



LIFE OF  
JEFFERSON S. BATKINS,

MEMBER FROM CRANBERRY CENTRE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF,

ASSISTED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "SILVER SPOON."

"Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."

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## PREFACE.

It appears to be the custom to occupy more or less space, at the end of a book, for the correction of such errors as may have escaped the vigilant eye of the printer. In reading over the pages that succeed this preface, I find the principal errors are of my own making, and are those of style, involving the rhetoric, as Mr. Birch instructed me to call it, and not the facts in the narrative.

I have this proposition to offer to the critical reader, that he may always change the language to suit himself when he reads it to his friends, or makes extracts for any other purpose, if he does not pervert my meaning when he cannot make out what it is; and also, when I use foreign words, and misapply them, the reader will understand that I picked up the phrases, had them explained to me, and dovetailed them in as well as I knew how. I do not pretend that they are good specimens, or grammatically expressed. I am aware of the saying, "A little learning," etc.

As it not unfrequently happens in relating an extended story, the same idea will be repeated with a slight variation of words. I apologize for these repetitions and tautological suggestions.

It is not an easy task to write a man's life, and to adhere strictly to the truth, particularly when the man's life he is writing is his own.

This is my first attempt; if I ever write my life again, or what may occur after this date, I will endeavor to improve, and say more in less words. As I have learned, it is much easier to write a long speech full of rhetorical figures, than a short speech including only an intelligent narration of facts, and what Mr. Birch called logical inferences and conclusions. What is true of speeches is more true of books.

I have attempted, while rescuing from oblivion historical events of Cranberry Centre, similar to those of many other towns, to present evidence of the truths of my old friend Dr. Slawter's theory of the inheritance of character from ancestry as well as disease. The doctor's theory is of ancient origin; the remedy is as old; but as, in the present day, the breeding of fast horses, the improvement of the dog race, swine, and other domestic animals, are considered more important than elevating, in a proper way, the human race, I do not know that the truth expressed in the matter will be acted upon.

I hope no person will read the last chapter until, in the natural course of events, he arrives at that conclusion, as it might interfere in the judgment I wish him or her to make as to the truth of Dr. Slawter's theory, which I am happy to endorse, and desire, in a proper way, to be a propagator of.

J. S. B.

P. S. I do not think I have so described myself that I should be recognized by the reader who was not acquainted with me. I have taken advantage of the photographic art, not discovered in my early days, and placed my resemblance as a frontispiece; my friends say it is a good likeness. — J. S. B.

## DEDICATORY ADDRESS.



I AM somewhat embarrassed as to the direction I shall give to my dedicatory address; my first impression was to omit it altogether; but that has been "overruled" by more consideration and thinking. The "question" is, do I wish to do honor to some person, or persons, other than myself, or to myself through others? It is now "in the orders of the day," and a decision must be made, and upon my vote, which cannot be decided in a political sense, although, as usual with me, my opinion is equally balanced, and requires something from without to turn the scale. I first thought, certainly for no political reasons, that I should dedicate it to my father, as one of the principal responsible parties for my existence, or to my mother, equally so, or to Mr. Feathergilt, my father-in-law, or to my wife, Mrs. Batkins. Then it appeared to me to be objectionable, as my readers and other friends might say I was using my patronage too much in favor of my relations and connections by birth or marriage; that the credit of writing the life would be sufficient for the family name, and for posterity in the family line.

Then I thought of my old friends, Doctor Slawter, Aunt Dolly, the minister, Seth Spring, and several others; for various reasons, collectively, it did not seem expedient, and if either one should be selected the act would offend the others. So I voted that proposition down in the caucus of my thoughts. I put the "question" in this way: "Mr. Speaker, what is the dedication for? Is it to put upon the record my thanks to somebody, and in addition, perhaps, to assist the publisher in the sale of the book? Well, it is clear neither of the parties referred to could do much in that direction. Moreover, they would expect of me a copy gratuitous, which would in so much lessen the profit to the publisher, and perhaps myself."

This "motion" was withdrawn, no objection having been made.

It is not often, in following the dictates of duty, that our gratification, personal wishes, and pecuniary advantages are in the same procession; but on this occasion there is a unanimity rarely accomplished.

I therefore dedicate this verbal monument, erected by me, to be preserved until a new series of dark ages come again to the world, as,

according to the theory of what has been, may be: first, to my constituents who elected me to be representative from Cranberry Centre, and in a spirit of conciliation and brotherly love to those who voted against me; and, further "to amend my resolution," to their wives and children, and to their relatives, married or unmarried, and to their heirs forever; with the request that this be entered upon their almanacs and other records.

Next, to all the members of the House of Representatives of the session of 1852, and to the survivors of all past legislatures, and to those in the future and their heirs; also

To the governors retrospective if living, and prospective, to the council, the senators, the sergeant-at-arms, and all the persons employed about the State House, except the unknown individual to whom I paid the half-dollar for admission to the cupola at the session of 1852, and all their relatives, friends, and neighbors;

To Mr. Kimball, for his politeness as a representative of the Boston members, and for his presentation of a complimentary ticket for myself to the Museum during that eventful year, and for every season since that time;

And, lastly, to Mr. William Warren, through whose efforts I was first brought into public notice, and all his friends, and, if I am rightly informed, I cannot include his wife or family, and their heirs, as he has not as yet entered the connubial state; but if he should, — and I am strongly impressed to advise him to do so, — a dedicatory epistle is not the place to give reasons, — I hereby add, to his heirs also, — if any there be. I advise all these persons and their friends, to place upon the shelves of their library, or on the table of their best room, a copy of my life. Take my word, I shall never regret that I have been so situated myself.

I am fearful, if I should undertake to select a representative lady from among those engaged in the new political agitation for woman's withheld rights, to whom I might apply my dedicatory homage and respect, I might be accused of partiality, and give offence to a goodly number. I therefore desire them all to consider themselves included in this category. To the female sex I was once, you understand, not over-partial. I have discovered, and acknowledge my error, and remain their obliged and gratified humble servant,

J. S. BATKINS.

CRANBERRY CENTRE, 1871.

