Boone took a long look in the direction whence they first approached; and then shaping his course so as to bear as near as possible on a direct line with it, set forward at a quick pace, going a very little west of due north.



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In this manner our pursuers continued their journey for some three or four hours, scarcely exchanging a syllable—the storm beating fiercely against their faces and drenching their bodies—when an incident occurred of the most alarming kind.

They had descended a hill, and were crossing an almost open plain of some considerable extent—which was bounded on the right by a wood, and on the left by a cane-brake—and had nearly gained its center, when they were startled by a deep rumbling sound, resembling the mighty rushing of a thousand horse. Nearer and nearer came the rushing sound; while each one paused, and many a pale face was turned with an anxious, inquiring glance upon Boone; whose own, though a shade paler than usual, was composed in every feature, as he gazed, without speaking, in the direction whence the noise proceeded.

“Good heavens! what is it?” cried Henry, in alarm.

“Behold!” answered Boone, pointing calmly toward the cane-brake.

A cry of surprise, despair and horror, escaped every tongue but the old hunter’s—as, at that moment, a tremendous herd of buffaloes, numbering thousands, was seen rushing from the brake, and bearing directly toward the spot where our party stood. Escape by flight was impossible; for the animals were scarcely four hundred yards distant, and booming forward with the speed of the frightened wild horse of the prairie. Nothing was apparent but speedy death, and in its most horrible form, that of dying unknown beneath the hoofs of the wild beasts of the wilderness. In this awful moment of suspense, which seemingly but preceded the disuniting of soul and body, each of the young men turned a breathless look of horror upon the old hunter, such as landsmen in a terrible gale at sea would turn upon the commander of the vessel; but, save an almost imperceptible quiver of the lips, not a muscle of the now stern countenance of Boone changed.

“Merciful Heaven!—we are lost!” cried Henry, wildly. “Oh! such a death!”

“Every man’s got to die when his time comes—but none afore; and yourn hasn’t come yet, Master Harry,” replied Boone, quietly; “unless,” he added, a moment after, as he raised his rifle to his eye, “Betsey here’s forgot her old tricks.”

As he spoke, his gun flashed, a report followed, and one of the foremost of the herd, an old bull, which had gained a point within a hundred yards of the marksman, stumbled forward and rolled over on the earth, with a loud bellow of pain. His companions, which were pressing close behind, snorted with fear, as they successively came up; and turning aside, on either hand, made a furrow in their ranks; that, gradually widening as they advanced, finally cleared our friends by a space of twenty yards; and so passed they on, making the very earth tremble under their mighty tread.[8]



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It was a sublime sight—to behold such a tremendous caravan of wild beasts rushing past—and one that filled each of the spectators, even when they knew all danger was over, with a sense of trembling awe; and they stood and gazed in silence, until the last of the herd was lost to their vision; then advancing to the noble hunter, Henry silently grasped his hard, weather-beaten hand, and turned away with tearful eyes—an example that was followed by each of the others, and which was more heart touchingly expressive of their feelings, than would have been a vocabulary of appropriate words.

Our party next proceeded to examine the wounded bull, which was still bellowing with rage and pain; and having carefully approached and despatched him with their knives, they found that the ball of Boone had entered a vital part. Taking from him a few slices of meat, to serve them in case their provisions ran short, they once more resumed their journey—the wind still easterly and the storm raging.

About three hours past noon the storm began to show signs of abatement—the wind blew less hard, and had veered several points to the north—an event which the old hunter noted with great satisfaction. They had now gained a point within ten miles of the beautiful Ohio; when the dog—which, since he had had no trail to guide him, ran where he chose—commenced barking spiritedly, some fifty paces to the left of the party, who immediately set off at a brisk gait to learn the cause.

“I’ll wager what you dare, lads, the pup’s found the trail,” said Boone.

The event proved him in the right; for on coming up, the footsteps of both captors and captives, who had evidently passed there not over three hours before, could be distinctly traced in the soft earth. A shout—not inferior in power and duration to that set up by crazy-headed politicians, on the election of some favorite—was sent away to the hills, announcing the joy of our party; which the hills, as if partakers also of the hilarious feelings, in turn duly echoed.

This new, important, and unexpected discovery, raised the spirits of all our company to a high degree; and they again set forward at a faster gait than ever, so as to overtake the pursued if possible before they crossed the Ohio river. The trail was now broad and distinct; and the footprints of the Indians, as also those of their captives, Algernon and Ella, could be clearly defined wherever the ground chanced to be of a clayey nature. In something like two hours our pursuers succeeded in reaching the river; but unfortunately too late to intercept their enemies and rescue their friends, who had already crossed sometime before. By trailing them to the water’s edge, they discovered the very spot where the canoes of the savages had been secreted on the beach, behind some drift-logs, nearly opposite the mouth of the Great Miami.

“Ef we’d only been here a little sooner,” observed Boone, musingly, “we’d ha’ saved some o’ the varmints the trouble of paddling over thar; or ef we only had the means o’ crossing now, we’d be upon ’em afore they war aware on’t. Howsomever, as it is, I

suppose we'll have to make a raft to cross on, and so give the red heathen a little more time."



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“Is it not possible, Colonel,” answered Millbanks, in a suggestive way, “that the Indians, forming the two parties, may all be of the game tribe, and have crossed here together, when they came over to make the attack? and that the boats of the other division, unless they have recrossed, may still be secreted not far hence?”

“By the Power that made me!” exclaimed Boone, energetically; “a good thought, lad—a good thought, Master Harry—and we’ll act on’t at once, by sarching along the banks above here; for as the other varmints took off to the east, it am’t improbable they’ve just steered a little round about, to come down on ’em, while these went right straight ahead.”

At once proceeding upon this suggestion, Boone and his companions commenced a close examination along the shore; which finally resulted in their finding, as had been premised, not the canoes themselves, but traces of where they had recently been, together with the trail of the other party, who had also arrived at this point and crossed over. This caused no little sensation among our pursuers; who, scanning the footprints eagerly, and perceiving thereby that the prisoners were still along with their captors, scarcely knew whether most to grieve or rejoice. One thing at least was cheering—they were still alive; and could their friends, the present party, succeed in crossing the river during the night, might be rescued. But where was Isaac and his band, was the next important query. If, as they ardently hoped, he and his comrades had not lost the trail, they might be expected to join them soon—a reinforcement which would render them comparatively safe.

Meantime the storm had wholly subsided—the wind blew strong and cold from the northwest—a few broken, dripping clouds sailed slowly onward—while the sun, a little above the horizon, again shone out clear and bright, and painted a beautiful bow on the cloudy ground of the eastern heavens.

“Well, lads, the storm’s over, thank God!” said Boone, glancing upward, with an expression of satisfaction; “and now, as day-light’ll be scarce presently, we’ll improve what there is, in constructing a raft to cross over on; and maybe Isaac and the rest on ’em will join us in time to get a ride.”

As the old hunter concluded, he at once applied himself to laying out such drift logs as were thought suitable for the purpose, in which he was assisted by three of the others, the remaining two proceeding into the bushes to cut withes for binding them together; and so energetic and diligent was each in his labors, that, ere twilight had deepened into night, the rude vessel was made, launched, and ready to transport its builders over the waters. They now resolved to take some refreshment, and wait until night had fully set in, in the faint hope that Isaac might possibly make his appearance. With this intent, our party retired up the bank, into the edge of the wood that lined the shore, for the purpose of kindling a fire, that they might dry their garments, and roast some portions of the slaughtered bull.



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Scarcely had they succeeded, after several attempts, in effecting a bright, ruddy blaze—which threw from their forms, dark, fantastic shadows, against the earth, trees and neighboring bushes—when Caesar uttered a low, deep growl; and Boone, grasping his rifle tightly, motioned his companions to follow him in silence into an adjoining thicket. Here, after cautioning them to remain perfectly quiet, unless they heard some alarm, he carefully parted the bushes, and glided noiselessly away, saying, in a low tone, as he departed:

“I rather ’spect it’s Isaac; but I’d like to be sartin on’t, afore I commit myself.”

For some five or ten minutes after the old hunter disappeared, all was silent, save the crackling of the fire, the rustling of the leaves, the sighing of the wind among the trees, and the rippling of the now swollen and muddy waters of the Ohio. At length the sound of a voice was heard some fifty paces distant, followed immediately by another in a louder tone.

On hearing this, our friends in the thicket rushed forward, and were soon engaged in shaking the hands of Isaac and his comrades, with a heartiness on both sides that showed the pleasure of meeting was earnest, and unalloyed.

As more important matters are now pressing hard upon us, and as our space is limited, we shall omit the detail of Isaac’s adventures, as also the further proceedings of both parties for the present, and substitute a brief summary.

The trail on which Isaac and his party started the day before, being broad and open, they had experienced but little difficulty in following it, until about noon, when they reached a stream where it was broken, which caused them some two hours delay. This, doubtless, prevented them from overtaking the enemy that day; and the night succeeding, not having found quarters as comfortable as Boone’s, they had been thoroughly soaked with rain. The trail in the morning was entirely obliterated; but pursuing their course in a manner similar to that adopted by Boone, the result had happily been the same, and the meeting of the two parties the consequence, at a moment most fortunate to both.

All now gathered around the fire, to dry their garments, refresh themselves with food, tell over to each other their adventures, and consult as to their future course. It was finally agreed to cross the stream that night; in the hope, by following up the Miami, to stumble upon the encampment of their adversaries; who were, doubtless, at no great distance; and who, as they judged, feeling themselves secure, might easily be surprised to advantage. How they succeeded in their perilous undertaking, coming events must show.

[Footnote 8: A similar occurrence to the above is recorded of Boone’s first appearance in the Western Wilds.—See *Boone’s Life—By Flint*]

CHAPTER X.

THE RENEGADE AND HIS PRISONERS.



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The feelings in the breasts of Algernon and Ella, as they reluctantly moved onward, captives to a savage, bloodthirsty foe, are impossible to be described. To what awful end had fate destined them? and in what place were they to drain the last bitter dregs of woe? How much anguish of heart, how much racking of soul, and how much bodily suffering was to be their portion, ere death, almost their only hope, would set them free? True, they might be rescued by friends—such things had been done—but the probability thereof was as ten to one against them; and when they perceived the care with which the renegade sought to destroy all vestiges of their course, their last gleam of hope became nearly extinguished.

We have previously stated that Ella was left unbound; but wherefore, would perhaps be hard to conjecture; unless we suppose that the renegade—feeling for her that selfish affection which pervades the breasts of all beings, however base or criminal, to a greater or less degree—fancied it would be adding unnecessary cruelty to bind her delicate hands. Whatever the cause, matters but little; but the fact itself was of considerable importance to Ella; who took advantage of her freedom, in passing the bushes before noticed, to snatch a leaf unperceived, whereon, by great adroitness, she managed to trace with a pin a few almost illegible characters; and also, in ascending the bank, which she was allowed to do in her own way, to throw down with her foot the stone, break the twig at the same instant, and pin the leaf to it, in the faint hope that an old hunter might follow on the trail, who, if he came to the spot, would hardly fail to notice it.

The freedom thus given to Ella, and the deference shown her by the renegade and his allies—who appeared to treat her with the same respect they would have done the wife of their chief—were in striking contrast with their manners toward Algernon, on whom they seemed disposed to vent their scorn by petty insults. Believing that his doom was sealed, he became apparently resigned to his fate, nor seemed to notice, save with stoical indifference, any thing that took place around him. This quiet, inoffensive manner, was far from pleasing to Girty, who would much rather have seen him chafing under his bondage, and manifesting a desire to escape its toil. But if this was the outward appearance, not so was the inward feelings of our hero. He knew his fate—unless he could effect an escape, of which he had little hope—and he nerved himself to meet and seem to his captors careless of it; but his soul was already on the rack of torture. This was not for himself alone; for Algernon was a brave man, and in reality feared not death; though, like many another brave man, he had no desire to die at his time of life, especially with all the tortures of the stake, which he knew, from Girty's remark, would be his assignment; but his soul was harrowed at the thought of Ella—her awful doom—and what she might be called upon to undergo: perhaps a punishment a thousand times worse than death—that of being the pretended wife, but in reality the mistress, of the loathsome renegade. This thought to him was torture—almost madness—and it was only by the most powerful struggle with himself, that he could avoid exposing his feelings.



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For a time, after ascending the rocky bank of the stream and gaining the hill, the renegade and his Indian allies, with their captives, moved silently onward at a fast pace; but at length, slackening his speed somewhat, Girty approached the side of Algernon, who was bound in a manner similar to Younker, with his wrists corded to a cross bar behind his back; and apparently examining them a moment or two, in a sneering tone, said:

“How-comes it that the bully fighter of the British, under the cowardly General Gates, should be so tightly bound, away out in this Indian country, and a captive to a *renegade* agent?—ha, ha, ha!”

The pale features of Algernon, as he heard this taunt, grew suddenly crimson, and then more deadly white than ever—his fingers fairly worked in their cords, and his respiration seemed almost to stifle him—so powerfully were his passions wrought upon by the cowardly insults of his adversary; but at last all became calm and stoical again; when turning to Girty, he coolly examined him from head to heel, from heel to head; and then moving away his eyes, as if the sight were offensive to him, quietly said:

“An honest man would be degraded by condescending to hold discourse with so mean a *thing* as Simon Girty the renegade.”

At these words Girty started, as if bit by a serpent—the aspect of his dark sinister features changed to one concentrated expression of hellish rage—his eyes seemed to turn red—his lips quivered—the nostrils of his flat ugly nose distended—froth issued from his mouth—while his fingers worked convulsively at the handle of his tomahawk, and his whole frame trembled like a tree shaken by a whirlwind. For some time he essayed to speak, in vain; but at last he hissed forth, as he whirled the tomahawk aloft:

“Die!—dog!—die!”

Ella uttered a piercing shriek of fear, and sprung forward to arrest the blow; but ere she could have reached the renegade; the axe would have been buried to the helve in the brain of Algernon, had not a tall, powerful Indian suddenly interposed his rifle between it and the victim.

“Is the great chief a child, or in his dotage,” he said to Girty, in the Shawanoe dialect, “that he lets passion run away with his reason? Is not the Big Knife already doomed to the tortures? And would the white chief give him the death of a warrior?”

“No, by ——!” cried Girty, with an oath. “He shall have a dog’s death! Right! Mugwaha—right! I thank you for your interference—I was beside myself. The stake—the torture—the stake—ha, ha, ha!” added he in English, with a hoarse laugh, which his recent passion made sound fiend-like and unearthly; and as he concluded, he smote Algernon on the cheek with the palm of his hand.

The latter winced somewhat, but mastered his feelings and made no reply; and the renegade resuming his former pace, the party again proceeded in silence.

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Toward night, Ella became so fatigued and exhausted by the long day's march, that it was with the greatest difficulty she could move forward at all; and Girty, taking some compassion on her, ordered the party to halt, until a rough kind of litter could be prepared; on which being seated, she was borne forward by four of the Indians. At dark they halted at the base of a hill, where they encamped and found a partial shelter from the wind and rain. At daylight they again resumed their journey; and by four o'clock in the afternoon arrived at the river, which they immediately crossed in their canoes; and, as the water was found in a good stage, did not land until they reached the first bend of the Miami—the place agreed on for the meeting between Girty and Wild-cat.

As the latter chief and his party had not yet made their appearance, Girty and his band went ashore with their prisoners, and took shelter under one of the largest trees in the vicinity, to await their coming. Of this expected meeting, the captives as yet knew nothing; and it was of course not without considerable surprise, mingled with a saddened joy, that they observed the approach, some half an hour later, of their friends and enemies.

Ella, on first perceiving their canoes silently advancing up the stream, started up with a cry of joy, which was the next moment saddened by the thought that she was only welcoming her relatives to a miserable doom. Still it was a joy to know they were yet alive; and as the sinking heart is ever buoyed up with hope, until completely engulfed in the dark billows of despair—so she could not, or would not, altogether banish the animating feeling, that something might yet interfere to save them all from destruction. As the canoes touched the shore, Ella sprung forward to greet her adopted mother and father; but her course was suddenly checked by one of the Indian warriors, who, grasping her somewhat roughly by the arm, with a guttural grunt and fierce gesture of displeasure, pointed her back to her former place. Ella, downcast and frightened, tremblingly retraced her steps, and could only observe the pale faces and fatigued looks of her relatives and the little girl at a distance; but she saw enough to send a thrill of anguish to her heart; and Girty, who perceived the expressions of agony her sweet features now displayed, at once advanced to her, and, modulating his voice somewhat from its usual tones, said:

“Grieve not, Ella. I will endeavor to procure you an interview with your friends.”

The kindness manifested in the tones of the speaker, caused Ella to look up with a start of surprise and hope; and thinking he might perhaps be moved to mercy, by a direct appeal to his better feelings, she replied, energetically, with a flush on her now animated countenance:

“Oh, sir! I perceive you are not lost to all feelings of humanity.” Here the compression of Girty's lips, and a knitting together of his shaggy brows, warned Ella she was treading on dangerous ground, and she quickly added: “All of us are liable to err; and there may be circumstances, unknown to others, that force us to be, or seem to be, that which in

our hearts we are not; and to do acts which our calm moments of reason tell us are wrong, and which we afterwards sincerely regret.”



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"I know not that I understand you," said the renegade, evasively.

"To be more explicit, then," rejoined Ella, "I trust that you, Simon Girty, whose acts hitherto have been such as to draw down reproaches and even curses upon your head, from many of your own race, may now be induced, by the prayer of her before you, to do an act of justice and generosity."

"Speak out your desire!" returned Girty, as Ella, evidently fearful of broaching the subject too suddenly, paused, in order to observe the effect of what had already been said. "Speak out briefly, girl; for yonder stands Wild-cat awaiting me."

"Oh, then, let me implore you to listen, and God grant your heart may be touched by my words!" rejoined Ella, eagerly, as she fancied she saw something of relentment in his stern features. "Look yonder! Behold that poor old man!—whose head is already sprinkled with the silvery threads of over fifty winters—beside whom stands the companion of his sorrows—both of whose lives have been spent in quiet, honest pursuits—whose doors have ever stood open—whose board has ever been free to the needy wayfarer. You yourself have been a partaker of their hospitality, in their own home—which, alas! I have since learned is in ashes—and can testify to their liberality and kindness. Is this a proper return therefor, think you?"

"But did not he, yon gray-headed man, then and there curse me to my face?" returned the renegade, fiercely, in whose eye could be seen the cold, sullen gleam of deadly hate; "and shall I, the outcast of my race—I, whose deeds have made the boldest tremble—I, whose name is a by-word for curses—now spare him, that has defied and called down God's maledictions on me?"

"Oh, yes! yes!" cried Ella, energetically. "Convince him, by your acts of generosity, that you are not deserving of his censure, and he, I assure you, will be eager to do you justice. Oh, return good for evil, where evil has been done you, and God's blessing, instead of His curse, will be yours!"

"It may be the *Christian's* creed to return good for evil," answered Girty, with a strong emphasis on the word *Christian*, accompanied with a sneer; "but by ——! such belongs not to me, nor to those I mate with! Hark you, Ella Barnwell! I could be induced to do much for you—for I possess for you a passion stronger than I have ever before felt for any human being—but were I ever so much disposed to grant your request, it is now beyond my power."

"As how?" asked Ella, quickly.

"Listen! I will tell you briefly. When first I saw, I felt I loved you, and from that moment resolved you should be mine. Nay, do not shudder so, and turn away, and look so pale—a worse fate than being the wife of a British agent might have been apportioned you.

To win you by fair words, I knew at once was out of the question—for one glance showed me my rival. Besides, I was not handsome, I knew—had not an oily tongue,



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and did not like the plan of venturing too much among those who have good reasons for fearing and hating me—therefore I resolved on your capture. I had already meditated an attack on some of the settlers in the vicinity, and I resolved that both should be accomplished at one time. The result you know. Younker and his wife became my prisoners. This was done for two purposes. First, to revenge me for the insults heaped upon Simon Girty. Secondly, to spare their lives; for had it not been for my positive injunctions, they would have shared the fate of their neighbors. My design, I say, was to spare their lives and send them back, whenever it could be done with safety, provided they showed any signs of contrition. Did they? No! they again upbraided me to my face. I was again cursed. My blood is hot—my nature revengeful. That moment sealed their doom. I gave them up to Peshewa. They are no longer my prisoners. For their lives you must plead with him. I can do nothing. Have you more to ask?”

Girty, toward the last, spoke rapidly, in short sentences, as one to whom the conversation was disagreeable; and Ella listened breathlessly, with a pale cheek and trembling form; for she saw, alas! there was nothing favorable to be gained. As he concluded, she suddenly started, clasped her hands together, and looked up into his stern countenance, with a wild, thrilling expression, saying, in a trembling voice:

“You have said you love me!”

“I repeat it.”

“Then, for Heaven’s sake! as you are a human being, and hope for peace in this world and salvation in the next—restore me—restore us all to our homes—and to my dying day will I bless and pray for you.”

“Umph!” returned the renegade, drily; “I had much rather *hear* your sweet voice, though in anger, than to merely *think* you may be praying for me at a distance. But I see Wild-cat is getting impatient;” and as he concluded, he turned abruptly on his heel, and advanced to Peshewa—who was now standing with his warriors and prisoners on the bank of the stream, some fifty paces distant, awaiting a consultation with him—while Ella hid her face in her hands and wept convulsively.

“Welcome, Peshewa!” said Girty, as he approached the chief. “You and your band are here safe, I perceive; and by ——! you have timed it well, too, for we have only headed you by half an hour.”

“Ugh!” grunted Wild-cat, with that look and guttural sound peculiar to the Indian. “Kitchokema has learned Peshewa is here!”



“Come! come!” answered the renegade, in a somewhat nettled manner; “no insinuations! I saw Peshewa when he arrived.”

“But could not leave the Big Knife squaw to greet him,” added the Indian.

“Why, I am not particularly fond of being hurried in my affairs, you know.”

“But there may be that which will not leave Kitchokema slow to act, in safety,” rejoined Wild-cat, significantly.



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“How, chief! what mean you?” asked Girty, quickly.

“The Shemanoes—”[9]

“Well?” said Girty.

“Are on the trail,” concluded Wild-cat, briefly.

“Ha!” exclaimed the renegade, with a start, involuntarily placing his hand upon the breech of a pistol in his girdle. “But are you sure, Peshewa?”

“Peshewa speaks only what he knows,” returned the chief, quietly.

“Speak out, then—*how* do you know?” rejoined Girty, in an excited tone.

“Peshewa a chief,” answered the Indian, in that somewhat obscure and metaphorical manner peculiar to his race. “He sleeps not soundly on the war-path. He shuts not his eyes when he enters the den of the wolf. He saw the camp-fires of the pale-face.”

Such had been the fact. Knowing that his trail was left broad and open, and that in all probability it would soon be followed, Wild-cat had been diligently on the watch and as his course had been shaped in a roundabout, rather than opposite direction (as the reader might at first glance have supposed) from that taken by Boone, he and his band, by reason of this, had encamped, on the night in question, not half a mile distant from our old hunter, but on the other side of the ridge. Ascending this himself, to note if any signs of an enemy were visible, Peshewa had discovered the light of Boone’s fire, and traced it to its source. Without venturing near enough to expose himself, the wily savage had, nevertheless, gone sufficiently close to ascertain they were the foes of his race. His first idea had been to return, collect a part of his warriors, and attack them; but prudence had soon got the better of his valor; from the fact, as he reasoned, that his band were now in the enemy’s country, where their late depredations had already aroused the inhabitants to vengeance; and he neither knew the force of Boone’s party—for the reader will remember they were concealed in a cave—nor what other of his foes might be in the vicinity;—besides which, his purpose had been accomplished, and he was now on the return with his prisoners;—the whole of which considerations, had decided him to leave them unmolested, and ere daylight resume his journey; so that, even should they accidentally come upon his trail, he would be far enough in advance to reach and cross the river before them. Such was the substance of what Wild-cat, in his own peculiar way, now made known to Girty; and having inquired out the location distinctly, the latter exclaimed:

“By heavens! I remember leaving that ridge away to the right, which proves that the white dogs must have been on my trail. I took pains enough to conceal it before that night; but if they got the better of me, I don’t think they did of the rain that fell afterwards



—so that they have doubtless found themselves on a fool's errand, long ere this, and given up the search. Besides, should they reach the river's bank, they have no means of crossing, and therefore we are safe.”