## LIFE OF JEFFERSON S. BATKINS.

### CHAPTER I.

#### MY ORIGIN.

NO ONE will deny that I have been a distinguished individual. I am about to give to the public, so well acquainted with me in an official capacity, an account of my history, previous to my elevation in the estimation of my contemporaries in political life, which, when completed, I trust will be no mean addition to the list of biographies of American statesmen and members of the General Court of the Commonwealth.

I have been perusing some works of a similar character, in some respects, to see in what way I can begin with my parentage and birth, and not frighten my readers with an old story on the start. If all men are born equal, none should be ashamed of their origin in consequence of the obscurity of their parents, or the humble locality of their first inspiration.

Nor should any one be proud because his parents, one or both, were "clad in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

I do not propose to dwell upon my ancestry, nor the doings of my immediate predecessors.

It is enough to say that the Batkins family are of ancient origin.

I must say something of my father and mother. I need



hardly add that my mother was not originally a Batkins, nor was it known that she had any of the Batkins blood in her veins; not an impossibility, however. The marriage of Abigail Withaspoon to Jethro Batkins, my father, changed the manner in which that lady had been previously addressed, and she was, during her life afterwards, known as Mrs. Jethro Batkins, and respected accordingly.

I do not deem it necessary to make any record of the date of this marriage.

< My father never gave any account of his birth; there were some people who knew his age; I never asked him a question on the subject. My mother, as I understood, agreed with him on this point, that is, silence as to the day upon which they first appeared upon the stage of life. My impression is that they had both passed the heyday of youth before they joined their fortunes in the connubial state. As I join with them, I shall omit to give the exact day of my entrance into their household. My mother did not live long after she was called Mrs. Batkins, and whether at her suggestion or not I am not informed, but my father carried out their mutual views on this subject in the arrangement of the tablet erected to her memory.

The stone was considered rather a handsome testimonial for those times. It had a death's-head and cross-bones, Time, with a scythe and hour-glass, cut out on the top part, and an angel with wings at each corner, to represent, I suppose, my father and my mother in their future state.

Verses were also cut into the stone, after the following inscription:—

“ Abigail, wife of Jethro Batkins, lies buried here.

“ A loving wife, to me most dear,  
Was she that lies reposing here;  
She dwelt within her native State,  
And died therein, — it was her fate.  
Her bereaved husband raised this stone,  
And now he knows that he's alone.”

These lines were said to have been composed by my father, — it was thought, with a little help from the school-master. It was thought, also, that her age was accidentally left off the tablet. It certainly did not appear. Subsequent events, however, proved that this was incorrect; but, whether purposely or not is not known, it had been cut so low down on the stone, that this matter of fact was buried in the earth out of sight. This omission had been the frequent subject of remark by both friends and enemies, though it was generally agreed upon, among the women folks, that the old gentleman Batkins had been liberal in this final erection to her memory.

I am not disposed to continue the subject of my parentage further than to say that I, Jefferson S. Batkins, am the sole offspring of this junction of the blood of Batkins and Withaspoon.

I think, following the natural order of events, I should introduce, at this time, a person to whom, next to Mr. and Mrs. Batkins, I and my readers and the public are under obligation, — Dr. Slawter, the physician of Cranberry Centre. It was by his assistance, you understand, that I was permitted to enjoy all I have of this world's rewards and punishments. He, as I have been informed, released me from my first difficulty. The domestic traditions at the time were, that, under Providence, and the skilful use of instruments, I owed to Dr. Slawter my thanks for becoming a living soul, however, Mr. and Mrs. Batkins may be entitled to all the honors of my being, up to that first crisis of my fate, the natural inhaling process by which my nostrils performed their functions for the first time. I do not think it important to perpetuate the memory of the nurse of the occasion. I believe Aunt Dolly, as we called her, a life-long friend, though not a professional nurse, did duty at times, and is entitled to notice, as assisting my mother in carrying me through the perils incident to infantile life. It may appear strange that I have not given more emphasis to the

obligations I am under to my mother. I have nothing to say against her; but, from my observations, I am rather inclined to believe, that, whatever her merits on general principles, she was not exactly the right kind of person to be the companion of Mr. Batkins, my respected and respectable male parent. When she was removed to a better life, I do not think my father regretted this dispensation of Providence, but invested the money involved in the erection of the tablet to her memory, with a satisfaction, expressed, as I have been informed, in becoming language, and did not dispute the items in the bills of the undertaker and stone-cutter, which were paid with more than his usual alacrity.

I have given the names of the four persons upon whose authority I might rely to prove my birth and parentage,—my earliest associates. I shall now proceed to indicate the locality of the great event referred to; and trust this authenticated report will prevent any other town from quarrelling for the honor of my birth, which belongs solely to

CRANBERRY CENTRE.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHY I WRITE MY BIOGRAPHY.

NEED I explain what I mean by a biography? I think not. There has been any quantity of doubt expressed by speakers in public, and writers in newspapers and books, as to what the expression "a self-made man" means. In a physical sense, the previous chapter does away with any claim I might advance in that direction; but in respect of the mental and moral aspects of the human organization I do claim that I was not born with the attributes of greatness, nor, to use the rhetorical figure, "with a silver spoon in my mouth," and that in these respects I am a "self-made man." I propose that the events of half a century, with which my name has been associated, shall not be lost, buried in that sea of oblivion which is constantly rolling its waves over the doings of men, who, in their day and generation, were parts and parcel of the progress of civilization, and in some cases, perhaps in mine, its moving powers.

I appeared about the time of that stormy period of my country's progress, the war with England. Soon after the war I had matured sufficiently to run about my native town, my athletic form covered with jacket and trousers of home-spun material. I went to school, to an aged but patriotic spinster, imbibing, with her teachings of diphthongs and other, to me then, literary mysteries, that love of freedom which the name given to me by my father had so well prepared me to receive. My distinguished predecessor in name had carved for himself that niche in Fame's temple which is now occupied by his mental effigy. Jefferson! Ah, when I afterward saw this name prefixed to Batkins in my

copy-book, little did I think how illustrious it was to become! Ah, then when I heard this great ex-president of our then young, but to be everlasting, republic called a Jacobin, and when my respected mistress of the children's school used to tell us, if we were not good boys Bonaparte would come over here and carry us all to France, — little did I think, that I should be an American statesman, or that Cranberry Centre would rise into a great political power. This is not the place to expand; I only propose to give a reason why I at this time appear as a biographer, and to state that, while I shall give true accounts of my social, financial, philosophical, and political mistakes and blunders, I shall, for obvious reasons, reserve the names of some of my friends and associates, who would not care to have their delinquencies or shortcomings known, as they now hold high places in the esteem of their fellow-countrymen, and many of them offices of emolument and honor in the federal, State, and municipal governments, or are employed in such labors of unremunerating character, as teachers of Sunday schools, deacons of meeting-houses, overseers of the poor, or general missionaries of moral reforms.

There are others who are entitled to have their names go down to posterity with mine, and perhaps will assist my chances of immortality as a representative of the class of self-made men.

I can say, — what cannot often be said by successful politicians, — I never forget my friends, — those who gave me my first boost in the political arena, when I was about to step upon the first round of the Jacob's ladder leading to the cloudy land of ambitious mortals.

To speak of Mr. William Warren, of Mr. Kimball's Museum, and also of Mr. Kimball, seems to me to be among my first biographical duties; and perhaps I ought to begin the list with the name of the author of the play-acting job of the "Silver Spoon." Neither of these persons have done anything deleterious

to my reputation or welfare; on the contrary, they have most generously assisted in making my character known to thousands of my fellow-countrymen, their wives and children; and no expense to me. To be sure, that part of my history as represented at the Museum was inaccurate and incomplete; this biography will supply the deficiencies, and preserve only that portion for the authenticity of which I am responsible.

It is not often that a public man, an acknowledged celebrity, writes his own life. Sometimes weighty reasons control his actions in this matter. Usually some friend, after the departure of the public functionary, collects the sayings and doings of the lamented subject, and, with the assistance of documentary evidence, arranges a biography to suit relatives and other survivors.

As a rule, I think monuments, obituaries, memoirs, eulogies, and biographies should not appear during the lifetime of any distinguished personage.

Still more, as a rule, do I think it to be unfair and improper, no matter how good the motive, to put a man's actions on the stage of a theatre or a museum while he is still alive, whether he is the heroic leader of a military battle, or a martyr to his country's cause in the bloodless field of legislative warfare.

I have been so placed in just this situation, and in my case no injury has been done; and if there has been any misapprehension of my character through the personification of Mr. Warren, this biography will set matters right.

How different has been the case of my friend, Mr. Solon Shingle, who was not a politician, but a very respectable tax-paying farmer, in a somewhat famous old town of the Commonwealth! Our intercourse in life will not warrant my doing more than to refer to his being placed upon the stage in his lifetime; and I am sure if he had ever witnessed himself there, he would not have known himself, and would have repu-

diated such behavior as is represented to be his, in a court of justice, as an outrage to any of the family name.

Mr. Shingle is dead. He cannot now change the current opinion as to his real character, and nobody will probably undertake the task, unless it be myself or the author of the Silver Spoon, who knew him well, and who is to assist me in making my life, although I am not to print his name on the title-page. This is a condition of the agreement between us. He thinks it might injure his practice to be associated with me in my autobiography.

## CHAPTER III.

### CRANBERRY CENTRE.

THE spirit of annexation and consolidation, aided by the broom of progress, has swept from the map of Massachusetts that ancient democracy known to a past generation, and part of the present, as Cranberry Centre; although this announcement is after the pattern of the style of to-day, as the reader will discover it is my intention to describe the manners and customs of its inhabitants at the time "when all that I saw, and part of which I was," have passed to things that were. Its location was west-south-west of Boston, then only a town, communication with which ever-thriving, wealthy, philanthropic, and moral metropolis was difficult, though not without reward and gratification to the sojourner within its limits. The homestead of the Batkins family for several generations was not a conspicuous pile of buildings, constructed after the style of the baronial castles of the mother country, as New Englanders were wont to call the kingdom of Great Britain. I shall first describe the peculiarities, and afterwards give the reader an idea of the other structures, which were comprised within the bounds of the aforesaid hamlet, or village as some termed it, but I, with full appreciation of the dignity of its inhabitants, denominate a town. The main road through Cranberry Centre run east and west, over a level plain, at the extreme ends of which it was bordered by a diversity of sand-hills and marsh lands, with an occasional sheet of water elaborated into ponds of no considerable depth, connected with each other by shallow canals. In summer, cattle would slake their

thirst in these natural reservoirs; they also gave shelter to frogs and some small fish, affording me in my early days an arena for prosecuting piscatory pastimes, rescuing many of their pouts and shiners from their watery homes. In winter it was used as a skating-ground, — being before the days of rinks and such-like improvements. Cranberries grew upon the marshes and flats that separated the watery domain; this originally gave the name to the place, "Cranberry Centre." The high-lands, or sand-hills, were not prolific in anything. Barberry bushes and wild roses, in a natural state, gave variety to the scene. Savin trees here and there dotted the landscape. It is immaterial to the story of my life what towns were next in contiguity to Cranberry Centre. Of course, Cranberry Centre was not an oasis in the midst of a desert. The face of the surrounding country was generally like the soil upon which stood the homestead of the Batkins family. On one side of the town a succession of rocky elevations diversified the scene as towns-people or travellers approached from the plain. All things are great or small by comparison. So these rocky elevations obtained the name of the mountains, one of which was called Mount Independence, and to this day retains the appellation. Upon this elevated position fourth of July celebrations were instituted and conducted, with all the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." It was here that I imbibed my first draught of the spirit of independence, at one of these patriotic outbursts of annual glorifications, in the oration of the minister of the town: —

"Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,  
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle eye;  
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,  
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky."

Between these hills a gorge had been cut, in ancient times, either by an earthquake, a freshet, or some speculating quarry-

men. Science had in vain attempted the solution of this geological problem. A cave was one of the results of this revolution, whatever it might have been; this was called the "Devil's Gap," and I don't believe any couple in the neighborhood during their courting days failed to visit this wonderful natural curiosity.