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Wild-cat seemed to muse on the remarks of Girty, for a moment or two, and then said:

“Why did Mishemenetoc[10] give the chief cunning, but that he might use it against his foes?—why caution, but that he might avoid danger?”

“Why that, of course, is all well enough at times,” answered Girty; “but I don’t think either particular cunning or caution need be exercised now—from the fact that I don’t believe there is any danger. Even should the enemies you saw be fool-hardy enough to follow us, they are not many in number probably, and will only serve to add a few more scalps to our girdles. However, we are safe for to-night, at all events; for if they reach the river, as I said before, they won’t be able to cross, unless they make a raft or swim it; and you may rest assured, Peshewa, they will sleep on the other side, if for nothing else than their own safety.”

“What, therefore, does my brother propose?” asked Wild-cat.

“Why, I am for encamping, as soon as we can find a suitable spot—say within a mile of here—for by ——! I am not only hungry but cold, and my very bones ache, from traveling in this untimely storm, which I perceive is on the point of clearing up.”

“Peshewa likes not sleeping with danger so near,” replied the savage.

“Well, I’m not *afraid*,” rejoined Girty, laying particular stress on the latter word; “and so suppose you take the prisoners, with a part of the band, and go forward, while myself and the balance remain behind to reconnoitre in the morning; for by ——! that will be time enough to look for the lazy white dogs. Yet stay!” he added, a moment after, as if struck by a new thought. “Suppose you take the two Big Knives, and leave the squaws with me—for being very tired, they will only be a drag upon your party—and then you can have the stakes ready for the others, if you get in first, so that we can have the music of their groans to make us merry on our second meeting.”

To this latter proposition, the chief gave a grunt of assent, and the whole matter being speedily arranged, the council ended.

The conversation between these two worthies having been carried on in the Indian dialect, was of course wholly unintelligible to Mrs. Younker and her husband, who were standing near; and trying in vain, for some time, to gain a clue to the discussion, the good lady at last gave evidence, that if her body and limbs were weary, her tongue was not; and that with all the warnings she had received, her old habits of volubility had not as yet been entirely superseded by thoughtful silence.

“I do wonder what on yarth,” she said, “that thar read-headed Simon Girty, and that thar ripscallious old varmint, as calls himself a chief, be coniving at?—and why the pesky



Injens don't let me and Ella and the rest on 'em come together agin, as we did afore?
Thar she stands—the darling—as pale nor a lily, and crying like all nater, jest as if her



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little heart war a going to break and done with it. I 'spect the varmints is hatching some orful plans to put us out o' the way—prehaps to hitch us to the stake and burn us all to cinder, like they did our housen, and them things. Well, Heaven's will be done!—as Preacher Allprayer said, when they turned him out o' meeting for gitting drunk and swearing—the dear good man!—but I do wish, for gracious sake, I could only jest change places with 'em—ef jest for five minutes—and I reckon as how they'd be glad to quit their gibberish, and talk like Christian folks, once in thar sneaking lives! Thar, they're done now, I do hope to all marcy's sake! and I reckons as how we'll soon have the gist on't.”

The foregoing remarks of Mrs. Younker, were made in a low tone, and evidently not intended, like Dickens' Notes, for general circulation—the nearly fatal termination of a former speech of hers, having taught her to be a little cautious in the camp of the enemy. The conclusion was succeeded by a stare of surprise, on being civilly informed by Girty, that she was now at liberty to join Ella as soon as she pleased.

“Well, now, that's something like,” returned the dame, with a smile that was intended to be a complimentary one; “and shows, jest as clear as any thing, that thar is a few streaks o' human nater in you arter all.”

Then, as if fearful the permission would be countermanded, the good lady at once set off in haste to join her adopted daughter. Subsequent events, however, soon changed the favorable opinion Mrs. Younker had began to entertain of Girty—particularly when she discovered, as she imagined, that the liberty allowed her, had only been as a ruse to withdraw her from her husband—who, as she departed, had been immediately hurried away, without so much as a parting farewell.

Orders now being rapidly given by Girty and Wild-cat, were quickly and silently executed by their swarthy subordinates; and in a few minutes, the latter chief was on his way, with four warriors, the two male prisoners, and the little girl—Oshasqua, to whom the latter had been consigned by Girty, as the reader will remember, and who still continued to accompany Wild-cat, refusing to leave her behind.

When informed by Girty, in an authoritative tone, that he must join the detachment of Wild-cat, Algernon turned toward Ella, and in a trembling voice said:

“Farewell, dear Ella! If God wills that we never meet again on earth, let us hope we may in the Land of Spirits;” and ere she, overcome by her emotion, had power to reply, he had passed on beyond the reach of her silvery voice.

Immediately on the departure of Peshewa, Girty ordered the canoes to be drawn ashore and concealed in a thicket near by, where they would be ready in case they should be

wanted for another expedition; and then leading the way himself, the party proceeded slowly up the Miami, for about a mile, and encamped for the night, within a hundred yards of the river.



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[Footnote 9: Americans, or Big Knives. We would remark here, that we have made use altogether of the Shawanoe dialect; that being most common among all the Ohio tribes, save the Wyandots or Hurons, who spoke an entirely different language.]

[Footnote 10: Great Spirit.]

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE RENEGADE.

It was about ten o'clock on the evening in question, and Simon Girty was seated by a fire, around which lay stretched at full length some six or eight dark Indian forms, and near him, on the right, two of another sex and race. He was evidently in some deep contemplation; for his hat and rifle were lying by his side, his hands were locked just below his knees, as if for the purpose of balancing his body in an easy position, and his eyes fixed intently on the flame, that, waving to and fro in the wind, threw over his ugly features a ruddy, flickering light, and extended his shadow to the size and shape of some frightful monster. The clouds of the late storm had entirely passed away, and through the checkered openings in the trees overhead could be discerned a few bright stars, which seemed to sparkle with uncommon brilliancy, owing to the clearness of the atmosphere. All beyond the immediate circle lighted by the fire, appeared dark and silent, save the solemn, almost mournful, sighing of the wind, as it swept among the tree-tops and through the branches of the surrounding mighty forest.

What the meditations of the renegade were, we shall not essay to tell; but doubtless they were of a gloomy nature; for after sitting in the position we have described, some moments, without moving, he suddenly started, unclasped his hands, and looked hurriedly around him on every side, as if half expecting, yet fearful of beholding, some frightful phantom; but he apparently saw nothing to confirm his fears; and with a heavy sigh, he resumed his former position.

What were the thoughts of that dark man, as he sat there?—he whose soul had been steeped in crime!—he whose hands had long been made red with the blood of numberless innocent victims! Who shall say what guilty deeds of the past might have been harrowing up his soul to fear and even remorse? Who shall say he was not then and there meditating upon death, and the dread eternity and judgment that must quickly follow dissolution? Who shall say he was not secretly repenting of that life of crime, which had already drawn down the curses of thousands upon his head? Something of the kind, or something equally powerful, must have been at work within him; for his features ever and anon, by their mournful contortions—if we may be allowed the phrase—gave visible tokens of one in deep agony of mind. It would be no pleasant task to analyze and lay bare the secret workings of so dark a spirit, even had we power to do it; and so we will leave his thoughts, whether good or evil, to himself and his God.



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By his side, and within two feet of the renegade, lay extended the beautiful form of Ella Barnwell—with nothing but a blanket and her own garments between her and the earth—with none but a similar covering over her—with her head resting upon a stone, and apparently asleep. We say apparently asleep; but the drowsy son of Erebus and Nox had not yet closed her eyelids in slumber; for there were thoughts in her breast more potent than all his persuasive arts of forgetfulness, or those of his prime minister, Morpheus. Was she thinking of her own hard fate—away there in that lonely forest—with not a friend nigh that could render her assistance—with no hope of escape from the awful doom to which she was hastening? Or was she thinking of him, for whom her heart yearned with all the thousand, undefined, indescribable sympathies of affection?—of him who so lately had been her companion?—for the heart of love measures duration, not by the cold mathematical calculation of minutes and hours, and days and weeks, and months and years, but by events and feelings; and the acquaintance of weeks may seem the friend of years, and the acquaintance of years be almost forgotten in weeks;—was she thinking of him, we say—of Algernon? who, even in misery, had been torn from her side, had said perchance his last trembling farewell, and gone to suffer a death at which humanity must shudder! Ay, all these thoughts, and a thousand others, were rushing wildly through her feverish brain. She thought of her own fate—of his—of her relations—pictured out in her imagination the terrible doom of each—and her tender heart became wrung to the most excruciating point of agony.

By the side of Ella, was her adopted mother—buried in that troubled sleep which great fatigue sends to the body, even when the mind is ill at ease, filling it with startling visions—and around the fire, as we said before, lay the dusky forms of the savages, lost to all consciousness of the outer world. The position of Ella was such, that, by slightly turning her head, she could command a view of the features of the renegade; whose strange workings, as before noted, served to fix her attention and divide her thoughts between him, as the cause of her present unhappiness, and that unhappiness itself—and she gazed on his loathsome, contorted countenance, with much the same feeling as one might be supposed to gaze upon a serpent coiling itself around the body, whose deadly fangs, either sooner or later, would assuredly give the fatal stroke of death. She noted the sudden start of Girty, and the wildness with which he peered around him, with feelings of hope and fear—hope, that rescue might be at hand—fear, lest something more dreadful was about to happen. At length Girty started again, and turned his head toward Ella so suddenly, that she had not time to withdraw her eyes ere his were fixed searchingly upon them.

“And are you too awake?” he said, with something resembling a sigh. “I thought the innocent could ever sleep!”



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“Not when the guilty are abroad, with deeds of death, and friends exposed,” returned Ella, bitterly.

“Ah! true—true!” rejoined Girty, again looking toward the fire, in a musing mood.

“Well may you muse and writhe under the tortures of your guilty acts,” continued Ella, in the same bitter tone; “for you have much to answer for, Simon Girty.”

“And who told you the past tortured me?” cried Girty, quickly, turning on her a fierce expression.

“Your changing features and guilty starts,” answered Ella.

“Ha! then you have been a spy upon me, have you?” said Girty, pressing the words slowly through his clenched teeth, knitting his shaggy brows, and fixing his eye with intensity upon hers, until she quailed and trembled beneath its seeming fiery glance; which the light, whereby it was seen, rendered more demon-like than usual; while it made shadow chase shadow, like waves of the sea, across his face: “You have been a spy upon my actions, eh? Beware! Ella Barnwell—beware! Do not put your head in the lion’s mouth too often, or he may think the bait troublesome; and by ——! had other than you told me what I just now heard, he or she had not lived to repeat it.”

“Far better an early death and innocence, than a long life of guilt and misery,” returned Ella, at once regaining her boldness of speech; “Far better the fate you speak of, than mine.”

“And would you prefer being wedded to death, rather than me?” asked Girty, quickly, in surprise.

“Ay, a thousand times!” replied Ella, energetically, rising as she spoke, into a sitting posture, and looking fearlessly upon the renegade, her previously pale features now flushed with excitement. “I fear not death, Simon Girty; I have done no act that should make me fear the change that all must sooner or later undergo; but I could not join my hand to that of a man of blood, without loathing and horror, and feeling criminal in the sight of God and man; and least of all to you, Simon Girty, whose name has become a word of terror to the weak and innocent of my race, and whose deeds of late have been such as to make me join my voice in the general maledictions called down upon you.”

During this speech of Ella, Girty sat and gazed upon her with the look of a baffled demon; and, as she concluded, fairly hissed through his teeth:

“And so you would prefer death to me, eh? By ——! you shall have your choice!”

As he spoke, he grasped Ella by the wrist with one hand, seized his tomahawk with the other, and sprung upon his feet. His rapid movement and wild manner now really



frightened her; and uttering a faint cry of horror, she endeavored to release his hold; while the warriors, aroused by the noise, bounded up from the earth, weapon in hand, with looks of alarm.

Turning to them, Girty now spoke a few words in the Indian tongue; and, with significant glances at Ella, they were just in the act of again encamping, when crack went some five or six rifles, followed by yells little less savage than their own, and four of them rolled upon the earth, groaning with pain; while the others, surprised and bewildered, grasped their weapons and shouted:



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“The Shemanoes!” “The Long Knives!” not knowing whether to stand or fly.

Girty, meantime, had been left unharmed; although the shivering of the helve of the tomahawk in his hand, in front of his breast, showed him he had been a target for no mean marksman, and that his life had been preserved almost by a miracle. For a moment he stood irresolute—his nostrils fairly dilated with fear and rage, still holding Ella by the wrist, who was too paralyzed with what she had seen to speak or move—straining his eyes in every direction to note, if possible, the number of his foes and whence their approach. The whole glance was momentary; but he saw himself nearly surrounded by his enemies, who were fast closing in toward the center with fierce yells; and pausing no longer in indecision, he encircled Ella’s waist with his left arm, raised her from the ground, and keeping her as much as possible between himself and his enemies, to deter them from firing, darted away toward a thicket, some fifty yards distant, pursued by two of the attacking party.

Just as Girty gained the thicket, one of his pursuers made a sudden bound forward and grasped him by the arm; but his hold was the next moment shaken off by the renegade, who, being now rendered desperate, drew a pistol from his belt, with the rapidity of lightning, and laid the bold adventurer dead at his feet. Almost at the same moment, Girty received a blow on the back of his head, from the breech of the rifle of his other antagonist, that staggered him forward; when, releasing his hold of Ella, he turned and darted off in another direction, firing a pistol as he went, the ball of which whizzed close to the head of him for whom it was designed; and in a moment more he was lost in the mazes of the forest.

Meantime the bloody work was going forward in the center; for at the moment when Girty darted away, the report of some three or four rifles again echoed through the wood, two more of the red warriors bit the dust, while the other two fled in opposite directions, leaving Boone and his party sole masters of the field.

Eager, excited, reckless and wild, several of the young men now rushed forward, with yells of triumph, to the wounded Indians, whom they immediately tomahawked without mercy, and began to scalp, when the voice of Boone, who had been more cautious, reached them from a distance:

“Beware o’ the fire-light, lads! or the red varmints will draw a bead^[11] on some of ye.”

Scarcely were the words uttered, ere his warning was sadly fulfilled; for the two savages finding they were not pursued, and thirsting for revenge, turned and fired almost simultaneously, with aims so deadly, that one of the young men, by the name of Beecher, fell mortally wounded and expired a moment after; and another, by the name of Morris, had his wrist shattered by a ball. This fatal event produced a panic in the others, who at once fled precipitately into the darkness, leaving Mrs. Younker, who had by this time gained her feet, standing alone by the fire, a bewildered spectator of the



terrible tragedies that had so lately been enacted by her side. To her Boone now immediately advanced, notwithstanding the caution he had given the others; and turning to him as he came up, the good lady exclaimed, in a tone of astonishment:



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“Why, Colonel Boone, be this here you? Why when did you come—and how on yarth did ye git here—and what in the name o’ all creation has been happening? For ye see I war jest dosing away thar by the fire, and dreaming all sorts of things, like all nater, when somehow I kind o’ thought I’d all at once turned into a man and gone to war a rale soldier; and the battle had opened, and the big guns war blazing away, and the little guns war popping off, and the soldiers war shrieking and groaning and falling around me, like all possessed; and men a trampling, and horses a running like skeered deer; and then I sort o’ woke up, and jumped up, and seed all them dead Injen wretches; and then I jest begun to think as how it warn’t no dream at all, but a living truth, all ’cept my being a man and a soldier, as you com’d up. Well, ef this arn’t a queer world,” resumed the good dame, catching breath meanwhile, “as Preacher Allprayer used to say, then maybe as how I don’t know nothing at all about it.”

“Your dream war a very nateral one, Mrs. Younker,” returned Boone, who, during the speech of the other, had been actively employed in scattering the burning brands, to prevent the recurrence of another sad catastrophe; “and I’m rejoiced to see that you’ve escaped unharmed, amid this bloody work. Allow me to set you free;” and as he spoke, he drew his scalping knife, and severed the thongs that bound her wrists.

“Gracious on me!” cried the dame, chafing the parts which had been swollen by the tightness of the cords; “how clever ’tis to get free agin, and have the use o’ one’s hands and tongue, to do and say jest what a body pleases; for d’ye know, Colonel Boone, them tharimps of Satan war awfully afeared o’ my talking to ’em, to convince ’em they war the meanest varmints in the whole univarsul yarth o’ creation; and actually put a peremshus stop to my saying what I thought on ’em; although I told ’em as how it war a liberty as these blessed colonies war this moment fighting for with the hateful red-coated Britishers. But, Lord presarve us! gracious on us! where in marcy’s sake is my dear, darling Ella?” concluded Mrs. Younker, with vehemence and alarm, as she now missed her adopted daughter for the first time.

“She’s here, mother,” answered a voice close behind her; and turning round, the dame uttered a cry of joy, sprung into the arms of her son Isaac, and wept upon his neck—occasionally articulating, in a choked voice:

“God bless you, Isaac! God bless you, son!—you’re a good boy—the Lord’s presarved you through the whole on’t—the Lord be praised!—but your father, poor lad—your father!” and with a strong burst of emotion, she buried her face upon his breast, and wept aloud.

“I know it,” sobbed forth Isaac, his whole frame shaken with the force of his feelings: “I—I know the whole on’t, mother—Ella’s told me. I’d rather he’d bin killed a thousand times; but thar’s no help for it now!”

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“No help for it!” cried Ella in alarm, who, having greeted the old hunter, with tearful eyes, now stood weeping by his side. “No help for it! Heaven have mercy!—say not so! They must—they must be rescued!” Then turning wildly to Boone, she grasped his hand in both of hers, and exclaimed: “Oh! sir, speak! tell me they can be saved—and on my knees will I bless you!”

A few words now rapidly uttered by Isaac, put the old hunter in possession of the facts, concerning the forced march of Younker and Reynolds, of which he had previously heard nothing; and musing on the information a few moments, he shook his head sadly, and said, with a sigh:

“I’m sorry for you, Ella—I’m sorry for all o’ ye—I’m sorry on my own account—but I’m o’ the opinion o’ Isaac, that thar’s no help for it now. They’re too far beyond us—we’re in the Indian country—our numbers are few—two or three o’ the red varmints have escaped to give ’em information o’ what’s been done—they’ll be thirsty for revenge—and nothing but a special Providence can now alter that prisoners’ doom. I had hoped it war to be otherwise; but we must submit to God’s decrees;” and raising his hand to his eyes, the old woodsman hastily brushed away a tear, and turned aside to conceal his emotion; while Ella, overcome by her feelings, at the thought of having parted, perhaps for the last time, from Algernon and her uncle, staggered forward and sunk powerless into the arms of Mrs. Younker, whose tears now mingled with her own.

By this time the whole party had gathered silently around their noble leader, and were observing the sad scene as much as the feeble light of the scattered brands would permit, their faces exhibiting a mournfulness of expression in striking contrast to that they had so lately displayed, previous to the death of their comrade. To them Boone now turned, and running his eye slowly over the whole, said, in a sad voice:

“Well, lads, one o’ our party’s gone to his last account, I perceive,” and he pointed mournfully to the still body of Beecher, some three or four paces distant; “another I see is wounded, and a third’s missing. I hope no harm’s befallen him, the noble Master Harry Millbanks!”

“Alas! he’s dead, Colonel!” answered Isaac, covering his eyes with his hand.

“Dead?” echoed Boone.

“Dead?” cried the others, simultaneously.

“Yes,” rejoined Isaac, with a sigh; “He and I war chasing that thar infernal renegade Girty, who war running away with Ella thar; and he’d jest got up to him, and got him by the arm, when Girty shuk him off like it warn’t nothing at all, and then shot him dead on the spot. Ef he hadn’t a bin quite so quick about it, I think as how it wouldn’t a happened; for the next moment I hit him a rap on the head with the butt-end o’ my rifle,



that sent him a staggering off, and would ha' fetched him to the ground, ef it hadn't first struck a limb. Howsomever, it made him let go o' Ella, and start up a new trail—jest leaving his compliments for me in the shape of a bullet, which, ef it didn't do me no harm, it warn't 'cause he didn't intend it to. I jest stopped to look at poor Harry; and finding he war dead, I took Ella by the hand and come straight down here."



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“Who’s that you said war dead, Isaac?” inquired his mother, who had partially overheard the conversation.

“Harry Millbanks, mother.”

“Harry Millbanks!” repeated the dame in astonishment. “What, young Harry?—our Harry?—Goodness gracious, marcy on me! what orful mean wretches them Injens is, to kill sech as him. Dear me! then the hull family is gone; for I hearn from Rosetta, that her father and mother and all war killed afore her eyes; and now she’s bin taken on to be killed too, the darling.”

“Ha! yes,” said Boone, as if struck with a new thought; “I remember seeing the foot-prints of a child—war they made by this unfortunat young man’s sister?”

“I reckon as how they war,” answered Mrs. Younker; “for the poor thing war a prisoner along with us, crying whensomever she dared to, like all nater.”

“Well,” rejoined the old hunter, musingly, “we’ve done all we could—I’m sorry it didn’t turn out better—but we must now leave their fates in the hands o’ Providence, and return to our homes. We must bury our dead first; and I don’t know o’ any better way than to sink thar bodies in the Ohio.”

Accordingly, after some further conversation, four of the party proceeded for the body of Millbanks—with which they soon returned—while Boone conducted the ladies away from the scene of horror, and down to where Ella informed him the canoes were hidden, leaving his younger companions to rifle and scalp the savages if they chose. In a few minutes from his arrival at the point in question, he was joined by the others, who came slowly, in silence, bearing the mortal remains of Millbanks and Beecher. Placing the canoes in the water, the whole party entered them, in the same silent and solemn manner, and pulled slowly down the Miami, into the middle of the Ohio; then leaving the vessels to float with the current, they uncovered their heads, and mournfully consigned the bodies of the deceased to the watery element.

It was a sad and impressive scene—there, on the turbid Ohio, near the midnight hour—to give to the rolling waters the last remains of those who had been their friends and companions, and as full of life and activity as themselves but an hour before;—it was a sad, impressive, and affecting scene—one that was looked upon with weeping eyes—and one which, by those who witnessed it, was never to be forgotten. There were no loud bursts of grief—there were no frantic exclamations of woe—but the place, the hour, and withal the various events which had transpired to call them so soon from a scene of festivity to one of mourning—together with the thoughts of other friends departed, or in terrible captivity—served to render it a most painfully solemn one—and one, as we said before, that was destined never to be forgotten.

For a short space after the river engulfed the bodies, all gazed upon the waters in silence; when Boone said, in a voice slightly trembling.



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“They did their duties—they have gone—God rest their souls, and give peace to their bones!” and taking up a paddle, the noble old hunter pulled steadily for the Kentucky shore in silence, followed by the other boats in the same manner. There they landed, placed the canoes in safety, in case they should again be needed, rekindled their fire, and encamped for the night.

On the following morning, they set out upon their homeward journey; where they finally arrived, without any events occurring worthy of note.

[Footnote 11: A hunter’s phrase for taking sight.]

CHAPTER XII.

THE INDIANS AND THEIR PRISONERS.