As to the original settlers of the town, anterior to the period of my father's locating himself therein, I shall not enlarge. The grand problem of how to improve the race of men has been in constant process of solution since the pre-Adamite days. My limited acquaintance with ancient history is not sufficient to throw much light upon the shades of doubt in this respect. Of course, Cranberry Centre, like most of the towns in the State,—not excluding Boston itself,—previous to the arrival of the Pilgrim Fathers, "so called," was in possession of the aborigines, "so called" by the learned, and, in this case, Indians, by everybody else. Of course, where the Indians come from, in the view that all men are born equal, is beyond the province of this work to inquire. It is enough for me to know that none of my ancestors were Indians. After the fashion of the noble Caucasian races when they emigrate to other lands, carrying with them liberty, religion, and the fine arts,—and some other artful dodges,—as the precursors and propagating agents of civilization, they cajoled the aborigines into selling their lands, and when all the agencies for the improvement of these heathen were in full action, by wars and laws for the preservation of game, and other instrumentalities framed for their benefit, there was not left a solitary aboriginal fellow-creature in Cranberry Centre. The Caucasian race had triumphed; civilization was established. We shall see what followed this redemption of the land. I have been reading a little, in order to be posted as to this elevating the human race. New countries, it appears, are usually settled by what we should call hard customers,—men and women who can't stay at home much longer and keep

free from those institutions which appear to be the test of civilization, the abundance of which are such glorious testimonials of the success of free governments in our own republic. In less than one hundred years we have eclipsed all other countries in our provisions for these classes. I refer to jails, penitentiaries, almshouses, hospitals, and that other invention, the gallows, which, in a degree, prevents the repetition of the offence for which the candidate for its honors has obtained them. Rome was peopled at first by thieves and murderers; it did not reach its proud and imperial position by any mixture of inferior races; they being of Caucasian blood, the fact of having practised robbery and other criminal professions did not deprive them of the power to inaugurate a posterity equal to the emergency of supplying material for kings, emperors, consuls, senators, tribunes, generals, and other important functionaries required to carry on a government, whatever its name or location. To be sure, there was some mixing of blood in this process; but it was not done on the modern principle of increasing the nutritive power of milk by an addition of water.

By this time the reader may wonder what this has to do with Cranberry Centre. I answer much, in the philosophy of the thing. It may be forgotten, perhaps, that I have been a legislator, and that I have been engaged in making laws for the benefit of that part of the human race, my constituents. And as history repeats itself, and as we are progressing so rapidly and successfully in elevating the race of Americans, not yet, with the exception of those who have Indian blood in their veins, quite entitling it to a national entity, I want to see how the Romans come out. It may seem singular to compare Rome, in its days of triumph, when it swallowed up, by war or by annexation, all its neighboring country, and some over the seas, with Cranberry Centre, controlled by its board of selectmen under the guidance of the ten commandments, and the principles of liberty and justice brought over in the May-

flower. There is what is called by scientific men the hydrostatic paradox. I would have had a drawing in this book of a picture to prove it; but the printer says it costs money, and everybody knows what it is.

That shall not prevent me from explaining it. It may be that not all my readers study books of natural philosophy. I am sorry to say, a great many legislators do not seem to understand the theory of the paradox, as in no shape or manner do they practise upon it. It is this: I am not extracting it from a book, other than "the book and volume of my brain," and may not hit it. If one body of water is the ocean, and it communicates under ground through a small pipe, with an outlet on any surface of the earth, the pressure will be equal, and the little stream will be as high as the great ocean; therefore, Rome and Cranberry Centre may be compared, and the pressure of human nature will be equal without regard to the hemispheres, and what could happen to Rome, from excess of greatness, may happen to Cranberry Centre, or any other place. I agree to this, that the white settlers of Cranberry Centre were no better nor any worse than those of other towns, whose pioneers were descendants of the Plymouth colony.

I shall not be particular as to dates, but the following statement may be relied on. In due course of time the following institutions were established: a meeting-house, a school-house, a pound, a work-house, a poor-house, a store, a mill, a justice of the peace, a constable, a whipping-post, stocks at a much later period, a dance hall, a fire-extinguisher, and an opposition meeting-house. A jail was in the next town. A state prison farther off answered the purpose. I will do justice to my native town by stating that no one of its inhabitants ever obtained the right of domicile to the state prison, for any act committed in the "Centre;" some few citizens having been enticed to Boston with prospects of advancement, I am told, did disgrace their native soil, and received their merited reward. It

will be perceived, with this machinery of government, and the right to send a representative to the legislature to superintend the interests of Cranberry Centre, the town might operate it, and contend in the race of rivalry with the other independent democracies in the county of which it was a part. There were roads to the different parts of Cranberry Centre, crossing as a general rule the main road, and leading to different localities, some of which have names expressive of topographical distinction, or of the peculiarities of original settlers; there were also some more devious pathways, which originally had been marked out by the boys crossing lots to the school-house, or after the cows in the season of pasture-feeding; on the main road stood the meeting-house, erected after a plan much in vogue in New England; a wooden structure with a porch, or weather-shed, doors opened on three sides on great occasions, or at the termination of services; a peculiarity not always to be accounted for in a people so thoroughly church-going as the congregation of the house at Cranberry Centre, — upon the door were posted bills of the tax-gatherer, auctioneer, town clerk, and pound-keeper.

The poor-house had a forbidding aspect; a scrupulous neatness characterized its outward appearance; the barns and out-houses were of a methodical regularity, the more chilling to the observer if he reflected upon the misfortunes of the family of the town dwelling therein; during my boyhood, I never visited the poor farm. The stories I heard of its keeper and its inmates did not encourage me to accept the invitations often given to me on visiting days, by the overseers or selectmen. The occupants of the rooms in the poor-house were decrepid old men and women, an idiot or two, a bed-ridden, palsied old soldier, an insane woman, with an occasional cripple, a hero of the war, for "sailor's rights and free trade," as they called it, whose pension from his grateful government was not sufficient to supply him with bread and milk, if from any other source

he could find clothes and lodging. I did not at the time understand much of pauper management, but from what I gathered from those who did, poor-houses, poor people in them, and poor-house keepers, are about the same all the world over.

Gipsey Village was a place that had a reputation of its own, on the outskirts of Cranberry Centre proper. Basket-making, poultry-stealing, fortune-telling, and some less respectable practices, were the visible means of subsistence of the dwellers within its boundaries, — a set of rural outlaws of both sexes, and of all ages, much of a pattern with this class of nature's noblemen who are constantly making business for constables, justices of the peace, keepers of jails and work-houses, and occasional necessities for the services of physicians and coroner's inquests. Our constable, Gideon Bodge, called this place the pest of his daily life. It had various names given to it, according to the whims of different observers of its routine of vagabondage and petty crime.