As you ascend the Miami from its mouth at the present day, you come almost immediately upon what are termed the Bottoms, or Bottom Lands, which are rich and fertile tracts of country, of miles in extent, and sometimes miles in breadth, almost water level, with the stream in question slowly winding its course through them, like a deep blue ribbon carelessly unrolled upon a dark surface. They are now mostly under culture, and almost entirely devoted to the production of maize, which, in the autumn of the year, presents the goodly sight of a golden harvest. At the time of which we write, there were no such pleasant demonstrations of civilization, but a vast unbroken forest instead, some vestiges of which still remain, in the shape of old decaying trees, standing grim and naked,

“To summer’s heat and winter’s blast,”

like the ruins of ancient structures, to remind the beholder of former days.

On these Bottoms, about ten miles above the mouth of the Miami, Wild-cat and his party, with their prisoners, encamped on the evening the attack was made upon the renegade, as shown in the preceding chapter. Possessing caution in a great degree, and fearful of the escape of his prisoners, Wild-cat spared no precautions which he thought might enhance the security of Younker and Reynolds. Accordingly, when arrived at the spot where he intended to remain for the night, the chief ordered stakes to be driven deep into the earth, some distance apart, to which the feet of the two in question, after being thrown flat upon their backs, in opposite directions, were tightly bound, with their hands still corded to the crossbars as before. A rope was next fastened around the neck of each, and secured to a neighboring sapling, in which uncomfortable manner they were left to pass the night; while their captors, starting a fire, threw themselves upon the earth around it, and soon to all appearance were sound asleep.



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To the tortures of her older companions in captivity, little Rosetta was not subjected; for Oshasqua—the fierce warrior to whom Girty had consigned her, in the expectation, probably, that she would long ere this have been knocked on the head and scalped—had, by one of those strange mysterious phenomena of nature, (so difficult of comprehension, and which have been known to link the rough and bloody with the gentle and innocent,) already begun to feel towards her a sort of affection, and to treat her with great kindness whenever he could do so unobserved by the others. The apparel of which he had at first divested her, to ornament his own person, had been restored, piece by piece; and this, together with the change in his manner, had at length been observed by the child, with feelings of gratitude. Poor little thing! to whom could she look for protection now? Her father and mother were dead—had been murdered before her own eyes—her brother was away, and she herself a captive to an almost merciless foe; could she feel other than grateful for an act of kindness, from one at whose hands she looked for nothing but abuse and death? Nay, more: So strange and complex is the human heart—so singular in its developments—that we see nothing to wonder at, in her feeling for the savage, under the circumstances—loathsome and offensive as he might have been to her under others—a sort of affection—or rather, a yearning toward him as a protector. Such she did feel; and thus between two human beings, as much antagonistical perhaps, in every particular, as Nature ever presented, was already established a kind of magnetic sympathy—or, in other words, a gradual blending together of opposites. The result of all this, as may be imagined, was highly beneficial to Rosetta, who, in consequence, fared as well as circumstances would permit. At night she slept unbound beside Oshasqua, who secured her from escape by passing his brawny arm under her head, which also in a measure served her for a pillow. So slept she on the night in question.

With Younker and Reynolds there was little that could be called sleep—the minds of both being too actively employed with the events which had transpired, and with thoughts of those so dear to them, who had been left behind, for what fate God only knew. Besides, there was little wherewithal to court the drowsy god, in the manner of their repose—each limb being strained and corded in a position the most painful—and if they slept at all, it was that feverish and fitful slumber, which, though it serve in part the design of nature, brings with it nothing refreshing to the individual himself. To both, therefore, the night proved one of torture to body and mind; and bad as was their condition after the encampment, it was destined to be worse ere the gray dawn of morning, by the arrival of Girty and the only two Indians who had escaped the deadly rifles of the Kentuckians.

“Up, warriors!” cried the renegade, with a blasphemous oath, as he came upon the detachment. “Up, warriors! and sharpen your wits to invent the most damnable tortures that the mind of man can conceive!” and at the sound of his voice, which was loud and hoarse, each Indian sprung to his feet, with an anxious and troubled face.



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“And you, ye miserable white dogs!” continued Girty, turning to Younker and Reynolds, on whom he bestowed numerous kicks, as if by way of enforcing the truth his assertion; “were you suffering all the torments of hell, you might consider yourselves in perfect bliss, compared to what you shall yet undergo ere death snatches you from me!”

“What new troubles ha’ ye got, Simon Girty?” asked Younker, composedly. “But you needn’t answer; I can see what’s writ on your face; thar’s bin a rescue—you’ve lost your prisoners—for which the Lord be praised! I can die content now, with all your tortures.”

“Can you, by ——!” cried the renegade, in a paroxysm of rage; “we shall see!”

As he concluded, he bestowed upon Younker a kick in the face, so violent that a stream of blood followed it. The old man uttered a slight groan, but made no other answer; and Girty turned away to communicate to the others the intelligence of what had transpired since their parting; for although they believed it to be of the utmost consequence, and tragical in all its bearings, yet so far there had not been a question asked nor an event related concerning it on either side—such being the force of habit in all matters of grave importance, and the deference to his superiors shown by the Indian on all similar occasions.

As soon as Girty had made known the sad disaster that had befallen his party, there was one universal yell of rage, accompanied by violent demonstrations of grief and anger—such as beating their bodies, stamping fiercely on the ground, and brandishing their tomahawks over their heads with terrific gestures. They then proceeded to dance around Younker and Reynolds, uttering horrid yells, accompanied with kicks and blows; after which, a consultation was held between Girty and Wild-cat, wherein it was agreed to take them to Piqua, a Shawanoe settlement on the Miami, and there have them put to the tortures. Accordingly, without further delay, they unbound their prisoners, with the exception of their hands, and forced them to set forward at a fast pace—treating them, meanwhile, in the most brutal manner. Oshasqua, however, took good care there should be no violence done to Rosetta; for he kept her closely by his side; and occasionally, when he saw her little limbs growing weary, raised and bore her forward, for a considerable distance, in his arms.

It was a strange, but by no means displeasing sight, to behold that dark, bloodstained warrior—whose very nature was cruel and ferocious, and who probably had never before loved or sought to protect aught bearing the human form—now exhibiting such tender regard for a weak, trembling prisoner, placed in his hands for a speedy sacrifice. It was withal an affecting sight, to Younker and Reynolds, who looked upon it with moistened eyes, and felt it in the force of a revelation from Heaven, that He, who sees the sparrow fall, was even now moving through the wilderness, and teaching one lesson of mercy at least to the most obdurate heart of the savage race.



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To the renegade, however, this conduct of Oshasqua was far from being agreeable; for so much did he delight in cruelty, and so bitterly did he hate all his race—particularly now, after having been foiled by them so lately—that he would a thousand times rather have heard the dying groans of the child, and seen her in the last agonies of death, than in the warrior's arms. At length he advanced to the side of the Indian, and said in the Shawanoe dialect, with a sneer:

“Is Oshasqua a squaw, that he should turn nurse?”

Probably from the whole vocabulary of the Indian tongue, a phrase more expressive of contempt, and one that would have been more severely felt by the savage warrior, who abhors any thing of a womanly nature, could not have been selected; and this Girty, who understood well to whom he was speaking, knew, and was prepared to see the hellish design of his heart meet with a ready second from Oshasqua. For a moment after he spoke, the latter looked upon the renegade with flashing eyes; and then seizing Rosetta roughly, he raised her aloft, as if with the intention of dashing her brains out at his feet. She doubtless understood from his fierce movement the murderous intent in his breast, and uttered a heart-rending cry of anguish. In an instant the grim features of the Indian softened; and lowering her again to her former position in his arms, he turned coldly to Girty, and smiting his breast with his hand, said, with dignity:

“Oshasqua a warrior above suspicion. He can save and defend with his life whom he loves!”

Girty bit his lips, and uttering a deep malediction in English, turned away to consult with Wild-cat on the matter; but finding the chief would not join him in interfering with the rights of the other, he growled out another dreadful oath, and let the subject drop.

Late at night the party encamped within something like a mile of Piqua; and by daylight a warrior was despatched to convey intelligence of their approach, their prisoners, and the sad disaster they had experienced on their journey. In the course of an hour the messenger returned, bringing with him a vast number of savages of both sexes and all ages, who immediately set up the most horrid yells, danced around Younker and Algernon like madmen, not unfrequently beating and kicking them unmercifully. They then departed for the town, taking the prisoners with them, where their fate was to be decided by the council.[12] But ere sentence should be pronounced, it was the unanimous decision of the savages, that they should have some amusement, by forcing the prisoners to run the gauntlet. This, to the women and children, as well as the warriors themselves, was a most delightful sport, and they at once made the welkin ring with yells of joy.

“It's a hard task we've got to undergo now, Algernon,” said Younker, in a low voice; “and God send it may be my last; for I'd much rayther die this way, nor at the stake. I don't at all calculate on escaping—but something tells me you will—and ef you do—”



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Here the old man was interrupted by Girty, who forced himself between the two and separated them. Younker being the first selected to run the gauntlet, was immediately unbound, and stripped to the skin,[13] preparatory to the race. The assemblage now formed themselves into two lines, facing each other, only a few feet apart, and extending the distance of a hundred yards, terminating near the council-house, which stood in the center of the village. Through these lines, the old man was informed by Girty, he must run; while the savages on either side, armed with clubs, were at liberty to inflict as many blows upon him as they could in passing; and therefore it would stand him in hand to reach the other extremity as soon as possible.

"I'm an old man, Simon Girty," said Younker, in reply, "and can't run as I once could—so you needn't reckon on my getting through alive."

"But, by ——! you must get through alive, or else not at all; for we can't spare you quite so soon, as we want you to try the pleasures of the stake," answered the renegade, with a laugh.

"God's will be done—not yours nor mine!" rejoined Younker, solemnly. "But tell me, Simon Girty, as the only favor I'll ever ask o' ye—war my wife and Ella rescued?"

"Why," said Girty, "if it will do you any good to know it, I will tell you they were; but I will add, for your particular benefit, that they will again be in my power; for I will excite every tribe of the Six Nations to the war path; and then, woe to the pioneers of Kentucky!—for desolation, rapine and blood shall mark our trail, until the race become extinct. I have sworn, and will fulfill it. But come—all is ready."

"For the first o' your information, I thank you," returned Younker; "for the last on't, I'll only say, that's a power above ye. I'm ready—lead on!"

Girty now conducted the old man to the lines; and having cautioned the savages, in a loud voice, to beware of taking his life, gave the signal for him to start. Instantly Younker darted forward, and with such speed, that the nearest Indians neglected to strike until he had passed them, by which means he gained some six or eight paces without receiving a blow; but now they fell hard and fast upon him, accompanied with screams and yells of the most diabolical nature; and ere he had gone thirty yards, he began to stagger, when a heavy stroke on the head laid him senseless on the earth. In a moment the renegade, who had kept him company outside, burst through the lines, just in time to ward off the blow of a powerful warrior, aimed at the skull of Younker, which, without doubt, would have been fatal.

"Fool!" cried Girty, fiercely, to the Indian. "Did I not tell you his life must be spared for the stake?"



The savage drew himself up with dignity, and walked away without reply; while the renegade, examining the bruises of the fallen man for a moment or two, ordered him to be taken to the council-house, and, if possible, restored to consciousness. He then returned to Algernon, who had been left standing a sad spectator of the whole proceedings, and said, in a gruff voice:



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“Now, by ——! young man, it’s your turn; and let me tell you, it will stand you in hand to do your best. Come, let us see what sort of a figure you will cut.”

As he concluded, he severed the thongs around the hands of our hero, and unceremoniously began to strip him, in which he was aided by a couple of old squaws.

The features of Algernon were pale, but composed; and he allowed himself to be handled as one who felt an escape from his doom to be impossible, and who had nerved himself to undergo it with as much stoicism as he could command. As his vestments were rent from his body, the wound in his side was discovered to be nearly healed; and would have been entirely so, probably, but for the irritation occasioned it of late by his long marches, exposure and fatigue, which had served to render it at present not a little painful. As his eye for a moment rested upon it, his mind instantly reverted to its cause—recalled, with the rapidity of thought, which is the swiftest comparison we can make, the many and important events that had since transpired up to the present time, wherein the gentle Ella Barnwell held no second place—and he sighed, half aloud:

“I would to Heaven it had been mortal!—how much misery had then been spared me?”

As he said this, one of the squaws, who had been observing it intently, struck him thereon a violent blow with her fist, which started it to bleeding afresh, and, in spite of himself, caused Algernon to utter a sharp cry of pain, at which all laughed heartily. Thinking doubtless this species of amusement as interesting as any, the old hag was on the point of repeating the blow, when Girty arrested it, by saying something to her in the Indian tongue, and all three turned aside, as if to consult together, leaving our hero standing alone, unbound.

A wild thought now suddenly thrilled him. He was free, perchance he might escape; at least he could but die in the attempt; and that, at all events, was preferable to a lingering death of torture! He looked hurriedly around. Only the renegade and the squaws were close at hand, and they engaged in conversation. The main body of the Indians were at a distance, awaiting him to run the gauntlet. He needed no second thought to prompt him to the trial; and wheeling about, he placed his hand upon the wound, and bounded away with the fleetness of the deer. In a moment the yells of an hundred savages in pursuit, sounded in his ear, and urged him onward to the utmost of his strength. He was no mean runner at any time; now he was flying to save his life, and every nerve did its duty. Before him was a slope, that stretched away to the river Miami; and down this he fled with a velocity that astonished himself; while yell after yell of the demons behind, now in full chase, were to him only so many death cries, to stimulate him to renewed exertions. At last he gained the river and rushed into the water. It was not deep,



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and he struggled forward with all his might. On the opposite side was a steep hill and thicket. Could he but gain that, hope whispered he might elude his pursuers and escape. Again he redoubled his exertions; and, joy—joy to his heart—he reached it, just as the foremost of his adversaries, a powerful and fleet young warrior, dashed into the stream from the opposite bank. He now for the first time began to feel weak and fatigued; but his life was yet in danger, and he still pressed onward. Alas! alas! just on the point of escape, his strength was failing him fast, the blood was trickling too from his wound, and a sharp, severe pain afflicted him in his side. Oh God! he thought—what would he not give for the strength and soundness of body he once possessed! The thicket he had entered was dense and dark, so that it was impossible to move through it with much velocity, or see ahead any distance; and as the thought just recorded rushed through his brain, he came suddenly upon a high, steep rock. By this time his nearest pursuer was also entering the thicket; and in a minute or two more he felt capture would be certain, unless he could instantly secrete himself till his strength should be again renewed. Fortune for once now seemed to stand his friend; for stooping down at the base of the rock, he discovered it to be shelving and projecting somewhat over the declivity; so that by dropping upon the ground and crawling up under it, he would, owing to the density and darkness of the thicket, as before mentioned, be wholly concealed from any one standing upright. To do this was the work of a moment; and the next he heard his pursuing foe rush panting by, with much the same sense of relief that one experiences on awakening from a horrible dream, where death seemed inevitable, and finding oneself lying safely and easily in a comfortable bed.

We say Algernon experienced much the same sense of relief as the awakened dreamer; but unlike the latter, his was only momentary; for yell upon yell still sounded in his ear; and plunge after plunge into the stream, followed quickly by a rustling of the bushes around, the trampling of many feet close by, and the war-whoops of his enemies, warned him, that, if he had escaped one, there were hundreds yet to be eluded before he could consider himself as safe. Wildly his heart palpitated, as now one stirred the bushes within reach of his hand, and, slightly pausing, as if to examine the spot of his concealment, uttered a horrid yell, as of discovery, and then, just as he fancied all was lost, to his great relief darted suddenly away.

Thus one after another passed on; and their fierce yells gradually sounding more and more distant, renewed his hope, that he might yet escape their vigilant eyes, and again be free to roam the earth at will. O, potent, joyful thought!—how it made his very heart leap, and the blood course swiftly through his heated veins!—and then, when some sound was heard more near, how his heart sickened at the



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fear he might again be captured, and forced to a lingering, agonizing death!—how he shuddered as he thought, until his flesh felt chill and clammy, and cold drops of perspiration, wrung forth by mental agony, stood upon his pale features! Even death, before his escape, possessed not half the terrors for him it would have now; for then he had nerved himself to meet it, and prepared himself for the worst; but now he had again had a taste of freedom, and would feel the reverse in a thousand accumulated horrors.

Thus for a few minutes he lay, in painful thought, when he became aware, by the different sounds, that many of the savages were returning. Presently some two or three paused by the rock, and beat back the bushes around it. Then, dropping upon his knees, one of the Indians actually put his head to the ground, and peered up into the cavity. It was a horrible moment of suspense to Algernon, as he beheld the hideous visage of the savage so near, and evidently gazing upon him; and thinking himself discovered, he was on the point of coming forth, when a certain vagueness in the look of the Indian, led him to hope he was not yet perceived; and he lay motionless, with his breath suspended. But, alas! his hope was soon changed to despair; for after gazing a moment longer, the Indian suddenly started, his features expressed satisfaction, he uttered a significant grunt, and, springing to his feet, gave a loud, long, peculiar whoop. The next moment our hero was roughly seized, and, ere he could exert himself at all, dragged forth by the heels, by which means his limbs and body became not a little bruised and lacerated.

The savages now came running towards their prisoner from all quarters, in high glee at his recapture—being attracted hither, probably, by the signal whoop of success made by the one who first discovered him. Among the rest came Girty; who, as he approached Algernon, burst into a loud laugh, saying, in a jocular manner:

“Well, my fine bird, so you are caught again, eh? I was most infernally afraid you had got away in earnest; I was, by ——! But we’ll soon fix you now, so that you won’t run away again in a hurry.”

Then turning to the savages around him, the renegade continued his remarks in the Indian tongue, occasionally laughing boisterously, in which they not unfrequently joined. In this manner, the whole party returned in triumph to the village—being met on their way thither by the women and children, who set up yells of delight, sung and danced around their prisoner, whom they beat with their fists and with sticks, until he became sore from head to heel.

The gauntlet was soon again made ready, and Algernon started upon the race; but fatigued in body and mind, from the late events—weak and faint from the bleeding of his wound and bruises—he scarcely reached twenty paces down the lines, ere he sunk overpowered to the earth; from which he was immediately raised, and borne forward to

the council-house, where, according to the Indian custom, the chiefs and warriors were to decide upon his fate.



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[Footnote 12: Lest there should seem to the reader an inconsistency in one tribe yielding the fate of their prisoners to the decision of another, we would remark here, that at the period of which we write, the Six Nations were allied and fought for one common interest against the Americans, on the British side, and therefore not unfrequently shared each others dangers and partook of each others spoils.]

[Footnote 13: A practice sometimes, but not always, followed.]

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRIAL, SENTENCE, AND EXECUTION.

The council-house in question, was a building of good size, of larger dimensions than its neighbors, stood on a slight elevation, and, as we before remarked, near the center of the village. Into this the warriors and head men of the Piqua tribe now speedily gathered, and proceeded at once to business. An old chief—whose wrinkled features and slightly-tremulous limbs, denoted extreme age—was allowed, by common consent, to act as chairman; and taking his position near the center of the apartment, with a knife and a small stick in his hand, the warriors and chief men of the nation formed a circle around him.

Among these latter—conspicuous above all for his beautiful and graceful form, his dignified manner, and look of intelligence, to whom all eyes turned with seeming deference—was the celebrated Shawanoe chief, Catahecassa, (Black Hoof) whose name occupies no inferior place on the historic page of the present day, as being at first the inveterate foe, and afterward the warm friend of the whites. In stature he was small, being only about five feet eight inches, lightly made, but strongly put together, with a countenance marked and manly, and one that would be pleasing to a friend, but the reverse to an enemy. He was a great orator, a keen, cunning and sagacious warrior, and one who held the confidence and love of his tribe. At the period referred to, he was far past what is usually termed the middle age; though, as subsequent events have proved, only in his noon of life—for at his death he numbered one hundred and ten years.

Upon the ground, within the circle, and near the old chief in the center, were seated Algernon and Younker—the latter having recovered consciousness—both haggard and bloody from their recent brutal treatment. They were sad spectacles to behold, truly, and would have moved to pity any hearts less obdurate than those by which they were surrounded. Their faces bore those expressions of dejection and wan despair, which may sometimes be perceived in the look of a criminal, when, loth to die, he is assured all hope of pardon is past. Not that either Younker or Reynolds felt criminal, or feared death in its ordinary way; but there were a thousand things to harass their minds,

besides the dreadful thought of that lingering, horrible torture, which was enough to make the boldest quail, and which they now had not the faintest hope of escaping.



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There is ever something solemn and awful in the thought of death, let it come in the mildest form possible—for the individual feels he is hastening to that silent bourne, whence none have e'er returned to tell its mysteries—yet such is as nothing in comparison with the death our prisoners were now silently awaiting, away from friends and all sympathy, in the full vigor of animal life, to be fairly worn out by the most excruciating pains, amid the hootings and revilings of a savage foe. It was enough to have made the stoutest heart faint, trembling and sick; and thus our unfortunate friends felt, as they slowly gazed around and saw nothing but fierce, angry looks bent upon them.

Girty was the first to address the assemblage, in the Indian dialect, in an animated and angry speech of five minutes duration; occasionally turning his sinister visage upon the prisoners, with an expression of mortal hatred; gesticulating the while in that vehement manner which would have left no doubts on their minds as to the nature of his discourse, had they not previously known him to be their determined foe. He narrated to the savages, clearly and briefly, the wrongs which had been done them, as well as himself, by the whites; how, as the ally and friend of the red-man, he had been cursed, defied and treated with much contumely, by those here present; how their friends had followed and slaughtered his braves; how the whites were every day becoming stronger and more aggressive; how that, unless speedily exterminated, they would presently drive the red-men from their hunting grounds, burn their wigwams, and murder their wives and children; referred them, as a proof, to the sacking and burning of the Chillicothe and Piqua villages, on the Little Miami and Mad rivers, the year preceding, by General Clark and his men;^[15] and wound up by demanding the death of the prisoners at the stake, and a speedy and bloody retaliation upon the pioneers of Kentucky.

As Girty concluded his speech, which was listened to in breathless silence, there was a great sensation in the house, and an almost unanimous grunt of approval from the chiefs and braves there assembled. It needed but this, to arouse their vindictive passions against the white invader to the extreme; and they bent upon the unfortunate prisoners, eyes which seemed inflamed with rage and revenge. Girty perceived, at a glance, that he had succeeded to the full of his heart's desire; and with a devilish smile of satisfaction on his features, he drew back among the warriors, to listen to the harangues of the others.

Black Hoof was the next to follow the renegade, in a similar but more eloquent strain; during which his countenance became greatly animated; and it was easy for the prisoners to perceive—who could not understand a word he uttered—that he spoke with great enthusiasm. He also pressed upon his companions the vast importance of exterminating the whites, ere they, as he expressed it, became as



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the leaves of the forest, and covered the red-man's soil; that, for this purpose, they should prepare themselves as soon as possible, to open a deadly, unyielding warfare upon the frontiers; but said, withal, that he was opposed to burning the prisoners—as that was a barbarism which he feared would not be sanctioned by the great Spirit—and urged that they should be put to death in, a quicker and milder form.[14]

Black Hoof's speech was warmly received, with the exception of what referred to the prisoners, and this rather coldly. They were excited to a powerful degree—their passions were up for revenge—and they could not bear the idea of sending a prisoner out of the world, without first enjoying the delight of seeing him writhe under the tortures of the stake.

Wild-cat next followed Black Hoof, in a brief speech, in which he but echoed the sentiments of Girty throughout, and received, like his colleague, an almost universal grunt of approbation. He was succeeded by one or two others, to the same effect—each urging the burning of the prisoners—and on their conclusion, no other appearing to speak, the old chief in the center at once proceeded to decide, by vote, the matter at issue. Advancing to the warrior nearest the door, he handed him a war-club, and then resumed his place in the circle, to record the will of each. He who was in favor of burning the prisoners, struck the ground fiercely with the weapon in question, and then passed it to his neighbor; he who was otherwise disposed, passed it quietly, in silence; thus it went through the whole assemblage—the old chief recording the vote of each, by cutting a notch on the stick in his hand; those for mercy being placed on one side, and those for the torture on the opposite. Some three or four only, besides Black Hoof, passed it quietly—consequently the sentence of death was carried by a decided majority. Had there been any doubt in the minds of Younker and Reynolds as to the result, it would have needed only one glance at Girty, who was now grinning upon them like a demon, to assure them their doom was sealed.

The question next came up as to the time and place for executing the sentence; and after some further debate, it was decided that the old man should be burnt forthwith, in the village, that their women and children might have a holiday pastime; but that Algernon must be made a grand national example of, before the assembled tribes at Upper Sandusky, when they should be met to receive presents from the British agent. [16] This latter decision was mainly effected by the eloquence of Black Hoof; who, from some cause, for which it would be impossible to account—only as a mysterious working of an overruling Providence—had secretly determined, if such a thing were possible, to save the life of Algernon; and took this method as the only one likely to aid his purpose by protecting him from immediate death.

The trial concluded, the council now broke up, and Girty was authorized to inform the prisoners of their sentence; while four young braves were selected to take charge of



Algernon, and to set off with him, so soon as the burning of Younker should be over, for Upper Sandusky, where he was to be kept in durance until wanted. Advancing directly to the prisoners, the renegade now said, with a sneer:



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“Well, my beauties, are you ready to die?”

“We don’t expect any thing else, Simon Girty,” answered the old man mildly.

“Don’t you, by ——!” rejoined Girty. “Perhaps it’s just as well you don’t—ha, ha, ha! Come, old dotard,” he continued, “down on your marrow bones and say your prayers; for, by ——! you will never behold the setting of another sun.”

“I’ve said my prayers regular for thirty year,” answered Younker; “and I’ve been ready to die whensomever the Lord should see fit to call me; and therefore don’t feel myself no more obligated to pray jest at this particular time, than ef I war told I war going to live twenty year more. It’s only them as hain’t lived right, that the near coming o’ death makes pray, more nor at another time; and so jest allow me, Simon Girty, to return you your advice, which is very good, and which, ef you follow yourself, you’ll be likely to make a much better man nor you’ve ever done afore.”

“Fool!” muttered the renegade, with an oath. Then turning to Algernon, he continued: “You, sirrah, are destined to live a little longer—though by no design of mine, I can assure you. Don’t flatter yourself, though, that you are going to escape,” he added, as he perceived the countenance of Algernon slightly brighten at his intelligence; “for, by ——! if I thought there was a probability of such a thing happening, I would brain you where you sit, if I died for it the next moment. No, young man, there is no escape for you; you are condemned to be burnt, as well as Younker, only at another place; and, by ——! I will follow you myself, to see that the sentence is enforced with all its horrors.”

“For all of which you doubtless feel yourself entitled to my thanks,” returned Algernon, bitterly. “Do your worst, Simon Girty; but understand me, before you go further, that though life is as dear to me at the present moment as to another, yet so much do I abhor and loathe the very sight of you, that, could I have it for the asking, I would not stoop to beg it of so brutal and cowardly a thing as yourself.”

“By ——!” cried Girty, in a transport of rage; “the time will come, when, if you do not sue for life, you will for death, and at my hands; and till then will I forego my revenge for your insolence now. And let me tell you one thing further, that you may muse upon it in my absence. I will raise an army, ere many months are over, and march upon the frontiers of Kentucky; and by all the powers of good and evil, I swear again to get possession of the girl you love, but whom I now hate—hate as the arch-fiend hates Heaven—and she shall thenceforth be my mistress and slave; and to make her feel more happy, I will ever and anon whisper your name in her ear, and tell her how you died, and the part I took in your death; and in the still hours of night, will I picture to her your agonies and dying groans, and repeat your prayers for death to release you. Ha! you may well shudder and grow pale; for again I swear, by all the elements, and by every thing mortal and immortal, I will accomplish the deed! Then, and not till then, will I feel my revenge complete.”



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The countenance of Girty, as he said this, was terrible to behold; for so enraged was he, that he fairly foamed at the mouth, and his eyes seemed like two balls of fire. As he concluded, he turned away abruptly; and muttering something in the Indian tongue, to some of the savages who were standing around, immediately quitted the council-house.

As Girty departed, the four young warriors who were to have charge of Algernon, immediately advanced to him; and one of them tapping him on the shoulder, moved away, motioning him to follow. As he prepared to obey, Younker grasped him by the hand, and, with eyes full of tears, in a trembling, pathetic voice, said:

“Good-bye, lad! God bless and be with you. Something tells me we won’t never meet agin. Keep up as stout a heart as you can, and ef you should escape, tell my (here the old man’s voice faltered so that he could scarcely articulate a syllable)—tell my wife, and—and children—that I died happy, a thinking o’ them, and praying for ’em—to—to the last. Good-bye! good-bye!” and wringing his hand again, the old man fairly sobbed aloud; while the rough warriors stood looking on in silence, and Algernon could only groan forth a farewell.

So they parted—never to meet again on earth.

Algernon was now conducted, by his guards, to a small building on the outskirts of the village; where, after receiving food and water, and having his clothes restored to him, he was informed by one of the Indians—who could speak a smattering of English—that he might be bound and remain, or accompany them to see the Big Knife tortured. He chose the former without hesitation; and was immediately secured in a manner similar to what he had been the night previously, and then left alone to the anguish of his own thoughts. What the feelings of our hero were, as thus he lay, suffering from his bruises and wound—his mind recurring to the dire events taking place in another part of the village, and his own awful doom—we shall leave to the imagination of the reader: suffice it to say, however, that when his guards returned, some two hours later, he was found in a swooning state, with large cold drops of perspiration standing thickly on his features.

Meantime, Younker was brought forth from the council-house—amid the hootings, revilings, and personal abuse of the savage mob—and then painted black,^[17] preparatory to undergoing the awful death-sentence. He was then offered food—probably with the kind intention of strengthening him, and thus prolonging his life and tortures—but this he absolutely refused, and was immediately conducted to the place of execution, which was on the brow of the slope before described as reaching to the river. Here his wrists were immediately bound behind him; and then a rope, fastened to the ligature, was secured to a stake—driven into the earth for the purpose and left sufficiently long for him sit down, stand up, or walk around a circle of some six or eight feet in diameter.



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During this proceeding, the Indians failed not to abuse him in various ways—some by pinching, and others by pounding him with their fists, with stones, and with clubs,—all of which he seemed to bear with great patience and resignation.

As soon as all was ready for the more diabolical tortures, Girty made the announcement, in a brief speech to the Indians; and then taking up a rifle, loaded with powder only, discharged it upon the prisoner's naked body. A loud yell of satisfaction, from the excited mob, followed this inhuman act; while several savages, rushing forward with rifles loaded in the same manner, now strove who should be first to imitate the renegade's example; by which means, no less than fifty discharges were made, in quick succession, until the flesh of the old man, from the neck downwards, was completely filled with burnt powder. Younker uttered a few groans, but bore all with manly fortitude, and made no complaints.

This part of the hellish ceremony over, a fire was kindled of hickory poles, placed in a circle round the stake, outside of that which his rope allowed Younker to make, in order that he might feel all the torments of roasting alive, without being sufficiently near to the flame to get a speedy relief by death. To add even more torture, if possible, to this infernal proceeding, the Indians would take up brands, and place the burning parts against the old man's body; and then, as they saw him cringe and writhe under the pain thus inflicted, would burst into horrid laughs, in which they were ever joined by the renegade. The old squaws too, and even the children, not wishing to be outdone in this refinement of cruelty, would take slabs, and having loaded them with live coals and ashes, would throw them upon his head and body, until not only both became covered, but the ground around him, so that there was no cool place for his feet; while at every new infliction of pain, the crowd would break forth in strains of wild, discordant laughter.

Thus passed some three-quarters of an hour of tortures the most horrible, during which the old man bore up under his sufferings with a strength and manliness that not only astonished his tormentors, but excited for himself, even in savage breasts, a feeling of respect. Girty, it may be, was moved to a similar feeling; for at length, advancing to his victim, he said, in a tone of more deference than he had hitherto used:

“You bear up well, old man—well. I have seen many a one die, in a similar way, who was thought to be courageous—yet none with that firmness you have thus far displayed.”

Younker, who was slowly walking around the stake, with his face bent toward the earth, suddenly paused, as Girty addressed him, and turning his eyes mildly upon the renegade, in a feeble voice, replied:



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“My firmness is given me from above. I can bear my torments, Simon Girty, for they’re arthly, and will soon be over; but yourn—who’ll say what yourn’ll be, when you come to answer afore Almighty God for this and other crimes! But that arn’t for the like o’ me to speak of now. I’m a dying man, and trust soon to be in a better world. Ef I ever did you wrong, Simon Girty, I don’t remember it now; and I’m very sartin I never did nothing to merit this. You came to my house, and war treated to the best I had, and here am I in return for’t. Howsomever, the reckoning’s got to come yit atween you and your God; and so I leave you—farewell.”

“But say,” returned Girty, who now seemed greatly moved by the manner and tone of Younker: “But say, old man, that you forgive me, and I will own that I did you wrong.”

“I don’t know’s I’ve any enemies, except these round here,” replied the other, feebly, “and I’d like to die at peace with all the world; but what you ax, Simon Girty, I can’t grant; it’s agin my nater and conscience; I can’t say I forgive ye, for what you’ve done, for I don’t. I may be wrong—it may not be Christian like—but ef it’s a sin, it’s one I’ve got to answer for myself. No, Girty, I can’t forgive—pre’aps God will—you must look to him: I can’t. Girty, I can’t; and so, farewell forever! God be merciful to me a sinner,” he added, looking upward devoutly; “and ef I’ve done wrong, oh! pardon me, for Christ’s sake!”

With these words, the lips of Younker were sealed forever.

Girty stood and gazed upon him in silence, for a few minutes, as one whose mind is ill at ease, and then walked slowly away, in a mood of deep abstraction. Younker continued alive some three-quarters of an hour longer—bearing his tortures with great fortitude—and then sunk down with a groan and expired. The Indians then proceeded to scalp him; after which they gradually dispersed, with the apparent satisfaction of wolves that have gorged their fill on some sheep-fold.

When Algernon’s guards returned, they found him in a swooning state, as previously recorded; and fearful that his life might be lost, and another day’s sport thus spoiled, they immediately called in their great medicine man, who at once set about bandaging his wound, and applying to it such healing remedies as were known by him to be speedily efficacious, and for which the Indians are proverbially remarkable. His bruises were also rubbed with a soothing liquid; and by noon of the day following, he had gained sufficient strength to start upon his journey, accompanied by his guards.

On that journey we shall now leave him, and turn to other, and more important events; merely remarking, by the way, lest the reader should consider the neglect an oversight, that, on entering the Piqua village, Oshasqua had taken care to render the life of little Rosetta Millbanks safe, and had secured to her as much comfort as circumstances would permit.



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[Footnote 14: In the action at Piqua here referred to, Simon Girty commanded three hundred Mingoes, whom he withdrew on account of the desperation with which the whites fought.]

[Footnote 15: This was a peculiar characteristic of this great chief, as drawn from the pages of history; and the more peculiar, that he was a fierce, determined warrior, and the very last to hold out against a peace with his white enemy. But there were some noble traits in the man; and when, at last, he was wrought upon to sign the treaty of Greenville, in 1795—twenty-four years after the date of the foregoing events—so keen was his sense of honor, that no entreaty nor persuasion could thenceforth induce him to break his bond; and he remained a firm friend of the Americans to the day of his death. He was opposed to burning prisoners, and to polygamy, and is said to have lived forty years with one wife, rearing a numerous family of children.—See *Drake's Life of Tecumseh*.]

[Footnote 16: The reader will bear in mind, that these events transpired during the American Revolution; that the Indians were, at this time, allies of the British; who paid them, in consequence, regular annuities, at Upper Sandusky.]

[Footnote 17: This was a customary proceeding of the savages at that day, with all prisoners doomed to death.]

CHAPTER XIV.

HISTORICAL EVENTS.

From the first inroads of the whites upon what the Indians considered their lawful possessions, although by them unoccupied—namely, the territory known as Kan-tuck-kee—up to the year which opens our story, there had been scarcely any cessation of hostilities between the two races so antagonistical in their habits and principles. Whenever an opportunity presented itself favorable to their purpose, the savages would steal down from their settlements—generally situated on the Bottom Lands of the principal rivers in the present State of Ohio—cross over *La Belle Riviere* into Kentucky, and, having committed as many murders and other horrible acts as were thought prudent for their safety, would return in triumph, if successful, to their homes, taking along with them scalps of both sexes and all ages, from the infant to the gray-beard, and not unfrequently a few prisoners for the amusement of burning at the stake.

These flying visits of the savages were generally repaid by similar acts of kindness on the part of the whites; who, on several occasions, marched with large armies into their very midst, destroyed their crops and stores, and burnt their towns. An expedition of this kind was prosecuted by General Clark, in August of the year preceding the events we have detailed, of which mention has been previously made. He had under his



command one thousand men, mostly from Kentucky, and marched direct upon old Chillicothe, which the Indians deserted and burnt on his approach. He next moved upon the Piqua towns, on Mad river, where



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a desperate engagement ensued between the whites and Indians, in which the former proved victorious. Having secured what plunder they could, together with the horses, the Kentuckians destroyed the town, and cut down some two hundred acres of standing corn. They then returned to Chillicothe on their homeward route, where they destroyed other large fields of produce, supposed in all to amount to something like five hundred acres.

We have mentioned this expedition for the purpose of showing why the year which opens our story, 1781, was less disastrous to the frontier settlers than the preceding ones—the Indians being too busily occupied in repairing the damage done them, and in hunting to support their families, to have much thought for the war-path, or time to follow it; consequently the year in question, as regards Kentucky, may be said to have passed away in a comparatively quiet manner, with no events more worthy of note than those we have laid before the reader.

But if the vengeance of the savage slumbered for the time being, it was only like some pent up fire, burning in secret, until opportunity should present for it to burst forth in a manner most appalling, carrying destruction and terror throughout its course; and in consequence of this, the year 1782 was destined to be one most signally marked by bloody deeds in the annals of Kentucky. The winter of '81 and '82 passed quietly away; but early in the ensuing spring hostilities were again renewed, with a zeal which showed that neither faction had forgotten old grudges during the intervening quietude. Girty did all that lay in his power to stir up the vindictive feelings of the Indians, and was aided in his laudable endeavors by one or two others^[18] who wore the uniform of British officers. It was the design of the renegade to raise a grand army from the union of the Six Nations, lead them quietly into the heart of Kentucky, and, by a bold move, seize some prominent station, murder the garrison, and thus secure at once a stronghold, from which to sally forth, spread death and desolation in every quarter, and, if possible, depopulate the entire country. Long and ardently did he labor in stirring up the Indians by inflammatory speeches; till at last he succeeded in uniting a grand body for his hellish purpose; which, on the very eve of success, as one may say, was at last frustrated by what seemed a direct Providence, of which more anon, and its proper place.

Previously, however, to the event just referred to, parties of Indians, numbering from five to fifty, prowled about the frontiers, committing at every opportunity all manner of horrid deeds, and thus rousing the whites to defence and retaliation. One of these skirmishes has been more particularly dwelt on, by the historians of Kentucky, than any of the others; on account, probably, of the desperate and sanguinary struggle for mastery between the two contending parties, and the cruel desertion, at a time of need, of a portion of the whites; by which means the Indians had advantage of numbers, that

otherwise would have been equally opposed. We allude to what is generally known as Estill's Defeat.



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It is not our province in the present work to detail any thing not directly connected with our story; and therefore we shall pass on, after a cursory glance at the main facts in question. Sometime in March, a party of Wyandots made a descent upon Estill's station, which stood near the present site of Richmond; and having killed and scalped a young lady, and captured a Negro slave, were induced, by the exaggerated account which the latter gave of the force within, to an immediate retreat; whereby, probably, the lives of the women and children, almost the only occupants, were saved—Captain Estill himself, with his garrison, and several new recruits, being at the time away, on a search for these very savages, who were known by some unmistakable signs to be in the vicinity. Word being despatched to Estill, of what had transpired in his absence, he immediately sought out the trail of the retreating foes, which he followed with his men, and toward night of the second day overtook them at Hinston's Fork of Licking, where a desperate engagement immediately ensued. At the onset, there were twenty-five Indians, and exactly the same number of whites; but the immediate desertion, in a cowardly manner, of a certain Lieutenant Miller, with six men under his command, left the odds greatly in favor of the Wyandots, who were all picked warriors. Notwithstanding the cowardice of their companions, our little Spartan band fought most heroically for an hour and three-quarters; when the few survivors, on both sides, being almost worn out, ceased hostilities as by mutual consent. In this ever memorable action, Captain Estill, a brave and popular man, together with nine of his gallant companions, fell to rise no more. Four others were badly wounded, leaving only the same number of unharmed survivors. The Indians, it was afterwards ascertained, had seventeen warriors killed on the field, among whom was one of their bravest chiefs, and two others severely wounded; and there has been a tradition since among the Wyandots, that only one survivor ever returned to tell the tale.

The news of the foregoing disastrous skirmish flew like wild fire, to use a common phrase, throughout the borders, and, together with others of less note, served to kindle the fire of vengeance in the bosoms of the settlers, and excite a deeper hostility than ever against the savage foe. Nor was the subsequent conduct of the Indians themselves calculated to soften this bitter feeling against them; for, to use the words of a modern writer, "The woods again teemed with savages, and no one was safe from attack beyond the walls of a station. The influence of the British, and the constant pressure of the Long Knives, upon the red-men, had produced a union of the various tribes of the northwest, who seemed to be gathering again to strike a fatal blow at the frontier settlements; and had they been led by a Phillip, a Pontiac, or a Tecumseh, it is impossible to estimate the injury they might have inflicted."



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Whether the foregoing remarks may be deemed by the reader a digression, or otherwise, we have certainly felt ourself justified in making them; from the fact, that our story is designed to be historical in all its bearings; and because many months being supposed to elapse, ere our characters are again brought upon the stage of action, it seemed expedient to give a general view of what was taking place in the interval. Having done so, we will now forthwith resume our narrative.

About five miles from Lexington, a little to the left of the present road leading thence to Maysville, and on a gentle rise of the southern bank of the Elkhorn, at the time of which we write, stood Bryan's Station, to which we must now call the reader's attention. This station was founded in the year 1779, by William Bryan, (a brother-in-law of Daniel Boone,) who had, prior to the events we are now about to describe, been surprised and killed by the Indians in the vicinity of a stream called Cane Run.

This fort, at the period in question, was one of great importance to the early settlers—standing as it did on what was considered at the time of its erection, the extreme frontier, and, by this means, extending their area of security. The station consisted of forty cabins, placed in parallel lines, connected by strong pallisades, forming a parallelogram of thirty rods by twenty, and enclosing something like four acres of ground. Outside of the cabins and pallisades, to render the fort still more secure, were planted heavy pickets, a foot in diameter, and some twelve feet in height above the ground; so that it was impossible for an enemy to scale them, or affect them in the least, with any thing short of fire and cannon ball. To guard against the former, and prevent the besiegers making a lodgment under the walls, at each of the four corners or angles, was erected what was called a block-house—a building which projected beyond the pickets, a few feet above the ground, and enabled the besieged to pour a raking fire across the advanced party of the assailants. Large folding gates, on huge, wooden hinges, in front and rear, opened into the enclosure, through which men, wagons, horses, and domestic cattle, had admittance and exit. In the center, as the reader has doubtless already divined, was a broad space, into which the doors of the cabins opened, and which served the purpose of a regular common, where teams and cattle were oftentimes secured, where wrestling and other athletic sports took place. The cabins were all well constructed, with puncheon floors, the roofs of which sloped inward, to avoid as much as possible their being set on fire by burning arrows, shot by the Indians for the purpose, a practice by no means uncommon during a siege. This fort, at the period referred to, was garrisoned by from forty to fifty men; and though somewhat out of repair, in respect to a few of its pallisades, was still in a condition to resist an overwhelming force, unless

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taken wholly by surprise. There was one great error, however, connected with its design—and one that seems to have been common to most of the stations of that period—which was, that the spring, supplying the inmates with water, had not been enclosed within the pickets. The reader can at once imagine the misery that must have ensued from this cause, in case of their being suddenly assaulted by a superior enemy, and the siege protracted to any considerable length of time.

Within this fort, on their return from captivity, Mrs. Younker and Ella had taken up their abode, to remain until another cabin should be erected, or it should be thought safe for them to live again in a more exposed manner. Isaac had straightway repaired to his father-in-law's, to behold again the idol of his heart, and pour into her ear his grief for the loss of his father and friend, and receive her sympathy for his affliction in return. The disastrous affair which had called him and his companions so suddenly from a scene of festivity to one of mourning—the loss of so many valuable neighbors, and the result of the expedition in pursuit of the enemy—created at the time no little excitement throughout the frontiers, and caused some of the more timid to resort to the nearest stations for security. But as time wore on, and as nothing serious happened during the fall and winter, confidence and courage gradually became restored; and the affair was almost forgotten, save by the friends and relatives of the deceased and those particularly concerned in it.

Spring, however, revived the alarm of the settlers, by the reappearance of the enemy in all quarters, and the outrages they committed, as before mentioned; so that but very few persons ventured to remain without the walls of a fort; and these, such of them as were fortunate enough to escape death or captivity, were fain to seek refuge therein before the close of summer.

Immediately on the receipt of the alarming intelligence of Estill's defeat, Isaac, his wife, and the family of his father-in-law, Wilson, repaired to Bryan's Station, and joined Mrs. Younker and Ella, who had meantime remained there in security.

[Footnote 18: McKee and Elliot.]

CHAPTER XV.

OLD CHARACTERS AND NEW.

It was toward night of a hot sultry day in the month of August, that Ella Barnwell was seated by the door of a cabin, within the walls of Bryan's Station, gazing forth, with what seemed a vacant stare, upon a group of individuals, who were standing near the center of the common before spoken of, engaged in a very animated conversation. Her



features perhaps were no paler than when we saw her last; but there was a tender, melancholy expression on her sweet countenance, of deep abiding grief, and a look of mournfulness in her beautiful eyes, that touched involuntarily the hearts of all who met her gaze.



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Since we last beheld her, days of anxious solicitude, and sleepless nights, had been apportioned Ella; for memory—all potent memory—had kept constantly before her mind's eye the images of those who were gone, and mourned as forever lost to the living; and her imagination had a thousand times traced them to the awful stake, seen their terrible tortures, heard their agonizing, dying groans; and her heart had bled for them in secret; and tears of anguish, at their untimely fate, had often dimmed her eyes. Even now, as she apparently gazed upon that group of individuals, whom she saw not, and whose voices, sounding in her ear, she heard not, her mind was occupied with the probable fate of her uncle and Algernon, the still all-absorbing theme of her soul.

While seated thus, Mrs. Younker approached Ella from behind, unperceived by the latter, and now stood gazing upon her with a sorrowful look. The countenance of the good dame had altered less, perhaps, than Ella's, owing to her strong masculine spirit; but still there was an expression of anxiety and sadness thereon, which, until of late, had never been visible—not even when on her march to what, as she then believed, was her final doom—the excitement whereof, and the many events that occurred on the route, having been sufficient to occupy her mind in a different manner from what it had been in brooding over the fate of her husband for months in secret, and in a place of comparative safety. At length a remark, in a loud voice, of one of the individuals of the group before alluded to, arrested the attention of both Mrs. Younker and Ella.