In contrast to Gipsey Village was the better part of the town, through which a road, called Main Street, had been laid out at the early settlement of this ancient and respectable domain. The minister's house, called the Parsonage, displayed its chimneys, and part of the gable roof, above the elm-trees which surrounded it; the doctor's homestead, with its neatly ordered fences, sheds, and barns, and a fine garden, was upon the opposite side of the way; the lawyer, a man of note, had a fine mansion, for the times, in the neighborhood. Here were law, medicine, and divinity, in close proximity. This was considered the aristocratic portion of the town, the "Centre."

About half a mile from this centre a tavern presented its claim to notice, by a somewhat gaudily painted exterior; before its door, swinging from a beam across two high posts, was a sign of Washington on horseback, painted by a Boston artist; in faded letters underneath was discernible the name of the



establishment, partly illustrated by the picture, "Washington Tavern." Down a lane, a few rods from the tavern, were the blacksmith's and the wheelwright's shops.

From this point a good view was had of the houses scattered about in different directions, and of the styles of architecture which give its peculiar character to a New England farming town.

I do not suppose that Cranberry Centre differed so much from many other New England villages of no special note, that strangers could not have discerned that its inhabitants were not to be set down altogether of that class that nature turns out after the fashion of bread-pans and bean-pots, with no distinctive marks upon them except as to the size and capacity for their intended uses. I shall append no topographical, hydrographical, or trigonometrical surveys at this time, nor make any further descriptive remarks; but I hope to prove that the people of this ancient and honorable town were superior in some respects to town and cities in the Commonwealth, of more ostentatious dimensions.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MY BOYHOOD.

I REFERRED in a previous chapter to the preliminary steps towards my education; religion, patriotism, and other virtues being mixed together at an early age, because, I suppose, it is thought best to work on the idea that "just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined," and therefore among the a-b, abs, it is a good idea to sandwich in some matters that the oldest heads in after life find a difficulty in understanding. About my time of boyhood there was a lad going about doing all sorts of sums in arithmetic without slate or pencil; but I never understood that anything great came out of it when he was a man. I suppose, generally, I was like most boys. As I grew up I learned to play the jews-harp, black joke, and marbles, on the holidays; in the winter, I used to slide down hill on a sled; I knew pretty much what was going on about the house; I knew where the woodchuck-holes were, and the berry-fields, and the nut-trees; perhaps I had as much of the boy mischief in me as was good for me, but I never was disposed to get up any jokes that would do anybody harm. If there were any barn-fillings, house-raisings, or funerals, I generally knew of it, and was on hand to do my share, which was for the most part eating and drinking some of the good things provided on such occasions. I had never any desire for strong drinks, contrary to old women's prophecies, who, in consequence of the use of gin in the substitutes for the natural aliment not furnished by my maternal nurse, said I should be a drunkard. Therefore I did not hanker after the sugar left in the tumblers, on the side-



board in the best room, after the contents had been swallowed by the mourners and friends, as was the custom at funerals in my boyhood's days.

I cannot say I ever saw any of the men or women folks tipsy at a funeral; but as their eyes were red from weeping, and their grief sometimes made them nervous and uncertain in their gait, it might have happened without my knowledge.

Once, at Squire Butters' obsequies, it was thought the minister was so affected; and his enemies did say, particularly some members of the opposition meeting-house, that he was fuddled; his friends averred that he was suffering from rheumatic neuralgia, and the doctor advised him to take Santa Cruz spirit, camphor and peppermint, before he left the parsonage. He did so, and the mixture struck to his head; and if this had not, the rheumatic neuralgia might have killed him. This is my boy's recollection of the affair at the time. Two places I was fond of visiting whenever I had the opportunity, — the store and the tavern. There were always some queer old jokers about these places. I used to listen with delight to their stories of escapes and adventures, when, as they said, the woods of Cranberry Centre were full of bears and catamounts. I had full faith in these stories, as boys usually have; and I was in the habit of repeating them and their rusty jokes to eager listeners at the homestead.

I was always glad to be sent after the doctor, and that was a little strange, as I was never remarkable for possessing an extra share of moral courage. Most boys were then afraid to go into the doctor's office. I was not. I had not then been told how much I was indebted to the doctor's skill, as I have stated in a previous — question. [Oh, how strange, — there's the future coming to mingle with the past! I will not erase the word, but substitute the correct one — previous chapter.] Waiting in the doctor's office one evening to deliver a message from my father, I saw upon his table the life of Robinson Crusoe.

This book interested me. I did not think of running away as he did, but the idea did come into my head as to whether my life in Cranberry Centre would ever be worth writing. I borrowed the book from the doctor, and was not satisfied until I had read every word of it.

I had worked on the farm with my father; had gone along much as boys do in similar situations. My father furnished me my board, and clothes, which were never extravagant, and usually made with an allowance for growth during the time they were in condition to perform the duties assigned to them. I had always a Sunday suit, and, by doing chores for neighbors, and the like, I occasionally could jingle in my pocket pieces of money of small size and value, with a representation of the copper currency of the times in greater number.

At the age of fifteen I went to a husking. I was naturally a modest, timid fellow among the women-folks, but when a girl insisted upon kissing me for some reason connected with the corn-ears, which I did not appreciate, I made a tussle for it, and fell down, buried with corn-husks, and, mixed up as I was with the laughing hussies, she accomplished her purpose amidst shouts of laughter and jokes I have not forgotten to this day. Next day, I felt a strange sort of nervousness, as they called it. I got frightened and went to Dr. Slawter with my case, who laughed at me, and said there was nothing unnatural about it; I did not need any medicine, as the difficulty would cure itself as I grew older. It gave me, however, an unpleasant idea of women that it took me some time to recover from. I went to one Thanksgiving ball; the music and the dancing almost set me crazy, but remembering the affair of the husking party, I went home and played checkers with our hired man, — a game I play some even to this day, and enjoy its exhilarating effects very much. I have nothing more to say of my education. I went to school some, studied the New England Primer, could write joining-hand, and cipher a little. I

did not take to arithmetic very well, and studying grammar appeared to me a useless waste of time. I do not think that any event occurred which would be of interest at this time to record, except those referred to, — my birth, the husking-party, the Thanksgiving ball, and the new suit of blue clothes, with brass buttons, made man-fashion, and given to me as a present on my fifteenth birthday.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE INDIGNATION MEETING.