“I tell you,” said the speaker, who was evidently much excited, “it was that infernal cut-throat Girty's doings, and no mistake. Heaven's curses on him for a villain!—and I don't think he'll more nor git his just dues, to suffer them hell fires of torment, hereafter, that he's kindled so often around his victims on arth.”

At these words Ella started to her feet, and exclaiming wildly,

“Who are they—who are Girty's victims?” sprung swiftly towards the group, followed by Mrs. Younker.

All eyes, from all quarters, were now turned upon her, as, like a spirit, she glided noiselessly forward, her sweet countenance radiant with the flush of excitement, her eyes dilated and sparkling, and her glossy ringlets floating on the breeze. Curiosity could no longer remain unsatisfied; and by one spontaneous movement, from every point of compass, women and children now hurried toward the center of the common, to gather the tidings.

The quiet, modest, melancholy air of Ella, had, one time with another, since her first appearance in the Station, attracted the attention, and won the regard of its inmates; most of whom had made inquiries concerning her, and learned the cause of her sadness; and now, as she gained the crowd, each gazed upon her with a look of respect; and at once moving aside to let her pass, she presently stood the central attraction of an excited multitude, of both sexes, all ages and sizes.



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“Who are they?” cried she again, turning from one to the other, rapidly, with an anxious look: “who are the victims of the renegade Girty?”

“We were speaking, Miss Barnwell,” answered a youth, of genteel appearance, doffing his hat, and making at the same time a polite and respectful bow: “We were speaking of the defeat, capture, and burning of Colonel Crawford, by the Indians, in their own country, in which the notorious Simon Girty is said to have taken an active part[19]—news whereof has just reached us.”

At the mention of the name of Crawford, so different from the one she was expecting to hear, the momentary insanity, or delusion of Ella, vanished; she saw her position at a glance, and the hundred eyes that were upon her; and instantly her face became suffused with blushes; while she shrunk back, with a sense of maidenly shame and bashful timidity, almost overpowering to herself, and really painful for others to behold. She now strove to speak—to give an excuse for her singular conduct—but her tongue failed her, and she would have sunk to the earth, only for the support of Mrs. Younker, who at this moment gained her side.

“Never mind it. Miss Barnwell—it don’t need any excuse—we understand your feelings for lost friends,” were some of the remarks from the crowd, as the throng again made a passage for her to depart.

“Goodness, gracious, marcy on me alive! what a splurge you did make on’t, darling!” said Mrs. Younker to Ella, as they moved away by themselves. “Why, you jest kind o’ started up, for all the world like a skeered deer; and afore I could get my hands on ye, you war off like an Injen’s arrow. Well, thar, thar, poor gal—never mind it!” added the good dame, consolingly, as Ella turned towards her a painful, imploring look; “we all knows your feelings, darling, and so never mind it. Mistakes will happen in the best o’ families, as the Rev. Mr. Allprayer used to say, when any body accused him o’ doing any thing he hadn’t oughter a done.”

“Mother,” said Ella, feebly, “I feel faint; this shock, I fear, may be too much for my nervous system.”

“Oh! my child, darling, don’t mind it—every body knows your feelings—and nobody’ll think any thing strange on’t. In course you war thinking o’ your friends—as war nateral you should—and so war I; and when I heerd the name o’ that ripscallious renegade, it jest set my hull blood to biling, like it war hot water, and I felt orful revengeful. But the Lord’s will be done, child. He knows what’s best; and let us pray to him, that ef our friends is among the land of the living, they may be restored to us, or taken straight away to His presence.”

As Mrs. Younker said this, she and Ella entered the cottage.



“Poor girl!” said a voice among the crowd, as soon as Ella was out of hearing; “they do say as how she eats but little now, and scarcely takes any rest at all lately, on account of the trouble of her mind. Poor girl! she’s not long for this world;” and the speaker shook his head sadly.

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“But what is it?—what is it as troubles her so?” inquired an old woman, in a voice tremulous with age, who, being somewhat of a new-comer, had not heard the oft-repeated story.

“I’ll tell it ye—I’ll tell it ye,” answered another gossiping crone, standing beside the querist, who, fearful of being forestalled, now eagerly began her scandalous narration.

Meantime, the male portion of the crowd had resumed their conversation, concerning the unfortunate campaign of Crawford; during which manifold invectives were bestowed upon the savages, and the renegade Girty. Some of the more reckless among them were for raising another army, as soon as possible, to pursue the Indians, even to the death, and spare none that fell into their hands, neither the aged, women, nor children; but these propositions were speedily overruled by cooler and wiser heads; who stated that Kentucky had scarcely fighting men enough to protect one another on their own ground—much less to march into the enemy’s country, and leave their wives and children exposed to certain destruction.

While these discussions were in progress, the attention of each was suddenly arrested by the cry of some person from the right hand block-house, looking toward the south, announcing that a single horseman was approaching with a speed which betokened evil tidings. These were times of excitement, when news of disaster and death was borne on almost every breeze; and consequently all now sprung rapidly to the southern pickets, where, through loop-holes and crevices in the partially decayed pallisades, they perceived an individual riding as if for life.

“How he rides!—Who is it?—What can have happened?” were some of the remarks now rapidly uttered, as the horseman was seen bounding forward on his foaming steed. Instantly the nearest gate was thrown open; and, in less than two minutes, horse and rider stood within the enclosure, surrounded by a breathless multitude, eager for his intelligence.

“Arm!” cried the horseman, a good looking youth of eighteen: “Arm—all that can be spared—and on to the rescue!”

“What’s happened, Dick Allison?” asked one who had recognized the rider.

“I have it on the best authority,” answered Dick, “that Hoy’s Station has just been attacked, by a large body of Indians, and Captain Holder and his men defeated.”

“But whar d’ye get your news?” inquired another voice; while a look of alarm, and resolute determination to avenge the fallen, could be seen depicted on the upturned countenances of the assemblage.



“I was riding in that direction, when I met a messenger on his way to Lexington for assistance; and turning my horse, I spurred hither with all speed.”

“Have the red devils got possession of the fort?” inquired another.

“I am not certain, for I did not wait to hear particulars; but I’m under the impression they have not, and that Holder was defeated outside the walls.”



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“Well, they must have assistance, and that as soon as it can be got to 'em,” rejoined a white-haired veteran, one of the head men of the garrison, whose countenance was remarkable for its noble, benevolent expression, and who, from love and veneration, was generally called Father Albach. “It’s too late in the day, though, to muster and march thar to-night,” continued the old man; “but we’ll have our horses got up and put in here to night, and our guns cleaned, and every thing fixed for to start at daylight to-morrow. Eh! my gallant lads—what say ye?” and he glanced playfully around upon the bystanders.

“Yes—yes—yes—father!” cried a score of voices, in a breath; and the next moment a long, loud cheer, attested the popularity of the old man’s decision.

“Another cheer for Father Albach, and three more for licking the ripscallious varmints clean to death!” cried our old acquaintance, Isaac Younker, who, having been otherwise occupied during the discussion concerning Crawford’s defeat, had joined the crowd on the arrival of the messenger.

“Good for Ike,” shouted one: “Hurray!” and four lusty cheers followed.

All now became bustle and confusion, as each set himself to preparing for the morrow’s expedition. Guns were brought out and cleaned, locks examined, new flints put in place of old ones, bullets cast, powder-horns replenished, horses driven within the enclosure, saddles and bridles overhauled, and, in fact, every thing requisite for the journey was made ready as fast as possible.

Isaac, on the present occasion, was by no means indolent; for having examined his rifle, and found it in a good condition, he immediately brought forth an old saddle and bridle, somewhat the worse for wear, and set himself down to repairing them, wherever needed, by thongs of deerskin. While engaged in this laudable occupation, a young lad came running to and informed him, that there was a stranger down by the gate who wished to speak with him immediately.

“A stranger!” replied Isaac, looking up in surprise. “Why, what in the name o’ all creation can a stranger be wanting with me? Why don’t he come and see me, if he wants to see me, and not put me to all this here trouble, jest when I’m gitting ready to go and lick some o’ them red heathen like all nater?”

“Don’t know, sir,” answered the lad, “what his reasons be for not coming, any more nor you; but he said to the man as opened the gate for him, ‘Is Isaac Younker in the fort?’ and the man said, ‘Yes;’ and then he said to me, ‘Run, my little lad, and tell him to come here, and I’ll gin you some thing;’ and that’s all I knows about it.”

“Well, I ’spose I’ll have to go,” rejoined Isaac, rising to his feet; “but I don’t think much o’ the feller as puts a gentleman to all this here trouble, jest for nothing at all, as one may



say, when a feller's in a hurry too. Howsomever," continued he, soliloquizing, as he walked forward in the proper direction, "I 'spect it's some chap as wants to hoax me, or else he's putting on the extras; ef so, I'll fix him, so he won't want to do it agin right immediately, I reckon."



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Thus muttering to himself, Isaac drew near the front gate, against which, within the pallisades, the stranger in question was leaning, with his hat pressed down over his forehead, as though he desired concealment. His habiliments, after the fashion of the day, were originally of a superior quality to those generally worn on the frontiers, but soiled and torn in several places, as from the wear and tear of a long, fatiguing journey. His features, what portion of them could be seen under his hat, were pale and haggard, denoting one who had experienced many and severe vicissitudes. As Isaac approached, he raised his eyes from the ground, turned them full upon him, and then, taking a step forward, said, in a voice tremulous with emotion:

“Thank God! Isaac Younker, I am able to behold you once again.”

As a distinct view of his features fell upon the curious gaze of the latter, and his voice sounded in his ear, Isaac paused for a moment, as one stupefied with amazement; the next, he staggered back a pace or two, dropped his hands upon his knees, in a stooping posture, as if to peer more closely into the face of the stranger; and then bounding from the earth, he uttered a wild yell of delight, threw his hat upon the ground in a transport of joy, and rushed into the extended arms of Algernon Reynolds, where he wept like a child upon his neck, neither of them able to utter a syllable for something like a minute.

“The Lord be praised!” were the first articulate words of Isaac, in a voice choked with emotion. “God bless you! Mr. Reynolds;” and again the tears of joy fell fast and long. “Is it you?” resumed he, again starting back and gazing wildly upon the other, as if fearful of some mistake. “Yes! yes! it’s you—there’s no mistaking that thar face—the dead’s come to life again, for sartin;” and once more he sprung upon the other’s neck, with all the apparent delight of a mother meeting with a lost child.

“Yes, yes, Isaac, thank God! it is myself you really behold—one who never expected to see you again in this world,” rejoined Algernon, affected himself to tears, by the noble, heart-touching, affectionate manner of his companion. “But—but Isaac—our friends here—are they—all—all well, Isaac?” This was said in a voice, which, in spite of the speaker’s efforts to be calm, trembled from anxiety and apprehension.

“Why,” answered Isaac, in a somewhat hesitating manner, “I don’t know’s thar’s any body exactly sick—but—”

“But what, Isaac?” interrupted Algernon, with a start.

“Why, Ella, you know—”

“Yes, yes, Isaac—what of her?” and grasping him by the arm, Algernon gazed upon the other’s features with a look of alarm.



“Now don’t be skeered, Mr. Reynolds—thar han’t nothing happened—only I ‘spect she’s bin a thinking o’ you—who every body thought war dead—and she’s kind o’ grown thin and pale on’t, and we war gitting afeared it might end badly; but as you’ve come now, I know as how it’ll all be right agin.”



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Algernon released the speaker's arm, and for some moments gazed abstractedly upon the ground; while over his countenance swept one of those painful expressions of the deep workings of the soul, to which, from causes known to the reader, he was subject. At length he said, with a sigh:

"Well, Isaac, I have come to behold her once again, and then—"

He paused, apparently overpowered by some latent feeling.

"And then!" said Isaac, repeating the words, with a look of surprise: "I reckon you arn't a going to leave us agin soon, Mr. Reynolds?"

"There are circumstances, unknown to you, friend Isaac, which I fear will compel me so to do."

"What!" cried the other; "start off agin, and put your scalp into the hands of the infernal, ripscallious, painted Injens? No, by thunder! you shan't do it, Mr. Reynolds; for sting me with a nest o' hornets, ef I don't hang to ye like a tick to a sheep. No, no, Mr. Reynolds; don't—don't think o' sech a thing. But come, go in and see Ella—she'd be crazy ef she knew you war here."

"Ay," answered Algernon, sadly, "that is what I fear. I dare not meet her suddenly, Isaac—the shock might be too much for her nerves. I have sent for you to go first and communicate intelligence of my arrival, in a way to surprise her as little as possible."

"I'll do it, Mr. Reynolds; but—(here Isaac's voice trembled, his features grew pale as death, and his whole frame quivered with intense emotion)—but—but my—my father—what—"

He could say no more—his voice had completely failed him.

"Alas! Isaac," replied Algernon, deeply affected, and turning away his face; "think the worst."

"Oh God!" groaned Isaac, covering his face with his hands, and endeavoring to master his feelings. "But—but—he's dead, Mr. Reynolds?"

"He is."

For a few moments Isaac sobbed grievously; then withdrawing his hands, and raising himself to an erect posture, with a look of resignation, he said:

"I—I can bear it now—for I know he's in Heaven. Stay here, Mr. Reynolds, till I come back;" and he turned abruptly away.



In a few minutes Isaac returned—his features calm, but very pale—and silently motioned the other to follow him. On their way to the cottage, they had to cross the common, where their progress was greatly impeded by a crowd of persons, who, having heard of Algernon's arrival, were deeply anxious to gather what tidings he might have concerning the movements of the Indians. In reply, he informed them of the threats made by Girty to him while a captive; and that, having since been a prisoner of the British at Detroit, he had learned, from reliable sources, that a grand army of the Indians was forming to march upon the frontiers, attack some stronghold, and, if possible, desolate the entire country of Kentucky; and that he believed they were already on their way.

“More'n that, they're already here,” cried a voice; “for it's them, I 'spect, as has attacked Hoy's Station, of which we've just got news, and are gitting ready to march at daylight and attack them in turn. Arm, boys, arm! Don't let us dally here, and be lagging when the time comes to march and fight!”



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With this the speaker turned away, and the crowd instantly dispersed to resume their occupations of preparing for the coming expedition, while our hero and Isaac pressed forward to the cottage of Mrs. Younker. At the door they were met by the good dame herself, who, with eyes wet with tears, caught the proffered hand of Reynolds in both of hers, pressed it warmly in silence, and led him into the house. Ella, who was seated at a short distance, on the entrance of Algernon, rose to her feet, took a step forward, staggered back, and the next moment her insensible form was caught in the arms of the being she loved, but had long mourned as dead.

[Footnote 19: This happened in June, 1782. For particulars of Crawford's disastrous campaign, and horrible fate—See *Howe's Ohio*, p. 542.]

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ALARM AND STRATAGEM.

It was late at night; but still Algernon Reynolds sat beside Ella Barnwell, relating the sad story of his many hair-breadth escapes and almost intolerable sufferings. A rude sort of light, on a rough table, a few feet distant, threw its faint gleams over the homely apartment, and revealed the persons of Isaac and his mother, his wife and her parents, together with several others, attracted hither by curiosity, grouped around our hero, and listening to his thrilling narrative with breathless attention.

“After being sufficiently recovered from my wound and bruises, to proceed upon my journey, (continued Reynolds, to resume the account of his adventures since leaving him at Piqua) Girty came to me, and inquired what I thought of my fate, and how I felt concerning it; to which I replied, rather briefly, that it was no worse than I had expected, since knowing into whose hands I had fallen.

“‘Perhaps you think to escape?’ said he, sneeringly.

“‘I have no such hope,’ I replied.

“‘No, and by ——! you needn't have, either,’ rejoined he, with a savage grin; ‘for I'm determined you shall experience the torture to its fullest extent, if for nothing else than to revenge myself on you for your insults. I have only one thing to regret; and that is, that you didn't suffer in place of Younker, who is the only one whose torments I would I had had no hand in. But you—you I could see tormented forever, and laugh heartily throughout. But I'll wreak my vengeance on you yet; I will by ——!’ and with these words he left me to the charge of my guards, with whom he spoke a short time in the Indian tongue—probably giving them instructions of caution regarding myself.



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“It was about mid-day, when, with my arms tightly bound, we set off for Upper Sandusky, where, as I had previously been informed by Girty, I was condemned to suffer before the assembled tribes of the different nations, who would there shortly meet to receive their annual presents from the British. Our march, very fatiguing to myself, was without incident worthy of note, until one night we arrived at a small village on the Scioto river, where one of my guards, who could speak a little English, informed me resided the celebrated Mingo chief, Logan. A thought suddenly flashed across my brain. I had often heard of Logan, as the great and good chief, humane in his principles, and friendly to the whites—particularly those who were signally unfortunate—and it occurred to me, that could I gain an interview, I might perhaps prevail upon him to assist me in making my escape; and accordingly I at once expressed to my informant my desire of beholding one so celebrated. To my great delight, he replied that it was in Logan’s cabin I was to pass the night—such being the private orders, as I afterwards learned, of Black Hoof—who had, it seems, from some cause unknown to myself, formed the design of saving my life; and had sent by the Indian in question, a verbal request to Logan, to use all his influence to this effect.

“As we entered the village, we were immediately surrounded by men, women and children, who stared hard at me, but offered no violence. In a few minutes we gained Logan’s hut, in the door of which I observed standing an old, noble-looking warrior, with a commanding form, and mild, benevolent countenance, who proved to be the chief himself. To him one of my guards now addressed a few words in Indian; and uttering a grunt, and looking closely at me some seconds, he moved aside, and we all passed in. Here I soon had a good supper of homminy provided me, whereof I did not partake lightly, having been from sunrise to sunset without tasting a morsel of food. Immediately after I had finished my repast, Logan approached me, and, in tolerable good English, said:

“‘White man, where from?’

“I motioned toward the east, and answered:

“‘From sunrise—away beyond the big mountains.’

“Logan shook his head sadly, and replied, with a sigh:

“‘Ah! so all come. Poor Indian get run over—he no place lay he head. But how you come all tied so?’

“In answer, I entered into a full explanation of all that had occurred respecting the proceedings of Girty, from first to last. Logan listened throughout with great attention, shook his head, and rejoined:



“Ah! Simon Girty bad man—berry. Me always think so. Me sorry for you. Me do all me can for you. You shall sleep here. Me promise you nothing. Me tell you more sometime—to-morrow mebby!”

“With this he rose and left the cottage, and I saw him no more that night.



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“Early in the morning, however, he came to me, and said that I was to remain at his cabin through the day; that he had laid a plan to effect my release from death, but not from captivity—the latter not being in accordance with his principles, nor in his power; that for this purpose he had despatched two young braves to Upper Sandusky, to speak a word in my favor; but that I must not be elated with hope, as it was very doubtful how much they might effect.[21] Notwithstanding his caution to the contrary, my spirits became exceedingly exhilarated; and grasping his hand in both mine, I pressed it to my heart in silence; while my eyes became suffused with tears, and the old chief himself seemed not a little affected.

“Late the night following, the messengers returned; and on the morning succeeding, we resumed our journey. In parting from the noble old chief, he shook my hand cordially, but gave me no intimation of what would probably be my fate.

“When within sight of Upper Sandusky, crowds of warriors, women and children came out to meet us, and, seeing me, set up many a hideous yell, until I again became alarmed for my safety, and fearful that Logan had not succeeded in his magnanimous design. This impression was the more strongly confirmed, shortly after, by one of my guides informing me that I must again run the gauntlet. Accordingly every preparation being speedily effected, I started upon the course; but possessing more strength and activity than before, and a better knowledge of what I had to perform, I succeeded in breaking through the lines, and reaching the council house unharmed. Here I was safe for the present; or until, as I was informed, my fate should once more be decided by a grand council.

“The council in question was speedily convened; and on the opening thereof, a British agent, one Captain Druyer, made his appearance, and requested permission to address the assemblage, which was readily granted. He spoke rapidly, for a few minutes, with great vehemence; and though I understood not a word he uttered, yet something whispered me it was in my favor; for I observed that the glances directed towards me, were milder far than those on my previous trial.

“To sum up briefly, it seems that Logan had despatched his messengers to Druyer, urging him to exert all his influence in obtaining my reprieve; and to effect this humane design, the latter had begun by stating to the Indians that their great white father, of whom he was an humble representative, was at war with the Long Knives; that nothing would please him better, than to hear of his red children having sacrificed all their enemies; but that in war, policy was oftentimes more effectual than personal revenge in accomplishing their destruction; and that he doubted not, if the prisoner present were put in his possession and taken to Detroit, that the great white chiefs of his own nation would there be able to extort from him such valuable information as would make the final conquest



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of the Long Knives comparatively easy. To this proposition, which was received rather coldly, he had added, that for this privilege he was willing to pay a fair recompense; and that so soon as all the information necessary had been gleaned from the prisoner, he should, if thought advisable, again be returned to them, to be put to death or not, as they might see proper. To this arrangement, all having at last consented, the gallant Captain advanced to me, shook my hand, and said that my life was for the present safe, and that I was to accompany him to Detroit, where I would be treated as a prisoner of war.

“It is impossible to describe my feelings, on hearing this joyful intelligence; therefore I shall leave you to imagine them, aided as you will be by your own experience under similar circumstances. And now let me close my long narrative as briefly as possible; for the hour is already late, and I must rise betimes on the morrow to join this expedition against the savages.”

“Surely, Algernon,” exclaimed Ella, with pale features, “you are not going to leave us again so soon?”

“Where duty calls, Ella, there is my place; and if I fall in honorable action, in defence of my country and friends, perchance my life may atone for matters whereof *you* are not ignorant.”

Ella buried her face in her hands, to conceal her emotion; and Algernon, with an effort at composure, again proceeded.

“At Detroit I experienced kind treatment, as a prisoner of war; but still it was captivity, and I longed for freedom. Many, many an hour did I employ in planning my escape; yet month upon month rolled on, and still I remained in durance. At last startling rumors reached me, that the Indians of the different tribes were banding together, to march upon the frontiers and depopulate the country; and remembering the savage threat of Girty, I doubted not he was the instigator, and would be leader of the expedition; and I determined, at all hazards, if such a thing were in the province of possibility, to effect my escape, and give the country warning of the impending danger. To be brief, I succeeded, as my presence here tells for itself; but no one knows, save myself, and He who knows all things, the misery I suffered from fatigue, lack of food, and the fear of again being captured by some roving band of savages—the which I shall detail, perhaps, should my life be spared me, at some future period, but not at the present.

“I swam the Ohio, a short distance above the Falls, and made my way, to the best of my judgment, directly towards Boonesborough, where I arrived, a few days since, in a state of complete exhaustion. The noble old hunter received me warmly; from whose lips I heard, with thrilling emotion, the particulars of the pursuit, headed by himself, and the



rescue of two of my dearest friends, their present abode, as also many startling events that had transpired during my absence; and in return, I communicated to him the alarming intelligence which I have before alluded to. So soon as I felt myself sufficiently strong for the journey, I left Boonesborough for Bryan's Station, and here I am, and thus my tale."



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“And a mighty tough time you’ve had on’t Mr. Reynolds, for sartin, and no mistake,” rejoined Mrs. Younker, with a sigh, wiping her eyes. “Ah! me—poor Ben!—poor Ben!—I’m a widder now in arnest. Well, the Lord’s will be done. The good Book says, ‘The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord;’ and them good words, my children and friends, must be our consolation.”

But little more was said; for each of the party felt oppressed with a weight of sadness, at the thought of the many mournful events a year had brought forth; and as the hour was late, each and all presently betook themselves to rest.

Meantime, the preparations of the garrison for the morrow had been going forward in every part of the station; lights were moving to and fro; and all within the cabins, and on the common, was bustle and activity. At last the sounds gradually ceased, the lights went out one by one, and all finally became tranquil for the night.