ENERGETIC men had singled out Cranberry Centre as a place capable of great improvement. Good farms in some localities had been cut up into building lots. It had been proposed to run a railroad through Cranberry Centre. This project met with great opposition. One of the strongest opposers of this enterprise was my father. One of the strongest advocates was a gentleman who had not a great while before come to the Centre, and about whose history and previous habits there had been some mystery. For reasons hereafter to be given, he was more frequently spoken of as "Mrs. Simms' man" than his real name of Andriss used, when he was spoken to. In the short time he had resided in the Centre, he had acquired some reputation as a lawyer, and some people had gone so far as to say that Squire Andriss was ahead of anybody in the State. A young lawyer from New Hampshire was then beginning to make marks, but it was said Squire Andriss was too much for him in a case which at this time had just been tried.

In order that my account of the meeting I am about to give may be understood, I will state how matters stood between the railroad corporation and the people of the Centre. A charter having been obtained, the question was whether the railroad corporation should lay their track through the old burying-ground, where reposed in peace the illustrious dead of Cranberry Centre, who had been tenants of this soil since the settlement of the town : —

"There the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

When this route was proposed to my father he was in a rage not controllable by merely persuasive words. I will not undertake the phraseology of his first loud and plump refusal, backed by an oath, which, if my father's wishes upon himself had been gratified, would have prevented his contemplation of a hereafter in a very complacent tone of mind. To whoever spoke to him with a view to cause him to reconsider his expressed determination of opposition, he repeated his first negative with such variations as appeared to him best adapted to render hopeless any appeal to his judgment as between private rights and the public good.

I cannot undertake to give his indignant answer to a committee of the railroad stockholders who proposed to give the town land for a new cemetery, and to remove the dead, free of all expense to the survivors, to the new location upon a hill, where it was not probable that any railroad would interfere with their repose at least for a century to come.

After a number of private caucuses among the leaders of politics in the Centre, the following notice, posted in the usual places when meetings were called on town business, may give the reader some idea of the state of the Centre at this time:—

"PUBLIC NOTICE.

"The inhabitants of Cranberry Centre, without respect to party, opposed to the sacrilegious attempt of a soulless and aristocratic monopoly, composed for the most part of non-residents of the town, to desecrate and to destroy the ancient burying-ground by running a railroad through its consecrated soil, are requested to assemble in the meeting-house of the first parish, at four o'clock in the afternoon, on Wednesday next, if the weather is fair, to consult as to the best means of frustrating this odious violation of the rights of the living and the dead.

"JETHRO BATKINS,

"(For the Committee of Citizens opposed to the railroad), *Chairman*."

Attired in my new suit of blue, with my father I attended

the meeting, a description of which I am about to give. I take a part of it from the newspaper of the time, and partly from impressions made upon my memory by an event which agitated Cranberry Centre almost to its foundation.

When the day arrived for the meeting, Cranberry Centre was all alive. On Sunday previous, the minister preached about the railroad. I didn't remember the text. I thought that it was a little out of the way, to carry railroads into sermons. But since that day, politics, life insurance, summer resorts, and quack medicines, have each and all had their turn in the pulpits of some meeting-houses, until the business of this life, and the occupation of the next, are so mixed up, that congregations hardly know where they are, or whether Sunday is different from other days of the week. What would the people have said if the minister of Cranberry Centre had had his name put out as the author of novels! How hard it is to keep back where I ought to be, in writing the events of a quarter of century or more behind this state of things!

Cranberry Centre, as I have stated, was all in commotion. The old farmers turned out from the extreme ends of the town and the by-ways; some on foot, some in their old chaises, some in wagons, and some on horseback. I shall leave the picture to the imagination of those people who have seen the gatherings at a turkey-shooting, a barn-raising, a voting-day, a wedding in the meeting-house, or a Christian revival, a camp-meeting, a cattle-show, or the day the circus first enters into a country town. This "turn out" resembled them all put together, and in fact there were few people left in the houses except nursing children, cripples, and some old maids, who took advantage of the absence from home of so many of the men folks to have a clearing up of places that had not seen mop or broom since the last time. I need not fully describe the inside of

the meeting-house. It was like most of its kind, externally and internally, — a platform, a pulpit with a sounding-board, three rows of pews, a gallery part way round, in which the singers and the bass-viol were conspicuous on proper occasions. There was no band of music engaged, and that leads me to remark on the difference since pianos and such-like things were introduced. Nowadays a band of music is engaged to play between the speeches. At the appointed hour, an old gentleman — I did not hear his name, and I did not put it down — called the meeting to order, and read the notice of the meeting.

My father had taken me with him close up to the pulpit, and I declare I felt proud of my situation so near the big people of Cranberry Centre.

There was a proposition to open the meeting with prayer; this was voted down; one man said it ought to be done, — that was the way the Declaration of Independence was made, and he considered this meeting not second in importance to that revolutionary event. Another man said that he liked to have prayers said at funerals; but he did not see the need of them at weddings or other meetings. He did not think the feelings of the people were in a condition, on these occasions, for prayer. He said he was willing to have the help of Providence, whenever he undertook any work; but, according to his understanding, if you have anything to do with railroad corporations, there's no use relying on Providence; all you have to do is to keep your eyes open, and not let them get ahead on you. I noticed my father was uneasy, he kind of talked out his thoughts. When the prayer was first proposed, he said, "That's right, Jeff." After the last speaker concluded, he said, in an undertone, "Well, I don't know. Some truth in what he says." The large vote given against the opening of the meeting with prayer settled my father's notion of the matter, and he held up his hand in favor of omission, with courage and vigor, and looking at me

as much as to say, "That's right." I may as well explain the difference between railroad corporations in the early days of their introduction and now. The directors or individuals did seem to have some consciences, and did look upon it as rather hard to tear up the homes and the graves of communities, in order to improve the public travel, and such other reasons as are given for changes and improvements now. Although the Legislature gave the corporation the right, for the public good, to destroy a homestead, a graveyard, or a meeting-house, still they had a desire to smooth things up a little, and get the consent of the people, who were not used to the innovation of the times. Things are different now. Corporations go through anything, legislatures, courts, treasury funds, people's rights, to a terminus not always beneficial to the public or to themselves, but, to balance the account, prayers are more frequent. It is not uncommon to open stockholders' meetings, under some circumstances, in this way. Agricultural fairs, boat-races, horse-trotting matches and dancing parties, perhaps prize-fights, will be thus inaugurated as matters improve.