About an hour before day-break, the sleepers began to rouse themselves, and all was soon again in commotion. Horses were led forth, saddled, returned and fed, and every thing got in readiness to throw open the gates and march forth so soon as it should become sufficiently light for the purpose.

At last came the exciting moment of all. Some were standing in groups, and weeping bitterly at the thought of parting, perhaps for the last time, with their fathers, husbands and sons; some were running to and fro with anxious messages; some were clasping each other to their hearts, in agonizing silence, and praying in secret that the Great Ruler of all might preserve and happily restore them again to the idols of their affections; some had mounted their noble steeds, or were leading them forth for the purpose—and all was in Babel-like confusion.

“Farewell, my friends,” said Algernon, as he stood in the door of Mrs. Younker’s cottage, grasping one after another the proffered hands of its weeping inmates, among whom was the wife and mother-in-law of Isaac. “Farewell, dearest Ella; we may never meet again on earth. Farewell—farewell!” and pressing her hand to his lips, he rushed forth with a heaving heart, not daring to trust himself longer in her presence.

Isaac and his father-in-law followed the example of Reynolds, moved away with weeping eyes, and all were quickly in their saddles.

A few minutes later the roll was called, and the order given by the commanding officer to form in double file and throw open the eastern gate. Scarcely were the words uttered, when there arose a series of terrific Indian yells, accompanied by a volley of firearms, and every face became blanched with surprise and dismay, and looked from one to the other in astonishment.



“By heavens!” cried a voice; “our fighting ’ll be at home, I reckon, judging by the specimen before us.”

Dismounting from their horses, the garrison, together with many of the women and children, now rushed to the southern pickets, where, through loop-holes and crevices, they beheld, only a few rods distant, about a hundred savages, running to and fro, jumping up and down, whooping, yelling, screeching and firing at the station, accompanied with all the wild, fantastic gestures of loosened madmen.



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“Thar’s not more nor a hundred o’ the varmints, any how,” cried Isaac; “and I reckon as how we can jest lick them, and no mistake. Hurray for a fight.”

“Hurray for a fight!” echoed a dozen voices, as they rushed back to remount their horses.

“Hold!” cried the deep voice of Father Albach. “Hold! lads; don’t do things rash! Them Indians wouldn’t be dancing and sky-larking round that way, ef thar warn’t some object in it, you may depend on.”

“And that’s my opinion too,” answered another gray-headed veteran. “The fact is, they’re only a decoy party, sent our thar from the main body, jest to draw us out, so that the others can rush on and make an easy conquest on’t. I tell you, friends, thar’s no mistaking it; we’re surrounded by a tremendous body o’ the red heathen, and we’re likely to have warm work on’t. I’ve lived in the woods all my life, and I know the nater of the painted varmints as well as I know my own. Ef them war all thar war on ’em, we’d have seen very different proceedings, I assure you.”

“But what’s to be done?” cried several voices in consternation.

“I would suggest that we send immediately to Lexington for a reinforcement,” spoke up Reynolds, in reply.

“Who’ll volunteer to go with me on the dangerous mission?” cried a young man, by the name of Bell.

“I will!” instantly responded another, called Tomlinson.

“Brave lads!” returned Father Albach. “You’ll be doing us and your country a service, which we at least will ever gratefully remember. I’d advise your leaving by the western gate, riding round the station, and keeping away to the right, and you’ll maybe pass them without trouble. But ef you go, now’s your only chance.”

As he spoke, the young men in question sprung forward to their horses, and immediately quitted the fort, amid cheers for their gallantry and courage, and prayers for their safety and success.

A council of the leading men was now speedily convened to deliberate upon the best means of insuring the safety of themselves, their wives, and children.

“They’ll no doubt attack us on the western side,” said Father Albach, “where the pallisades are somewhat out o’ kilter; and it’s my opinion, that we’d better repair them as soon as possible, and station the main part of the garrison thar, ready to receive ’em with a military salute, while we send out a few o’ our young men to fire on them as is in



sight, to deceive the others; for I believe with neighbor Nickolson, here, that thar's a large party in ambush close by."

"Ay, and doubtless led by the renegade," said Reynolds; "as I presume this Indian army is the same whose approach I have foretold. Thank God!" added he, with energy and emotion, as his mind reverted to Ella, "that they came as they did; for an hour later, and they would have found the fort defenceless, when all within would have been food for the tomahawk and scalping knife."



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He shuddered at the thought, and placed his hand to his eyes.

“Indeed, it seems like a direct Providence in our favor,” rejoined another.

“But thar’s one thing you’ve overlooked, in your proposition, Albach,” said the old veteran called Nickolson. “Ef the seige be protracted, what are we to do for water?”

Each face of the company blanched, and turned toward the speaker with a startled look. It was a question of the most grave importance, and all felt it to be so. The spring was without the pallisades, as we have previously mentioned, on the northwestern side of the station. The path to it was through a rank growth of tall weeds, wherein the main body of the Indians was supposed to be concealed—so that, should the garrison venture forth in that direction, they would in all probability be cut off, and the fort fall into the possession of the enemy. This of course was not to be thought of. But what was to be done? To be without water in a protected siege, was a dangerous and painful alternative. In this agitating dilemma, one of the council suddenly exclaimed:

“I have it!—I have it!” All looked at the speaker in breathless expectation. “I have it!” continued he joyfully. “The women!—the women!”

“The women!” echoed several voices at once.

“Ay! you know they’re in the habit of going for water—and this the savages know too—and ef they venture forth by themselves, as usual, the wily scoundrels will be deceived for once—for they won’t mistrust thar hiding place is known; and as thar object is to carry the fort by stratagem, they won’t unmask till they hear firing on t’other side.”

“Good!—good!” exclaimed several voices; and forthwith the council proceeded to summon all the women of the station, and make known their plan for procuring a supply of water.

Not a little consternation was expressed in the faces of the latter, when informed of the perilous undertaking required of them.

“What! go right straight in among the Injen warmints—them male critters?” cried an old maid, holding up her hands in horror.

“Do you think we’re invisible, and they can’t see us?” said a second.

“Or bullet proof?” added a third.

“Or that our scalps arn’t worth as much as yourn?” rejoined a fourth.

“Or of so little account you arn’t afeared to lose us?” put in a fifth.



“We don’t think any thing o’ the kind,” returned the spokesman on the part of the council; “but we do think, as I before explained, that you can go and come in safety; and that ef we don’t have a supply o’ water, we’re likely to perish any how, and might as well throw open the gates and be butchered at once.”

This last brief speech produced the desired effect, and a few words from Mrs. Younker completely carried the day.



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“Is this here a time,” she cried, with enthusiasm, her eyes flashing as she spoke, “to be hanging back, till the all important moment’s gone by, and then choke to death for want o’water? What’s our lives any more’n the men’s, that we should be so orful skeered about a few ripscallious, painted varmint, as arn’t o’ no account, no how? Han’t I bin amongst ’em once?—and didn’t the Lord preserve me?—and shall I doubt His protection now, when a hundred lives is at stake? No! no! I’m not skeered; and I’ll go, too, ef I has to go alone. Who’ll follow me?”

“I will!” cried one.

“And I!” said a second.

“We’ll all go!” exclaimed several voices.

Dispersing in every direction, each flew to her own cabin, and seizing upon a bucket, hurried to the rear gate, where, all being assembled, they were at once given exit.[20]

Perhaps in the whole annals of history, a more singular proceeding than this—of men allowing their wives and daughters to deliberately put themselves into the power of a ferocious, blood-thirsty enemy, and women with nerve and courage to dare all so bravely—can not be found. But these were times of stern necessity, when each individual—man, woman or child—was called upon to dare and do that which would surprise and startle their descendants. Still it must not be supposed that they, on either side, were without fears, and those of the most alarming kind. Many a palpitating heart moved over the ground to the spring, and many a pale face was reflected in its placid waters; while many a courageous soul within the fort trembled at the thought of the venture, and what might be its result, as they had never done before—even with death staring them in the face—and as they probably would never do again. Each party, however, knew the step taken to be a serious alternative; and the women believed that on their caution and presence of mind, their own lives, and those of their fathers, husbands, and children were depending; and in consequence of this, they assumed an indifference and gaiety the most foreign to their present feelings. As for Algernon, we leave the task to lovers of imagining his feelings, when he saw the lovely Ella depart with the rest. It was indeed a most anxious time for all; but the stratagem succeeded to a charm; and, to use the words of a historian on the subject, “Although their steps became quicker and quicker on their return, and, when near the gate of the fort, degenerated into a rather unmilitary celerity, attended with some little crowding in passing the aperture, yet not more than one-fifth of the water was spilled, and the eyes of the youngest had not dilated to more than double their ordinary size.”

[Footnote 20: In both the foregoing and subsequent details, we have followed history to the letter.]



[Footnote 21: The reader, familiar with the history of the early pioneers of Kentucky, will doubtless observe a similarity between the account given by Reynolds of his escape from captivity, and that of Gen. Simon Kenton, as narrated by his biographer, Col. John McDonald.]



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CHAPTER XVII.

THE ATTACK AND RESULT.

Meantime the repairing of the pallisades had been going bravely forward, every moment rendering the garrison more and more secure, which served not a little to revive their spirits; and when at length the women had all entered, the gate been barred, and they had seen themselves well supplied with water, they could restrain their feelings no longer, and one grand, simultaneous cheer burst from their lips.

“Now then,” said Father Albach, “let 'em come, and I reckon as how they'll meet with a warm reception. But to draw 'em on, we must send out a party to make a feint to fight the others.”

Thirteen young men, among whom was Isaac, were accordingly selected, to pass out by the eastern gate and commence firing rapidly; while the remainder, with loaded muskets, were to range themselves along the western pickets, and be ready to pour their deadly contents into the swarthy horde of besiegers, in case their attack should be made in that quarter. As the young men departed, all relapsed into a solemn silence of anxious suspense; which was presently broken by the rapid discharge of firearms, outside the fort, accompanied with cheers and yells from both the whites and Indians. Now was the all important moment—the war sounds were gradually growing more and more distant—and every eye of the inner garrison was strained in breathless expectation, in the direction of the spring, while every rifle was cocked and in rest, ready for any emergency.

Suddenly the tall weeds—which a moment before had been quietly waving in the morning breeze—became dreadfully agitated; and the next instant, as if by magic, the ground was peopled by some five hundred hideous savages; who, led on by the notorious renegade, now rushed forward, with wild frantic yells, to the western pallisades, where our gallant little band stood drawn up ready to receive them. They had advanced in a tremendous body, to within a few feet of the fort, when the word “Fire,” uttered in a clear, manly voice, resounded above their own frightful yells, and was followed the next moment by a terrible volley of leaden balls, that carried death and terror into their serried ranks. With one simultaneous yell of rage, consternation, and disappointment, they halted a moment in indecision; when another death-dealing volley, from the gallant Kentuckians, decided their course of action; and again yelling fearfully, they parted to the right and left, and bearing their dead and wounded with them, rushed for the covert of a neighboring forest. At the same moment, the party which had sallied forth upon the Lexington road, to make a feint of attacking their decoys, entered the fort by the eastern gate, in high spirits at the success of their maneuver.



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The warfare was now carried on in the usual manner, after the failure of stratagem, for several hours, with but little success on either side. The block-houses were immediately manned by the garrison, who by this means could command every point of compass; and whenever an Indian came in sight, he was at once made the target for three or four keen riflemen, who rarely missed their mark. In consequence of this, the wily savage rarely showed himself in an open manner; but would creep stealthily among the tall weeds, or among the tall standing corn, that covered about an hundred acres of ground on the southern side of the station, or ensconce himself behind some stump or trunk of a tree in the vicinity, and discharge his rifle at any mark thought suitable, or let fly his burning arrows upon the roofs of the cabins. To avoid, if possible, a conflagration, every boy of ten years and upwards, was ordered upon the roofs of the houses, to throw off these burning missiles; but notwithstanding their great vigilance, so rapidly were they sent at one period, that two of the cabins, being in a very combustible state, took fire, to the great consternation of all, and, before they could be extinguished, were totally consumed. Here again the hand of an overruling Providence was manifest; for a light wind drove the flames from the other buildings, and thus a terrible and fatal calamity was averted.

From the attack in the morning by the main body, a sharp fire was maintained on both sides till towards noon; when it began to slacken considerably; and a little past meridian ceased altogether—the savages having withdrawn for another purpose, as we shall show anon, leaving the garrison in suspense as to whether they had totally abandoned the siege or not.

We have previously stated that Bryan's Station stood on a gentle rise on the southern bunk of the Elkhorn, whereby it commanded a view of much of the surrounding country. A considerable portion of the land in the immediate vicinity had been cleared and was under cultivation; but still, in some places, the forest approached to a close proximity; so that it was impossible, without traversing the ground, to determine whether the foe had withdrawn altogether, or, as was more probable, now lay hidden therein, awaiting an unguarded moment of the besieged to renew hostilities. Where the Maysville and Lexington road now runs, was a long narrow lane, bounded on one side by the large cornfield before alluded to, and on the other by a heavy wood. Through this lane the reinforcements from Lexington must naturally pass, to reach the station; and knowing this, and that they were expected, (for the escape of the two couriers in the morning had not been overlooked) the Indians, to the number of more than three hundred, had concealed themselves in the thicket, within pistol shot of the road, and were now quietly waiting to cut them off.

Notwithstanding the quiet which had succeeded the sounds of warfare, the garrison were still on the lookout, fearful of being surprised. In this manner an hour or two passed away, without any event occurring worth being recorded, when a voice shouted joyfully:



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“The Lexington reinforcements are at hand!”

In a moment the whole station was in commotion—men, women, and children rushing to the block-houses and pallisades nearest to and overlooking the long lane just mentioned. The force in question numbered some sixteen horsemen, and about twice as many foot; who, not having heard any firing, nor seen any savages thus far, were somewhat carelessly approaching the fort at a leisure pace, thinking, as was not uncommon in those times of danger, when such things were often exaggerated, that perhaps the alarm had been unfounded, or, at the most, based only on slight grounds. They had been overtaken on the road between Lexington and Hoy’s station, for which place they had marched on receiving the news of Holder’s defeat, and had been informed by Tomlinson and Bell that Bryan’s station was surrounded by a large body of Indians, of whose numbers they knew nothing. On hearing this, and knowing the unguarded condition of Lexington, they had instantly turned back, and pressed forward at what speed they could to the assistance of their neighbors, of whom they were now in sight.

“Great Heaven!” cried the voice of the look-out, at this moment, in consternation. “See!—see!—they are ambushed, and will all be cut off!”

As he spoke, a long rolling line of fire could he discerned; and presently was heard the report of a tremendous volley of musketry, followed by a cloud of dust and smoke, which for a time completely hid them from view. In a few minutes, however, the horsemen were seen close at hand, spurring forward with lightning speed. Some three or four individuals instantly sprung to and threw open the eastern gate, and in less than two minutes they reined in their panting steeds in the court of the station. At the first shot of the savages, they had put spurs to their horses, and, as the ground was very dry, a cloud of dust had instantly enveloped them, by which means, fortunately, every one of them had escaped unharmed, although on their way they had drawn the fire of more than three hundred Indian rifles, successively discharged at them while passing the lines of the ambuscade. Not thus easily, however, escaped their companions on foot.

At the commencement of the firing, these latter were advancing toward the station through the cornfield, and, being completely hidden from the savages thereby, they might, had they pressed rapidly forward, have gained the fort in safety. Not so was their conduct. They were brave, hot-blooded, noble men. They could not think of flying and leaving their friends in danger; and more noble and reckless than wise and prudent, they turned and rushed to their assistance. They saw their error, but too late to retrieve it. Their friends had fled, and were safe, but they were now placed within a few paces of three hundred blood-thirsty warriors. On seeing them, the savages uttered the most hideous yells, rushed forward and cut them



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off from the fort, and then sprung after them, tomahawk in hand. Luckily, however, for our little band of heroes, the Indians had just discharged their rifles, and their own were loaded; by which means, when hard pressed, they turned and kept their foes at bay—the savage, in all cases, being too cautious to rush upon a weapon so deadly, with only a tomahawk wherewith to defend himself. Moreover, the corn was stout and tall, among which they ran and dodged with great agility; and whenever an Indian halted to load his rifle, the fugitive for whom its contents were designed, generally managed, by extra exertion, to gain a safe distance before it was completed, and thus effect his escape. Some five or six, however, were so unfortunate as to be knocked or shot down, when they were immediately tomahawked and scalped; but the remainder, in various directions and by various artifices, succeeded in making their escape. A few reached the fort in a roundabout manner; but the main body of them returned to Lexington; where, had the savages followed them, they would have found an easy conquest. Fortunately for the whites, however, the red men were not so inclined; and pursuing them a few hundred yards only, the latter abandoned the chase as hopeless.

One of the most active and ferocious on the part of the Indians during this skirmish, which lasted nearly an hour, was Simon Girty. Enraged to madness at the failure of his stratagem in the morning, he gnashed his teeth and rushed after the fugitives, with all the fury depicted on his countenance of a demon let loose from the infernal regions of Pluto. Two with his own hand he sent to their last account; and was in hot pursuit of a third—a handsome, active youth—who, being hard pressed, turned round, and raising his rifle to his shoulder, with a scornful smile upon his face, bitterly exclaimed, as he discharged it:

“Take that, you —— renegade, and see how it'll digest!”

As he fired, Girty fell, and perceiving this, the Indians, with a yell of despair, instantly gathered round him, while the man effected his escape. This closed the exciting contest of the cornfield—which had been witnessed throughout from the station with feelings better imagined than described—but, unfortunately for humanity, did not end the career of Girty; for the ball had taken effect in his shot pouch instead of his body; and though wounded, his case was in no wise critical; and he was soon able to take his place at the council fire, to deliberate upon what further should be done.[22]

The council alluded to, lasted some two or three hours. The Indians were disheartened at their loss in the morning, and the failure of all their stratagems, even to cutting off the reinforcements of the enemy. They were sufficiently convinced they could not carry the fort by storm; and they also believed it unsafe to longer remain where they were; as the alarm of their presence had spread far and wide, and there was



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no telling at what moment a force equal to their own might be brought against them; therefore, they were now anxious to abandon the siege and return home. Girty, however, was by no means satisfied with the turn matters had taken. He had with great difficulty and masterly persuasion succeeded in getting them to unite and march in a body (contrary to their usual mode of warfare, which consisted in skirmishing with small parties,) against the whites; and he now felt that his reputation was in a manner staked on the issue; consequently he could illy bear to leave without the trial of one more stratagem. This he made known to the chiefs of the council, and offered, in case of failure, to retreat with them at once.

As this last design of Girty was merely to deceive the whites, and frighten them into capitulation, without any further risk to themselves, the Indians agreed to it, and the council broke up.

It was nearly sundown; and every one in the station had been on the alert, ready to repel another attack should the Indians renew hostilities, as was not unlikely, when a voice cried out:

“Hang me to the nearest cross-bar, ef the red sons of Satan hav’nt sent out a flag of truce!”

This at once drew the attention of most of the garrison to a small white flag on a temporary pole, which at no great distance was gradually nearing them, supported in an upright position by some object crawling along on the ground. At length the object gained a stump; and having mounted it, was at once recognized by Reynolds as the renegade—although Girty on this expedition had doffed the British uniform, in which we once described him, and now appeared in a costume not unlike his swarthy companions.

“Halloo the garrison!” he shouted.

“Halloo yourself!—what’s wanted?” cried a voice back again.

“Respect this flag of truce, and listen!” rejoined Girty; and waving it from side to side as he spoke, he again proceeded: “Courage can do much in war, and is in all cases a noble trait, which I for one do ever respect; but there may be circumstances where manly courage can avail nothing, and where to practice it only becomes fool-hardy, and is sure to draw down certain destruction on the actor or actors. Such I hasten to assure you, gentlemen, is exactly your case in the present instance. No one admires the heroism which you have, one and all, even to your women and children, this day displayed, more than myself; but I feel it my duty to inform you that henceforth the utmost daring of each and all of you combined can be of no avail whatever. Resistance



on your part will henceforth be a crime rather than a virtue. It is to save bloodshed, and you all from a horrible fate, that I have ventured hither at the risk of my life. You are surrounded by an army of six hundred savages. To-morrow there will be a large reinforcement with cannon; when, unless you surrender now, your bulwark will be demolished,



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and you, gentlemen, with your wives and children, will become victims to an unrelenting, cruel foe. Death will then be the mildest of your punishments. I would save you from this. I am one of your race; and, although on the side of your enemy, would at this time counsel and act toward you a friendly part. Do you not know me? I am Simon Girty—an agent of the British. Take my advice and surrender now your fort into my hands, and I swear to you not a single hair of your heads shall be harmed. But if you hold out until you are carried by storm I can not save you; for the Indians will have become thirsty for your blood, and no commander on earth could then restrain them. Be not hasty in rejecting my friendly offer. It is for your good I have spoken—and so weigh the matter well. I pause for an answer.”

The effect of Girty’s speech upon the garrison, was to alarm them not a little. His mention of reinforcements with cannon, caused many a stout heart to tremble, and many a face to blanch and turn to its neighbor with an expression of dismay. Against cannon they knew, as Girty stated, resistance would be of no avail; and cannon had, in 1780, advanced up the Licking Valley, and destroyed Riddle’s and Martin’s stations. If Girty told the truth, their case was truly alarming.

As the renegade concluded, Reynolds—who saw the effect his words had produced, and who, knowing him better than any of the others, believed his whole tale to be false—at once begged leave to reply for the garrison, which was immediately granted. Placing himself in full view of Girty, he answered as follows, in a tone of raillery:

“Well done, my old worthy companion! and are you really there, carrying out another of your noble and humane designs? When, O when, I humbly beg to know, will your philanthropic efforts end? I suppose not until death has laid his claim, and the devil has got his due. You ask us if we know you. What! not know the amiable Simon Girty, surnamed the Renegade? Could you indeed for a moment suppose such a thing possible? Know you? Why, we have an untrusty, worthless cur-dog in the fort here, that has been named Simon Girty, in compliment to you—he is so like you in every thing that is ugly, wicked and mean. You say you expect reinforcements of artillery. Well, if you stay in this quarter long, I know of no one that will be more likely to need them than yourself and the cowardly cut-throats who call you chief. We too expect reinforcements; for the country is roused in every direction; and if you remain here twenty-four hours longer, the scalps of yourself and companions will be drying on our cabins. Bring on your cannon and blaze away as soon as you please! We shall fear you not, even then; for if you succeed in entering, along with your naked, rascally companions, we shall set our old women to work, and have you scourged to death with rods, of which we have on hand a goodly stock for the purpose. And now to wind up, allow me to say I believe you to be a liar, and *know* you to be a most depraved, inhuman villain. This knowledge of your character is not second-hand. I paid dearly for it, by a year’s captivity. I defied you

when in your power: I spit at and defy you now in behalf of the garrison! My name you may remember. It is Algernon Reynolds. What would you more?"[23]



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“Would that I had you in my power again,” shouted back Girty; “for by ——! I would willingly forego all other vengeance on the whites, to take my revenge on you. I regret the garrison did not choose some one to reply who was not already doomed to death. It was my desire to save bloodshed; but my offer has been rejected from the mouth of one I hate; and now I leave you to your fate. To-morrow morning will see your bulwarks in ruins, and yourselves, your wives and little ones, in the power of a foe that never forgives an injury nor forgets an insult. Farewell till then! I bide my time.”

As Girty concluded altogether, he began to ease himself down from the stump, when his progress was not a little accelerated by hearing a voice from the garrison cry out:

“Shoot the —— rascal!—don’t let him escape!”

Instantly some five or six rifles were brought to bear upon him; and his fate might then have been decided forever, had not the voice of Nickolson warned them to beware of firing upon a flag of truce. Girty, however, made good his retreat, and the garrison was disturbed no more that night. Before morning the Indians, after having killed all the domestic cattle they could find belonging to the station, began their retreat; and by daylight their camp was deserted; though many of their fires were still burning brightly, and several pieces of meat were found on roasting-sticks around them, all showing a late and hasty departure.