I cannot give all the particulars of the organization of the meeting; there was a great deal of whispering among the people on the platform. At length the meeting was put in working order by the choice of a moderator; a tall gentleman read the following resolutions, — he was the secretary: —

"Resolved, by the people of Cranberry Centre, in town meeting assembled, that we view with alarm the encroachment of corporate power upon private rights, and consider the yielding by the Legislature to such inroads upon the habits and customs of law-abiding people and Christian communities, as opening the graves of the departed dead, and exposing them to the vulgar gaze of the rabble, subversive of the true principles of liberty, for which our fathers fought, bled, and died, on Lexington Plain and Bunker Hill."

Upon this being read, there was a great clapping of hands,

and some hurrahs. My father expressed his assent to these demonstrations with a liberal display of approving smiles. In those days Bunker Hill and Lexington were considered among the great things of the world. Subsequent events have somewhat damaged their value. They are scarcely referred to now even in Fourth-of-July orations.

The second resolution was then read, as follows: "Resolved, that we pledge ourselves to resist this new tyranny, and instruct our next representative to the General Court to use his influence to have all charters repealed giving any such rights to corporations as to desecrate graveyards and churches, or that in any way interfere with private rights. Also, resolved, that our representative be requested to pledge himself to oppose as spirit of domination, now, henceforth, and forever, and to communicate with other friends of the cause, in order to accomplish this patriotic purpose."

More clapping of hands followed this part of the ceremony. It was evident that some one, out of the usual course of things, had framed these resolutions. My father could never have done it. It must have been the work of the minister, or Dr. Slawter, or the lawyer, "Mrs. Simms' man."

No one seemed ready to speak first; there was a large amount of whispering, and angular and energetic gesticulations; but no person seemed ready to begin. As is often the case on such occasions, everybody is waiting for somebody else. Herein is the advantage of a band of music, as is the modern way of pumping spunk into a dormant gathering. There was a dreary and dead silence, when, after some pushing and nodding, the moderator arose, and in a low voice inquired what was the pleasure of the meeting. In modern times some half-a-dozen boys would simultaneously have shouted out for a speech; but no one, in those days, had arrived at that advanced state of "Hail Columbia" or "Yankee Doodle" inspiration, to make somebody say something. After a great many evidences

of embarrassment, my father arose. All eyes were upon him. He opened his mouth, but words seemed to be wanting. He placed both hands upon the partition separating the pew from the one before it, and at last there escaped from his mouth these words: "Mister Mod-e-ra-to'r, I move the adoption of these resolutions. I—I—move that—" He sat down.

Immediately arose "Mrs. Simms' man," the lawyer, with an air of modesty becoming to any man, and quite surprising in the case of a man who had the reputation of robbing his principal, and marrying his wife. Whatever might be the truth in the case, he looked around, measured the calibre of the meeting, and in a sweet, winning voice began: "Mr. Moderator, in matters of this kind it is not always well to be hasty. Under some circumstances I can conceive that disturbing the remains of those we love, who have been quietly reposing in their last homes, would be an act of great cruelty, and lacerating to the feelings of friends who survived. Now I am personally acquainted with many of the directors of the railroad, and I am sure, if they had the slightest idea of the objections here raised, they would sooner sacrifice all their interests, and some of their lives even, rather than to carry their road through Cranberry Centre. It is true they have the power, but they have too much humanity in them, for merely pecuniary gain, to offend the intelligent farmers of this enterprising town. I need not state the advantages to you of having this road built, or the disadvantages to you if it goes through Leadenville and avoids Cranberry Centre altogether.

"If the road goes through, this will be the central depot for produce. It will raise the value of your lands, reduce your taxes, and bring the necessities, nay, the luxuries of life to your very doors, from all parts of the world. Now, as I said, my friends and neighbors, I have a common interest with you, and I should regret if, by passing these harsh resolutions, we should force the directors of the railroad to give to Leadenville the

advantages intended for us alone. I think in the course of time it will be necessary to have a new cemetery. If, I say, if you should upon consideration give the corporation permission to grade the cemetery, and lay the track upon it, you would not desire the cars to run over the cherished resting-places of your friends. I have no doubt the corporation would, in the most careful and appropriate manner, remove the remains of your loved ones to a new cemetery, and though pecuniary considerations could never alone weigh in the matter to influence your decision, I feel sure the corporation would satisfy all claims on that score, for your noble resignation of private rights for the public good. I hope this meeting will think, and not act rashly in the matter of these resolutions." He sat down. More whispering and putting of heads together; my father fidgety. All eyes were upon him. Fingers were pointed in the direction of our pew. The fact was, my father was the chief getter-up of this meeting, and it was expected that he would answer any person who should be bold enough to defend the railroad corporation. His continued silence at last became unendurable. One thick-set, farmer-looking individual arose, with the hoarse voice peculiar to an obese specimen of a cider-drinking community, and delivered himself as follows:—

"Mr. Moderator: I have listened to the resolutions and to the gentleman's speech. I have not anybody that belonged to me buried in the graveyard, and don't expect to be put there myself,—at least, I am not in a hurry to be, Mr. Moderator; but I should like to hear both sides. I should like to hear Mr. Batkins' views on the question, and I hope he will speak." He sat down, chuckling at his success, and turned square round to hear my father, encouraging him with saying, also, "Get up, Batkins, and say something."

After many efforts, my father was on his feet. I stood up, gazing upon him with admiration,—my father going to speak against "Mrs. Simms' man." Now, I had heard my father's posi-

tive style of speaking about the house, and around the farm to the men and the cattle, and sometimes down at the store, about election time. I had heard him talk to the neighbors on this question, calling anybody hard names, who was in favor of the railroad. Now I was to hear a reply to evidently a friend of the outrageous association.