[Footnote 22: The foregoing is strictly authentic.]

[Footnote 23: This celebrated reply of Reynolds to Girty, is published, with but slight variations, in all the historical sketches that we have seen relating to the attack on Bryan’s Station and is, perhaps, familiar to the reader.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FOE PURSUED.

As Algernon had stated to Girty, the country was indeed roused to a sense of their danger. The news of the storming of Bryan’s Station had spread fast and far; and, early on the day succeeding the attack, reinforcements began to come in from all quarters; so that by noon of the fourth day, the station numbered over one hundred and eighty fighting men.

Colonel Daniel Boone, accompanied by his son Israel, and brother Samuel, commanded a considerable force from Boonesborough—Colonel Stephen Trigg, a large company from Harrodsburgh—and Colonel John Todd, the militia from Lexington. A large portion of these forces was composed of commissioned officers, who, having heard of the attack on Bryan’s Station by an overwhelming body of Indians, had hurried to the scene of hostilities, and, like brave and gallant soldiers as they were, had at once

taken their places in the ranks as privates. Most noted among those who still held command under the rank of Colonel, were Majors Harlan, McGary, McBride, and Levi Todd; and Captains Bulger, Patterson and Gordon.



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Of those now assembled, Colonel Todd, as senior officer, was allowed to take command—though, from the tumultuous council of war which was held in the afternoon, it appears that each had a voice, and that but little order was observed. It was well known that Colonel Benjamin Logan was then in the act of raising a large force in Lincoln county; and at the furthest would join them in twenty-four hours; which would render them safe in pursuing the savages; and for this purpose the more prudent, among whom was our old friend, Colonel Boone, advised their delay; stating, as a reason, that the Indians were known to outnumber them all, as three to one; and that to pursue them with a force so small, could only result, should they be overtaken, in a total defeat of the whites. Besides which, Boone stated that the scouts who had been sent out to examine the Indian trail, had reported that it was very broad, and that the trees on either side had been marked with their tomahawks; thereby showing a willingness on the part of the enemy to be pursued, and a design to draw the whites into an ambuscade, the consequences of which must necessarily be terrible. In this view of the case, Colonel Boone was strongly seconded by Major McGary, who, though a hot-headed young officer, eager on almost all occasions for a fight, now gave his voice on the side of prudence.

But these prudent measures were combatted and overruled by Todd; who, being an ambitious man, foresaw that, in waiting for Logan, he would be deprived of his authority as commander-in-chief of the expedition, and the glory which a successful battle would now cast upon him. By him it was urged, in opposition to Boone and McGary, that to await the arrival of Colonel Logan, was only to act the part of cowards, and allow the Indians a safe retreat; that in case they were overtaken and their numbers found to be double their own—which report he believed to be false—the ardor and superior skill of the Kentuckians would more than make them equal, and the victory and glory would be their own. Whereas, should the Indians be allowed to escape without an effort to harass them, the Kentuckians would be held eternally disgraced in the minds of their countrymen.

The dispute on the matter waxed warm, high words ensued, and the discussion was in a fair way of being drawn out to great extent; when Boone, becoming tired and disgusted with the whole proceedings, replied:

“Well, I’ve given my conscientious opinion about the affair, and now you can do as you please. Of course I shall go with the majority, and my seniors in command; and ef the decision’s for a fight, why a fight we must venter, though every man o’ Kaintuck be laid on his back for the risking. Ef we fail—and its my opine we shall—let them as takes the responsibility bear the blame. I’ll give my voice, though, to the last, that we’d better wait the reinforcements o’ Colonel Logan.”

“Sir!” exclaimed Colonel Todd, turning fiercely to Boone; “if you are not a *coward*, you talk like one! Don’t you know, sir, that if we wait for Logan, he will gain all the laurels?—and that if we press forward, we shall gain all the glory?”



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“As to my being a coward, Colonel Todd,” replied Boone, mildly, with dignity, “when the word’s explained so as I know the full meaning on’t, perhaps I’ll be able to decide ef I be or not. Ef it means prudence in a time o’ danger, on which the welfare o’ my country and the lives o’ my countrymen depends, I’d rather be thought cowardly than rash. Ef it means a fear to risk my own poor body in defence o’ others, I reckon as how my past life’ll speak for itself; and for the futer, wharsomever Colonel Todd dars to venter, Daniel Boone dars to lead. As to *glory*, we’ll talk about that arter the battle’s fought.”

Thus ended the discussion; and the matter being put to vote, it was carried by an overwhelming majority in favor of Todd’s proposition, that the Indians should be pursued without further delay. It was now about three o’clock in the afternoon; and immediately on the final decision being made, the council broke up, and orders were rapidly given to prepare to depart forthwith. All the horses in or about the station were now collected together, on which most of the officers and many of the privates were soon mounted; and by four o’clock the eastern gate was thrown open, the order to march given by Colonel Todd, and the procession, composed of the flower of Kentucky’s gallant sons, moved forth, amid sighs and tears from the opposite sex. Reynolds—who, during the past two or three days, since the retreat of the enemy, had employed his leisure moments in the company of the being he loved, and who was now finely mounted on a superb charger which had been presented him by Colonel Boone—turned upon his saddle, as he was leaving the station, and waved another adieu to Ella, who stood in the door of her cottage, gazing upon his noble form, with a pale cheek, tearful eye, and beating heart. She raised her lily hand, and, with a graceful motion, returned his parting salute; and then, to conceal her emotion, retired into the house.

The Indians, it was found, had followed the buffalo trace, and, according to the account given by the scouts, had made their trail obvious as possible, by hacking the trees on either side with their tomahawks. Their camp fires, however, were very few, comparatively speaking, which to Boone seemed plainly evident of a desire to mask their numbers. He had lived in the woods all his life, was the oldest settler on the borders, and had been several times a prisoner of the Indians; so that he was familiar with their artifices for decoying their enemies; and he believed, from what he saw, that it was their desire to be followed by the whites; and that they would probably seek to draw the latter into an ambushade in the vicinity of the Blue Licks, where the wild country was particularly favorable to their purpose. In imagination he already saw the disastrous result that was destined to follow this hasty expedition; but his counsel to the contrary had been disregarded, and it was not a time now to dampen the ardor of the soldiers, on which alone success could depend, by expressing his fears and laying himself liable to further reproach and contumely. He had said and done all that was consistent in his situation to prevent the present step; and he now saw proper to keep his fears of the result to himself; the more so, as a retreat was out of the question.



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About dark the party came to halt, and encamped in the woods for the night. Early on the ensuing morning they resumed their march; and a little before noon reached the southern bluffs of Licking river, opposite the Lower Blue Lick, distant from Bryan's Station some thirty-six miles, and the place where, according to the opinion of Boone, the savages would be likely to lie in wait to give them battle.

The scenery in the vicinity of the Licks, even at the present day, is peculiarly wild and romantic; but at the period in question, it was relieved by nothing in the shape of civilization. The Licks themselves had for ages been the resort of buffalo and other wild animals, which had come there to lick the saline rocks, and had cropped the surrounding hills of every green thing, thereby giving them a barren, desolate, gloomy appearance. On the northern bank—the one opposite our little army—arose a tremendous bluff, entirely destitute of vegetation, the brow of which was trodden hard by the immense herds of buffalo which had passed over it from time immemorial on their way to and from the salt springs at its base. To add to its dismal appearance, the rains of centuries had sloughed deep gullies in its side, and washed the earth from the rocks around its base, which, being blackened in the sun, now rose grim and bare, frowning in their majesty like fettered monsters of the infernal regions. As you ascended this ridge, a hard level trace or road led back for something like a mile—free from tree, stump or bush—when you came to a point where two ravines, one on either hand, met at the top, and, thickly wooded, ran in opposite directions down to the river, which, beginning on the right, went sweeping round a large circuit, in the form of an iron magnet, and made a sort of inland peninsula of the bluff in question. Back from this buffalo trace, on the southern bank of the Licking, dark heavy woods extended for miles in every direction, and made the whole scene impressive with a kind of gloomy grandeur.

As our gallant band of Kentuckians gained the river, they descried some three or four savages leisurely ascending the stony ridge on the opposite side. On perceiving the troops, the Indians paused, gazed at them a few moments in silence, and then, quietly continuing their ascent, disappeared on the other side. A halt was now ordered by Colonel Todd, and a council of war called to deliberate on what was best to be done. The wild gloomy country around them, their distance from any post of succor, and the startling idea that perchance they were in the presence of a body of savages of double or treble their own numbers, was not without its effect upon Todd and those who had seconded his hasty movements, and served much toward cooling their ardor, and inspiring each other with a secret awe.

Immediately on the halt of the troops, some twenty officers assembled in front of the lines for consultation; when, turning to them, Colonel Todd said:



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“Gentlemen, for aught I know to the contrary we are now in the presence of a superior enemy—superior at least in point of numbers—and I desire to know your minds as to what course we had best pursue. And particularly, Colonel Boone,” continued Todd, politely bowing to the veteran woodsman, “would I solicit your views on the matter; believing as I do, notwithstanding any hasty words I may have uttered in the heat of excitement to the contrary, that you are a brave soldier, cool under all circumstances, amply experienced in Indian stratagem, and consequently capable of rendering much valuable advice in the present instance.”

Boone was not a revengeful man under any circumstances; and though he had felt more stung and nettled at the implication of Todd the day before than he cared to let others see, yet now that the other had made the apology due him, he showed nothing like haughtiness or triumph in his mild, benevolent countenance, but, bowing slightly, with his characteristic frankness replied:

“As you say, Colonel Todd, I’ve had some little experience with the varmints at different times, not excepting my capter at these same Licks in 1778; and, besides, I’ve have traversed this here country in every direction, and know every secret hiding-place round about, as well as the rest o’ ye know the ground we’ve jest traveled; and it’s on account o’ this knowledge partly, and partly on account o’ the lazy movements o’ them red heathen we’ve jest seen go over the hill yonder, and the wide trail, and marked trees behind us, that I’m led to opine thar’s a tremendous body o’ the naked rascals hid in a couple o’ ravines, that run down to the river on either side of that ridge, about a mile ahead, who are waiting to take us by surprise. Now I think we’d better do one of two things. Either wait for the reinforcement o’ Colonel Logan—who’s no doubt on his march by this time to join us—or else divide our party, and let half on ’em go up stream and cross at the rapids, and so get round behind the ravines, ready to attack the savages in the rear; while the rest cross the ford here, and keep straight on along the ridge to attack ’em in front—by which maneuver we may prehaps be able to beat them. But ef you don’t see proper, gentlemen, to take up with either o’ these proposals—don’t, for Heaven’s sake! I beg o’ ye, venter forward, without first sending on scouts to reconnoitre—else we’re likely to be in an ambuscade afore we know it, and prehaps all be cut off.”

“Well, all things considered,” answered Colonel Todd, who now, becoming aware of the fearful responsibility resting upon him as commander, felt little inclined to press rashly forward, “I think it advisable to wait the reinforcements of Logan before proceeding further. It can delay us but a day or two, and then we shall be sure of a victory; whereas, if we press forward now, and run into an ambuscade, of which Colonel Boone feels certain, we shall doubtless rue the day by a total defeat.”



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"I'm of the same opinion," rejoined Major Levi Todd.

"And I," said Captain Patterson.

"And I," rejoined several other voices.

"But I'm opposed to waiting for Logan," said Colonel Trigg; "as delays on the point of a battle are rarely ever beneficial. I think we had better take up with Colonel Boone's second proposition—divide our forces, and proceed at once to action; though, for the matter of prudence, it may be advisable to send a couple of scouts ahead, before deciding upon any thing positive."

Majors Harlan and McBride, with two or three others of inferior rank, took sides with Trigg; and the discussion seemed likely to be protracted for some considerable time; when Major Hugh McGary, who had been listening to the proceedings with the utmost impatience, suddenly startled and broke up the council by a loud whoop, resembling that of an Indian; and spurring his high mettled charger forward, he waved his hat over his head, and shouted, in a voice that reached the whole length of the line, these ever memorable words:

"Those among you who are not d—d cowards, follow me! I'll soon show you where the Indians are!"

As he spoke he rushed his fiery steed into the river, with all the rash impetuosity of a desperate soldier charging at the cannon's mouth.

The effect of McGary's words and actions were electrical. The troops, mounted and on foot, officers and privates, suddenly became animated with a wild enthusiasm. Whooping and yelling like Indians, more than a hundred of them now sprung forward, and in a tumultuous body rushed into the stream and struggled for the opposite shore. A few lingered around Boone, Todd, and Twigg, to await their orders. But the pause of these commanders was only momentary. They saw their ranks in confusion, and more than two-thirds of their soldiers in the water, struggling after the hot-headed McGary, and most of the other officers. The mischief was already done. To delay was but to doom their enthusiastic comrades to certain destruction; and shouting to those who yet remained to follow, Todd put spurs to his horse, and, together with Trigg and Boone dashed after the main body. It was a wild scene of excitement. Horsemen and footmen, officers and privates, all mixed up together in confusion, and pushing forward in one "rolling and irregular mass."

By violent threats and repeated exertions, with their swords drawn and flashing in the sunlight, Colonels Todd, Trigg and Boone at length succeeded, after reaching the opposite bank, in restoring something like order to the half-crazed troops. On gaining the brow of the buffalo ridge, Todd commanded a halt; then drawing a pistol from the



holster of his saddle, he rode to the front of the lines, and, with eyes flashing fire, exclaimed:

“Men! we must have order! Without order we are lost. I command a halt; and the first man that moves from the ranks, officer or private, until so commanded, I swear to scatter his brains on the land he disgraces!”



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His speech produced the desired effect; not a man ventured, by disobeying, to put his threat to the test; and after gazing on them sternly a few moments in silence, he turned to McGary, who was sitting his horse a few paces distant, and said:

“Sir! you have acted unbecoming, both as an officer and a gentleman; and if we two live through an engagement which I fear is near at hand, and which your rashness will have brought about, I will have you put under arrest and tried by court martial.”

“As you please, Colonel Todd,” replied McGary, with a fierce look. “But you will bear in mind, sir, that at the council yesterday, you scouted at the proposition advanced by Colonel Boone, and seconded by myself and others, of waiting for the reinforcements of Colonel Logan, and insinuated that we were cowards. As *you*, sir, were so *very* brave, and so eager for a fight when at a distance, I swore that, if we came where a fight could be had, I would either draw you into action, or forever damn you as a coward in the eyes of your soldiers. If I have succeeded, I rest satisfied to let you do your worst.”

“Resume your place, sir! and break an order this day at your peril!” cried Todd, sharply, his face flushed with indignation.

As McGary slowly obeyed, Todd called to Boone, Trigg, and one or two others, with whom he held a short consultation as to the propriety of sending forward scouts before advancing with the main army. This being decided in the affirmative, Isaac Younker and another individual were selected from the ranks, and appointed to go on the dangerous mission; with orders to follow the buffalo trace and examine it carefully on both sides—particularly round about the ravines—and if they saw any traces of Indians, to hasten back with all speed; but if not, to continue their examination for a half mile further on, where the great trace gradually became lost in lesser paths, which branched off in every direction.

Immediately on the departure of these two scouts, the troops were drawn up in a long line, ready for action at a moment's notice. Colonel Trigg commanded the Harrodsburgh forces on the right; Colonel Boone the Boonesborough soldiers on the left; and Colonel Todd, assisted by Majors McGary and McBride, the Lexington militia in the center. Major Harlan led the van, and Major Levi Todd brought up the rear. This was the order in which they went into battle.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BATTLE OF BLUE LICKS

In less than an hour, Isaac and his companions returned, and reported that they had seen no signs of Indians whatever. On the receipt of this intelligence, the order to march was immediately given, and the whole body of soldiers, under the scorching rays

of an August sun, moved rapidly forward. Nothing occurred to interrupt their progress, until the van had reached within a few yards of the ravines before mentioned,



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when the appalling truth of a tremendous ambush of the savages suddenly became known, by the pouring therefrom, into their ranks, a terrible volley, which carried with it death, terror and confusion. Never were soldiers taken more by surprise, and at greater disadvantage to themselves, both as to numbers and position. They had relied upon the report of the scouts, who had themselves been deceived by the quiet of everything about the ravines; and now here they were, less than two hundred in number, on an open spot, exposed to the deadly rifles of more than five hundred Indian warriors, who were lying concealed among the dark cedars of the ravines.

The first fire was severely destructive, particularly on the right, where the gallant Colonel Trigg fell mortally wounded, and was soon after tomahawked and scalped. With him went down several officers of inferior grade, and a large portion of the Harrodsburgh troops; but, undaunted, his little band of survivors returned the fire of the Indians, and, assisted by those in the rear, pressed forward like heroes to the support of the center and van, where the work of death and carnage was now becoming terrible.

“Onward!” shouted Colonel Todd, as he rode to and fro, animating his men by his voice and gestures: “Onward, my noble soldiers, and strike for your country and firesides! Oh God!” exclaimed he the next moment, as a ball pierced his breast; “I am mortally wounded; but strike! press on, and mind me not!”

As he spoke, he reeled in his saddle, the rein slipped from his grasp, and his fiery steed rushed away, bearing him to the enemy and his untimely doom.

“Fight, my lads, and falter not!” cried Major Harlan in the van; and the next moment his horse went down, some five or six balls lodged in his body, and he fell to rise no more.

But his men remembered their orders, and fought without faltering, until but three remained alive to tell the fate of the party.

“At ’em, lads!—don’t spare the varmints!” said Boone, as he urged the left wing into action; and the immediate report of more than fifty rifles in that quarter, told him he was obeyed. In this wing fought Algernon, Isaac, the brother and son of Boone, with a heroic desperation worthy of Spartans; and at every fire an Indian went down before each of their deadly rifles.

But what could avail heroism here on that ill-fated day? Our brave little band of Kentuckians was opposed by a foe of treble their number; who, on their first terrible fire being expended, rushed forth from their covert, with horrible yells, tomahawk in hand, and, gradually extending their lines down the buffalo trace, on either side, so as to cut off the retreat of the whites, closed in upon them in overwhelming numbers, and the slaughter became immense. Major McGary rushed his horse to and fro among the

enemy, and shouted and fought with all the desperate impetuosity of his nature. Major Todd did his best to press



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on the rear, and Colonel Boone still urged his men to the fight with all the backwoods eloquence in his power. But, alas! of what avail was coolness, impetuosity, or desperation now? The Indians were closing in thicker and thicker. Officers and privates, horsemen and footmen, were falling before the destructive fire of their rifles, or sinking beneath their bloody tomahawks, amid yells and screeches the most diabolical. Cries, groans, and curses, resounded on every hand, from the living, the wounded, and dying. But few now remained in command. Colonels Todd and Trigg, Majors Harlan and McBride, Captains Bulger and Gordon, with a host of other gallant officers, were now no more. Already had the Indians enclosed them as in a net, hemmed them in on all sides, and they were falling as grass before the scythe of the mower. Retreat was almost cut off—in a few minutes it would be entirely. They could hope for nothing against such odds, but a certain and bloody death. There was a possibility of escape. A few minutes and it would be too late. They hesitated—they wavered—they turned and fled; and now it was that a horrible sight presented itself.

The space between the head of the ravines and the ford of the river a distance of more than a mile, suddenly became the scene of a hard and bloody race. As the whites fled, the Indians sprung after them, with whoops and yells that more resembled those of infuriated demons than human beings; and whenever an unfortunate Kentuckian was overtaken, he instantly fell a victim to the tomahawk and scalping knife. Those who were mounted generally escaped; but the foot suffered dreadfully; and the whole distance presented an appalling sight of bloody, mangled corpses, strewn the ground in every direction. Girty, the renegade, was now at the height of his hellish enjoyment. With oaths and curses, and horrid laughter, his hands and weapons reeking with blood of the slain, he rushed on after new victims, braining and scalping all that came within his reach.

At the river the carnage was in no wise abated. Horsemen and footmen, victors and vanquished, rushed down the slope, pell-mell, and plunged into the stream—some striving for life and liberty, some for death and vengeance—and the dark rolling waters went sweeping on, colored with the blood of the slaughtered.

An act of heroic gallantry and presence of mind here occurred, which has often been mentioned in history, tending to check somewhat the blood-thirsty savages, and give many of the fugitives time to escape. Some twelve or fifteen horsemen had already passed the ford in safety, and were in the act of spurring forward, regardless of the fate of their unfortunate companions on foot, when one of their number, a man by the name of Netherland, who had previously been accused of cowardice, suddenly shouted, as if giving the word of command:

“Halt! Fire on the Indians, and protect the men in the river!”



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The order was obeyed, in the same spirit it was given; and the sudden discharge of more than a dozen rifles, made the infuriated savages recoil in dismay, and thereby saved many a poor fellow's life. The reaction, however, speedily followed. Many of the savages now swam the river above and below the ford, and gave chase to the fugitives for fifteen and even twenty miles—though with but little success after crossing the stream—as the latter generally plunged into the neighboring thickets, and so eluded the vigilance of the former.

Such were the general features of the disastrous battle of Blue Licks—a battle of dreadful import to the pioneers of Kentucky—which threw the land into mourning, and made a most solemn and startling impression upon the minds of its inhabitants. Had we space to chronicle individual heroism, we might fill page after page with brave and noble achievements; but as it is, we shall confine ourself to those connected with our most prominent characters.

We have stated previously, that Algernon Reynolds fought in the left wing, under the command of Boone; where, for the few minutes which the action lasted, he sustained himself with great gallantry; and, by his undaunted courage, inspired those immediately around him with like ardor. On the retreat of the whites, he found himself cut off from the river by a large body of Indians, headed by his old foe, Simon Girty, who, having recognized him, was now pressing forward with several stalwart warriors, to again make him prisoner. For the first time since the commencement of the battle, he felt his heart sink. To be taken alive was a thousand times worse than death, and escape seemed impossible. However, there was no time for consideration; another moment might be fatal; his foes were upon him; it was now or never. Luckily he was mounted on a fiery steed—which had thus far escaped a scratch—and had one undischarged pistol in his holster. This he drew forth as his last hope; and, tightening the rein, wheeled his horse and spurred down upon his enemies with tremendous velocity.

“I have you now, by ——!” cried the renegade.

As he spoke, he sprung forward to grasp the bridle of Algernon's horse; but stumbled and fell, and the beast passed over him, unfortunately though without doing him any injury.

But Algernon had not yet got clear of his enemies; for on the fall of Girty, he found himself surrounded by a host of savages, whooping and yelling frightfully, and his direct course to the river cut off by a body of more than a hundred. There was only one point, and that a few yards to his left, where there appeared a possibility of his breaking through their lines. In the twinkling of an eye, and while his horse was yet under full headway, his decision was made. Rushing his steed hard to the right, in order to deceive his foes, he suddenly wheeled him again to the left; and the side of the beast striking against some three



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or four of the Indians, who were on the point of seizing his rein, staggered them back upon their companions, creating no little confusion. Taking advantage of this, our hero, with the speed of a flying arrow, bore down upon the weakest point; where, after shooting down a powerful savage, who had succeeded in grasping his bridle and was on the point of tomahawking his horse, he passed their lines, amid a volley of rifle balls, which cut his clothes in several places, but left himself and steed unharmed.

The worst of the danger now seemed over; but still his road ahead was beset with Indians, who were killing and scalping all that fell in their power; and behind him were the infuriated renegade and his party now in hot pursuit. His steed, however, was strong and fleet, and he put him to his wind; by which means he not only distanced those behind him, but passed one or two parties in front unharmed. About half way between the ravines and the river, he overtook Major McGary, and some five or six other horsemen, who were dashing forward at a fast gallop; and checking his fiery beast somewhat, he silently joined them. A little further on, Reynolds observed an officer on foot, who, exhausted by his recent exertions, and lame from former wounds, had fallen behind his companions. On coming up, he recognized in the crippled soldier the brave Captain Patterson; and with a magnanimity and self-sacrifice worthy of all imitation, he instantly reined in his horse and dismounted, while the others kept upon their course.

“Sir!” cried he to Patterson; “you are, I perceive, fatigued and weak. Your life is in great danger. Mount, sir—mount! I am fresh and will take my chance on foot.”

“God bless you, sir!—God bless you for this noble act!” exclaimed Patterson, as Reynolds assisted him, into the saddle. “If I escape—”

“Enough!” said Reynolds, hurriedly, interrupting him. “Fly, sir—fly! God be with you! Adieu!”

And turning away as he spoke, he sprung down the side of the ridge, and running along the edge of the river some little distance, plunged into the water and swam to the opposite shore. Unfortunately for our hero, he had changed his garments at Bryan’s Station, and now wore a pair of buckskin breeches, which, in swimming the stream, had become so soaked and heavy that he was obliged to remove them in order to display his usual agility. While seated upon the bank and occupied in this manner, he was startled by a hand being placed upon his shoulder, and the familiar grunt of an Indian sounding in his ear. On looking up, he at once recognized the grim features of Wild-cat, and saw himself in the power of some half a dozen savages.

“Me wanty you,” said Wild-cat, quietly. “Kitchokema give much for Long Knife. Come!”



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There was no alternative now; and Algernon rose to his feet, and suffered his weapons to be taken from him, with what feelings we leave the reader to imagine. Taking him along, the savages set forward, on the alert for other game; and presently three of them darted away in chase of a party of whites; and directly after, two others, leaving our hero alone with Wild-cat. Hope now revived that he might yet escape; nor was he this time disappointed; for after advancing a short distance, Wild-cat stooped down to tie his moccasin; when Reynolds immediately sprung upon him, knocked him down with his fist, seized his rifle, tomahawk, and knife, fled into the thicket, and reached Bryan's Station, during the night succeeding, unscathed.[24]

Throughout the short but severe action at the ravines, Boone maintained his ground with great coolness and courage, animating his soldiers by word and deed, until the rout became general, when he found it necessary, to prevent falling into the hands of the enemy, to have recourse to immediate flight. As he cast his eyes around him for this purpose, he saw himself cut off from the ford by the large body of Indians, through whose lines our hero was even then struggling. At this moment he heard a groan which attracted his attention; and looking down, he perceived his son Israel lying on the ground, scarcely five paces distant, weltering in his blood. With all a father's feelings of affection and alarm, he instantly sprung from his horse, and, raising the youth in his arms, darted into the nearest ravine, and made with all speed for the river. A few of the Indians were herein concealed, who discharged their rifles at him as he passed, without injury, and then joined in pursuit. One, a powerful warrior, having outstripped his companions, was rushing upon the old woodsman with his tomahawk, when the latter, with backwoods celerity, instantly raised his rifle and shot him through the body. Finding himself hard pressed, and that his son was already in the agonies of death, the old hunter strained him for the last time to his heart, with choking emotion, pressed his lips to those already growing cold, and then, with a groan of agony, left him to his fate and the scalping-knife of the savage, while he barely made his own escape by swimming the river below the bend. To him this was a mournful day—never to be forgotten—and one that, even long, long years after, could never be mentioned but with tears.

In this action the brother of Boone was wounded; but in company with Isaac Younker, and some three or four others, he succeeded in making his escape.



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On the day of the battle, Colonel Logan arrived at Bryan's Station with a command of four hundred and fifty soldiers. On learning that the garrison with their reinforcements had gone the day preceding in pursuit of the Indians, and fearful of some disaster, he resolved on a forced march to give them assistance as soon as possible. For this purpose he immediately set forward on their trail; but had advanced only a few miles, when he met a party of the fugitives returning from the scene of slaughter. They were alarmed and excited, and of course their account of the battle was greatly exaggerated, believing as they did that they were the only escaped survivors. Their report, to say the least, was very startling, allowing that only the half were true; and in consequence, Logan decided on retracing his steps to the station, until he should be able to collect more definite news concerning the fight. Gradually one party after another came dropping in; and by nine o'clock nearly or quite all of the survivors were assembled in the fortress; when it was ascertained that a little over one-third of the party, or between sixty and seventy of those engaged in the battle, were missing. It was a sad night of wailing, and lamentation, and dreadful excitement in the station; for scarcely a family there, but was mourning the loss of some friend or relation. Algernon and Isaac had returned, to the great joy of those most interested in their welfare; but the father-in-law of the latter came not, and there was mourning in consequence.

A consultation between Colonels Logan and Boone, resulted in the decision to march forthwith to the battle-ground. Accordingly every thing being got in readiness, Colonel Logan set out with his command, at a late hour the same night, accompanied by Boone, and a few of the survivors of the ill-fated engagement. Towards morning a halt of three hours was ordered for rest and refreshment: when the line of march was again taken up; and by noon of the day succeeding the battle, the forces arrived upon the ground, where a most horribly repulsive scene met their view.

The Indians had departed on their homeward route, bearing their killed and wounded away from the field of carnage; but the dead and mutilated bodies of the whites still remained where they had fallen, presenting a spectacle the most hideous and revolting possibly to be conceived. In the edge of the stream, on the banks, up the ridge, and along the buffalo trace to the ravines, were lying the bloody and mangled corpses of the gallant heroes—who, the day before, full of ardor and life, had rushed on to the battle and an untimely and inglorious death—now swollen, putrid, and in the first stage of decomposition, from the action of the scorching rays of an August sun—surrounded by vultures and crows, and all species of carrion fowl; many of which, having gorged themselves on the horrid repast, were either sweeping overhead in large flocks, and screeching their funeral dirges, or wiping their bloody bills on the neighboring trees. Some of the bodies in the stream had been gnawed by fishes—others by wolves—and all had been so disfigured, by one means and another, that but very few could be recognized by their friends.



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“Great Heaven! what a sight!” exclaimed Colonel Logan, as he ran his eye over the scene.

“A dark and terrible day for Kaintuck,” answered Boone, who was standing by his side; and as he spoke, the old hunter turned away his head to conceal his emotion; for his mind reverted to the death of his noble son.

Orders were now given by Colonel Logan, to have the bodies collected, and interred in a manner as decent as circumstances would permit. This being accomplished, he returned with his men to Bryan’s Station, and there dismissed them—it not being thought advisable to pursue the enemy further. In this ever memorable battle of Blue Licks, the Kentuckians had sixty killed, twelve wounded, and seven taken prisoners, most of whom were afterwards put to the tortures. As we said before, it was a sad day for Kentucky, and threw the land into mourning and gloom. Colonels Todd and Trigg, and Majors Harlan and McBride, were men beloved and respected in life, and bitterly lamented in death by a long list of true-hearted friends.

The great trace where the battle was fought, is now green with low branching cedars; and a solitary monument near by, informs the curious spectator of the sad disaster of by gone times. The Blue Lick Springs are much resorted to in the summer season by invalids and others, for whose convenience a magnificent hotel stands upon the banks of the lovely and romantic Licking.

A few words more and our general history will be closed. On receiving the intelligence of the battle of Blue Licks, General Clark—who then occupied a fort at the Falls of the Ohio, on the present site of Louisville—resolved upon another expedition to the enemy’s country; for which purpose it was proposed to raise an army of one thousand men, who, under their respective commanders, should congregate opposite the mouth of the Licking, on the present site of Cincinnati. The interior and upper country were to rendezvous at Bryan’s Station, under the command of Colonels Logan and Floyd; and the lower settlements at the Falls of Ohio, under General Clark; who, on all parties arriving at the grand rendezvous, was to be commander-in-chief of the expedition. One thousand mounted riflemen were raised without a draft, who marched upon the enemy in their own country, destroyed their villages, provisions, and cornfields, took several prisoners, and carried with them so much terror and desolation, that the Indians never sufficiently recovered from the shock to renew hostilities in a formidable body; and the Kentuckians henceforth, save in individual cases, were left unmolested.

On their march they came upon the rear of Girty’s party, returning from their successful battle; but an Indian scout gave the renegade and his companions warning in time for them to escape the whites by flight. In this expedition, Colonel Boone volunteered and served as a private; being the last in which the noble old hunter was ever engaged in defence of the settlements of Kentucky. Algernon Reynolds and Isaac Younker were his

companions in arms; who, on the dismissal of the troops, returned again to Bryan's Station.



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[Footnote 24: It may perhaps add interest to the story, for the reader to know that the foregoing account concerning Reynolds and Captain Patterson, is historically true; as is also the one which follows with regard to Boone and his son.]

CHAPTER XX.

THE FINALE.

Month upon month rolled away, quiet succeeded to the alarm and commotion of war, hostilities between Great Britain and America ceased, and the country both east and west now began to look up from the depression and gloom which had pervaded it during its long and sanguinary struggle for independence. In Kentucky the effect was really invigorating; and the settlers, who for a year past had been driven from their homes in terror and dismay—who had quitted their peaceable farming implements for the destructive weapons of strife and bloodshed—now ventured to return to their desolate firesides, and renew their honest occupations of tilling the soil. Some, however, more predisposed to financiering than their neighbors, sought only speculation; in consequence whereof the Land Offices of the Virginia Commissioners—which opened in November, after the return of the troops under Clark—were daily thronged with applicants for the best locations; whereby was laid the first grand corner-stone of subsequent litigation, disaffection, and civil discord among the pioneers. But with these, further than to mention the facts as connected with the history of the time, we have nothing to do; and shall now forthwith pass on to the finale of our story.

Month upon month, as we said before, had rolled away, spring had come, and with it had departed many of those who had occupied Bryan's Station during the siege of August; but still, besides the regular garrison and their families, a few of the individuals who had sought refuge therein, yet remained; among whom we may mention Mrs. Younker, Ella, Isaac and his wife, and so forth. Algernon, too—by the entreaty of his friends, and contrary to his previous calculations, and what he considered his duty—had been induced to defer his departure until the opening of spring. Possibly there might have been a secret power, stronger than the mere entreaties of others, which had prevailed over his resolution to depart; but further the records say not. Be that as it may, the extreme limit of time which he had set for remaining, was now nearly expired; and he was, at the moment when we again present him to the reader, engaged in conversation with Ella on the painful subject. Suddenly he was startled by the information that a stranger in the court desired to speak with him.

"A stranger!" exclaimed Algernon, in surprise; and as he spoke, his face became very pale, his lips quivered, and his hands trembled. Turning upon Ella a look of agony, which seemed to say, "I am an arrested felon," he wheeled upon his heel, and followed the messenger in silence; while she, knowing the cause of his agitation, and fearful of the worst, sunk almost lifeless upon a seat.



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As Algernon passed out of the cottage, he beheld, in the center of the common, a well dressed, good-looking individual, who was standing on the ground and holding by the bridle a horse, which, as well as the rider himself, appeared both travel-stained and weary. Approaching the stranger with a firm step, but with a pale countenance and throbbing heart, he said:

"I understand, sir, you have business with me."

"Your name, then," returned the other, quietly, "I presume to be Algernon Reynolds?"

"The same."

"You are, too, I infer, a native of ——, Connecticut, and son of Albert Reynolds of that place?"

"Again right," answered Algernon, in a voice which, in spite of himself, was a little tremulous.

"Then, sir," rejoined the stranger, with a satisfied air, "I may say that I have business with you, and of vast importance. A long chase you have led me, i' faith; and weeks of travel have you cost me; so you may rest assured that I am happy in finding you at last."

"Proceed!" said Algernon, compressing his lips, as one whose mind is made up for the worst. "Proceed, sir. I know your mission."

"The deuce you do!" replied the other, in astonishment; "then you must have a very remarkable faculty for divining secrets. I rather guess you are mistaken though," he added, as he drew forth a couple of letters from a side pocket; "but these will inform you whether you are or not."

Seizing the proffered letters with trembling eagerness, Algernon hastily glanced at their superscription; then, breaking the seals, he devoured their contents with the utmost avidity; while the stranger stood noting the varying expressions of his handsome countenance, with a quiet smile. At first his pale features seemed flushed with surprise—then became radiant with joy—and then gradually saddened with sorrow; yet a certain cheerfulness prevailed over all—such as he had not exhibited for many a long month. As he finished a hasty perusal of the epistles, he turned to the stranger, grasped his hand, and, shaking it heartily, while tears of joy filled his eyes, exclaimed:

"I was mistaken, sir—God be thanked! God bless you too, sir! for being the messenger of peace between myself and conscience. Excuse me. Tarry a moment, sir, and I will send some one to take charge of your weary beast, and show yourself a place of rest and refreshment."



As he spoke, Algernon darted away toward the cottage. Observing Isaac, he ran to and caught him by the hand:

“Isaac,” he said, in a gay tone, while his eyes sparkled with delight, “wish me joy! I have good news. I—but stay; I forgot; you know nothing of the matter. Oblige me, though, by showing yonder gentleman and his beast due hospitality;” and wringing his hand, he sprung into the apartment where Ella was sitting alone, leaving Isaac staring after him with open mouth, and wondering whether he were in his right senses or not.



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“Ella!” he exclaimed, wildly, as he suddenly appeared before her with a flushed countenance: “Ella, God bless you! Listen. I—I am free! I am no longer a criminal, thank God! These, Ella—these!” and he held aloft the letters with one hand, and tapped them nervously with the other.

The next moment his features grew pale, his whole frame quivered, and he sunk upon a seat, completely overcome by the nervous excitement produced by the sudden transition from despair to hope and freedom.

Ella was alarmed; and springing to him, she exclaimed:

“For Heaven’s sake! Algernon, what is the matter?—what has happened?—are you in your senses? Speak!—speak!”

“Read!” answered he, faintly, placing the letters in her hand: “Read, Ella—read!”

Ella hesitated a moment on the propriety of complying with his request, but a moment only; and the next she turned to one of the epistles. It was from the father of Algernon, and ran as follows:

“DEAR SON:—If in the land of the living, return as speedily as possible to your afflicted and anxious parents, who are even now mourning you as dead. You can return in safety; for your cousin, whom you supposed you had fatally wounded, recovered therefrom, and publicly exonerated you from all blame in the matter. He is now, however, no more—having died of late. Elvira, his wife, is also dead. She died insane. As a partial restitution for the injury done you, your cousin has made you heir, by will, to all his property, real estate and personal, amounting, it is said, to over twenty thousand dollars. Your mother is in feeble health, caused by anxiety on your account. For further information, inquire of the messenger who will bear you this.

Your affectionate father,
ALBERT REYNOLDS.”
Nov. 12th, 1782.

The other epistle was from a lawyer, informing Reynolds of his acquisition to a large amount of property, by a will of his late cousin; and that he, the said lawyer, being executor thereof, required the presence of him, the said Reynolds, or his proxy forthwith.

“I knew it: I felt that all would yet be well: I told you to hope for the best!” cried Ella, as she concluded the letter, her eyes moist with tears, and her face beaming like the sun through a summer shower.

“God bless you, dearest Ella—you did indeed!” exclaimed Reynolds, suddenly, bounding from his seat and clasping her in his arms. “You did indeed tell me to hope—



and you told me truly;" and he pressed kiss after kiss, again and again, upon her sweet lips, with all the wild, trembling, rapturous feelings of a lover in his first ecstasy of bliss, when he has surmounted all obstacles, and gained the heart of the being he loves.

"Now, dearest Ella," continued Algernon, when the excitement of the moment had been succeeded by a calmer, though not less blissful mood: "Now, dearest Ella, I am free—my sacred oath binds me no longer—and now can I say, with propriety, that I deeply, solemnly, and devotedly love you, and you alone. I am not rich; but I have enough of this world's goods to live in ease, if not in splendor. Will you share with me, and be partner of my lot, be it for good or ill, through life? My heart you have had long—my hand I now offer you. Say, dearest, will you be mine?"



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Ella did not speak—she could not; but she looked up into his face, with a sweet, modest, affectionate smile; and her dark, soft, beautiful eyes, suffused with tears, wherein a soul of love lay mirrored, gave answer, with a heart-felt eloquence surpassing words.

“I understand you, Ella,” said Algernon, with emotion. “You are mine—mine forever!” and he strained her trembling form to his heart in silence—a deep, joyful and holy silence—that had in it more of Heaven than earth.

* * * * *

It was a mild, lovely day in the spring of 1783. Earth had donned her green mantle, and decorated it with flowers of every hue and variety. The trees were in leaf and in bloom; among whose soft, waving branches, gay birds from the sunny south sung most sweetly; and nature seemed every where to rejoice. In the court of Bryan’s Station was a large concourse of people—many of whom were from a distance—and all assembled there to witness the solemn ceremony which was to unite Algernon Reynolds and Ella Barnwell forever; for who shall say the holy marriage rite is not eternally binding in the great Hereafter. There were congregated both sexes and all ages, from the infant to the hoary headed veteran of eighty winters. There were assembled youth and manhood, whose names have since graced the historic page, and whose deeds have stamped them benefactors of their race and nation. All were in order, and silent, and the scene was most solemnly impressive. On the right and left of the bride and groom and their attendants, stood, promiscuously, the general spectators of both sexes. In front was drawn up the garrison, in three platoons, under arms, in compliment to the noble bravery of our hero at the battle of Blue Licks.

Never did Algernon appear more noble than now—never did Ella look more beautiful; as, pale and trembling, she seemed to cling to his arm for support. The ceremony was at length begun and ended, amid a deep and breathless silence. As the last words, “*I pronounce you man and wife,*” died away upon the air, the first platoon advanced a pace and fired a volley—the second and third followed—and then arose a soft bewitching strain of music; during which the friends of the newly married pair came forward to offer their congratulations, and wishes for their long life and happiness.

Among the party present was Colonel Boone; and approaching Algernon and Ella—who were now seated where the solemn rite had taken place—he took the hand of each, and said, in a voice of some emotion:

“My children—for ye seem to me as such—may you both live long and be happy. You’ve both o’ ye had a deal o’ trouble since I first saw ye—and that’s but a little while ago—but I hope its now over. Don’t think I want to flatter, sir, when I say I think you’re a brave and honorable young man, and that you’ve got a wife every way worthy of ye—

and she a husband worthy o' her—and that's saying much. God bless ye both! and ef you ever need a friend, call on Daniel Boone."



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With this he shook their hands heartily, and strode away.

The next who advanced to them was Captain Patterson—the officer, it will be remembered, whose life Algernon so generously saved at the risk of his own. After the usual congratulations, he took our hero by the hand, and said, with deep feeling:

“Sir! I feel that to you, for risking your own life to save mine, I owe a debt I can never cancel; and an attempt to express to you in words my sense of obligation for the noble act, would be worse than vain: therefore accept this, as a slight testimonial of the gratitude of one who will ever remember you in his prayers, and wear your image in his heart.”

As he concluded, Captain Patterson placed in the hands of Algernon a sealed packet, and moved away.[25]

“Well, its all over,” said Mrs. Younker, coming up in turn to wish the young couple joy. “I al’ays ’spected as how it ’ud come to this here. Goodness, gracious, marsy on me alive! what a flustration they has made about ye, sure enough, for sartin—han’t they? I never seed the like on’t afore in all my born days. Why, it’s like you war governor’s folks, sure enough. And my own Ella, too; and the stranger as com’d to my house all bleeding to death like! My! my!—what strange doings Providence does! Well, its to be hoped you’ll al’ays git bread enough to keep from starving, and that you won’t fight nor quarrel more nor is necessitous—as the Reverend Preacher Allprayer said, when he married me and Ben together. Ah!—poor Ben!—poor Ben!—I’m a lone widder now. Well, the Lord’s will be done!” And the good dame moved sadly away, to make room for others, and console herself by recounting her afflictions to some patient listener, together with the virtues of her deceased and living friends.

“I don’t ’spect it’s o’ much account my telling you I wish ye joy,” said Isaac, “when every body’s doing the same thing; but it comes from the heart, and I can’t help it. Well, you’ll be happy, I know; for thar’s nothing like married life; and I speak from experience. I’m sorry you’ve got to leave us so soon; but you won’t git far from me; for I’ve got you both here;” and placing his hand upon his heart, he bowed, smiled, and passed on.

As soon as the congratulations were over, Algernon and Ella were escorted into the cottage occupied by Mrs. Younker; where a sumptuous dinner was already prepared for them, their relatives, and a few select friends, among whom was Colonel Boone and Captain Patterson. For the remainder, long tables were ranged around the common, where the greatest conviviality prevailed; and toasts were drank, and songs were sung, and all were merry. After dinner there were music and dancing on the common and in the cabins: and the coming night shut in a scene of festivity, such as was but seldom witnessed even in those early times; and which was remembered and spoken of long, long years after, when many of those who were then actors in the scene had sunk beneath the clods of the valley.



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Years have rolled away to the dark and unapproachable past since the transpiring of the events which we have chronicled, and vast mutations have marked the steps of all conquering time. Our beloved country, which then weak and oppressed was struggling for her independence against the most powerful nation on the globe, has since nobly won a name and place among the mighty ones of earth, and planted her stars and stripes from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and built cities and towns amid dark and mighty forests, where then roved in freedom the wild, untutored aborigines of America.

Kentucky, too, has since become a rich, populous, and powerful state; and her noble sons, by their courage and generosity, have well maintained that name and fame which was won for them by their fathers, and which shall go down to future ages all green and unfading. Bryan's Station—the theatre of many a scene of gay frolic and sanguinary strife—of festivity and mourning—has long since sunk to ruin and dust; and on its site now stands the private dwelling of a gentleman of fortune. But where are they who once inhabited it? Those hoary headed veterans—those middle aged men—or those fiery and impetuous youths ever ready for either love or war? Where are they now? Gone! Passed away like moving shadows that leave no trace behind. Gone out, one by one, as lights in the late deserted hall of revelry, or stars at the dawn of day. But very few—and these mere striplings then—now remain to tell the tale; of whom it may with truth be said, “The places which know them now shall soon know them no more forever.”

Reader, a word or two more and we have done; and in your hands we leave the decision, as to whether our task has been faithfully fulfilled or not.

Shortly after their marriage, Algernon and Ella bade farewell to their friends in the west, and returned to the east, where a long and happy career awaited them; and where they lived to recount to their children and grand-children, the thrilling narratives of their captivity, and their wild and romantic adventures while pioneers on the borders of Kentucky.

Isaac returned to the farm of his father—rebuilt the cottage destroyed by the Indians—and there, with his dear Peggy, lived happily to a green old age, beloved and respected by all who knew him; and there his posterity still continue to multiply the name of Younker. With him the good dame, his mother, sojourned for several years, as industrious and talkative as ever; and at last passed quietly from among the living, even while in the act of making a sublime quotation on the subject of dying from her favorite, the immortal Preacher Allprayer.

Boone continued a resident of Kentucky, until he fancied it too populous for his comfort; when he removed with his family to Missouri; where he spent much of his time in fishing and hunting, and where he finally died at an advanced age. From thence his remains were conveyed to Frankfort, the capital of Kentucky, where they now repose; and where a rough slab, with a few half intelligible characters thereon, points out to the curious

stranger the last earthly resting place of the noblest, the most daring, and famous hunter and pioneer the world has ever produced.



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The fate of little Rosetta Millbanks, the captive, is unknown.

Girty, notwithstanding his outrageous crimes against humanity, continued to live among the Indians for a great number of years, the inveterate and barbarous foe of his race. In the celebrated battle of the Thames, a desperate white man led on a band of savages, who fought with great fury, but were at length overpowered and their leader cut to pieces by Colonel Johnson's mounted men. The mangled corpse of this leader was afterwards recognized as the notorious and once dreaded Simon Girty.

[Footnote 25: This was found to contain a deed of two hundred acres of the best land in Kentucky. A historical fact.]

THE END