My father's brow was covered with sweat. He clenched his hands. "Mr. Moderator," were his first words, and these he repeated several times, and in different tones of voice. I began to think the old gentleman would back down. He, however, rallied, and using both hands and arms, in various styles of impressive and expressive pantomime,—this word has been put in since I copied my ideas from the original journal,—he at length, in a loud tone, commenced the exordium of his speech,—this is also added: "Mr. Moderator, my friends, and fellow-townsmen, I am well known to you all. When I say a thing I mean it, unless something happens to change my mind. I am opposed to the railroad on conscientious grounds. I came prepared to answer any man who wants to prove the railroad to be of any use to Cranberry Centre, anyhow; but, sir, when it comes to destroying the ancient landmarks,—the burying-ground,—I—"

My father stopped full, and, taking from his pocket, a piece of folded paper, handed it to me to read, looking in vain in all his pockets for his spectacles, without which the paper upon which was written the heads of his objections was entirely useless. He spoke in a scarcely audible voice: "Jeff, read me what the paper says about the sacrilege." I repeated: "To-day I despise the wretch who, for filthy lucre, would see the railroad corporation play with his dead ancestors' bones as with a club."—"Yes, yes," says my father, "that will do;" and he repeated this Shakespearean paraphrase, I cannot say with good emphasis and good discretion, but with that volume of voice for which he was so noted when driving cattle from

the corn, or the dogs from the chickens, or a suspicious-looking wayfarer, who might be entering the gate leading to the door-yard of our homestead. At this time I did not know anything about Shakespeare, but I thought the minister or the doctor wrote this for him when they made the resolution. My father rose in my estimation after this first speech, and he continued calling all corporations awful names, and this one in particular, which was to ruin Cranberry Centre by the new enterprise. A few questions were asked and answered by different persons, none of them throwing much light upon the real intention of the corporation. From the speech of "Mrs. Simms' man," which was a feeler, nothing could be gained as to which side he would take. After my father's speech, the general feeling was, Down with the railroad! yet nobody seemed ready to push the advantage, and carry the resolutions. My father was surrounded by his friends, who congratulated him on his effort. His popularity was established, and at that time he could have been nominated as Governor of the State, and elected too, if the vote of Cranberry Centre could have done it. I need not say how proud I felt. I was naturally tall of my age, and I stretched myself to my utmost length, at the hazard of the seams in my new trousers, and bright buttons that decorated my first long-tailed coat.

"Mrs. Simms' man" rose again, and in that winning way that I before described, said: "Mr. Moderator, perhaps before passing the resolution, which I am inclined to favor, we had better dispense with the formality of the occasion, and talk as neighbors and friends, so that, whatever conclusion we arrive at, we may, as one man, be a solid phalanx in our resistance to any power that would rob us of our rights."

This appeared to suit the majority, and when it was formally announced, promiscuous conversation caused such a confusion that it would be difficult to say what opinion had been arrived at. After a short time, "Mrs. Simms' man" came into

the pew where we were; he was very polite. He looked at me all over: "Mr. Batkins' son, I suppose." I said I had supposed so. "Look like your father, young man; I hope you will one day fill his place." This was very complimentary to me; but at this time my father was so full of enthusiasm, he did not look upon the prophecy with complacency; as he at that time had no idea of anybody filling his place, particularly if the road was to run through the graveyard, where his wife, my mother, was reposing. This appeared to be the sum and substance of his thoughts, judging from the conversation going on between him and "Mrs. Simms' man." Something like the following dialogue took place, beginning in a whisper, and, as the people gradually went away from the pew, the voices increased in tone, so that I heard it without putting out my ears to listen.

"Well," said "Mrs. Simms' man," "I agree with you, Mr. Batkins, but I can assure you the corporation have no such intention; if the road does not go through the burying-ground, it will go higher up, and through the best part of your farm; so you see personally you will lose by the operation; now they have that lot next to yours, by the upper road. If you will not oppose the lower track, they will convey to you, for a nominal sum, Hedge's piece of good land, and purchase all your sand-hills to fill up the marsh."

My father listened with great attention: "Well," said he, "that looks fair; why didn't they say so to me before we got up this meeting? Now, after I have called them such hard names, and roused up all Cranberry Centre, it will not do for me to show any signs of backing out."

"Mrs. Simms' man" whispered again: "All easy enough. I will make a motion to adjourn the meeting, to be called together by the committee, after they have seen what the directors of the corporation mean to do." Something had evidently changed my father's mind; either that I heard, or something else that was said when their two heads were close together.



Without much ceremony, the resolutions were laid on the table, and the meeting adjourned, to be called together by the committee, of which my father was the chairman. The meeting dispersed as it came, only with more rapidity of motion. It was never called together again. The road went through the graveyard. My mother's remains were removed to the new cemetery, and for the first time, when the old stone was taken up, I discovered when my mother died, and her age at the time of her decease. This excitement made a great impression on me, and particularly when the addition was made to our farm, and my father was made a justice of the peace and a coroner of the county; and by these two offices I was enabled to know more of the doings in Cranberry Centre than the generality of people of my age.

## CHAPTER VI.

## MY FIRST TEMPTATION.

ABOUT this time I began keeping a journal of matters about the farm, and saved up pieces from the newspapers, which I cut out and pasted in an old account-book. I think I must say I was led to this from my continued reading of the "Life of Robinson Crusoe," to whose adventures I became more and more attached. I used the "Old Farmer's Almanac" to record my adventures, without being aware at the time how useful this would be, as I did not then think of writing my own life. I shall not suppress any truth; my journal accounts were deficient in fulness, and my spelling was not what it ought to have been; but, making allowance, I was about up to the average; and I have since known a school-committee-man who could not write his name. I had serious thoughts of leaving off farm work, as I had no wages, and either going apprentice to some trade, or obtaining a situation in Deacon Smoothe's grocery and dry goods store. I understood his clerk was about to be married and set up on his "own hook," as he called it, and that would leave a chance for some young man, of a religious turn of mind, who was willing to work. I did not seem to suit the deacon; but when my father heard of my movement, he proposed to give me an allowance, besides my board and clothes, until I was of age. He was a plausible man, and he used to bring me over to his opinions, after a hard day's work, with the following announcement:—

"Jefferson, you are my only son; you look partly like



me, and partly like your mother. You have all our good points: you are industrious, frugal, and honest; when I am gone all my property will fall to you; and it depends upon yourself whether or not you will be the greatest man in Cranberry Centre."

While events were transpiring which I need not mention, I was growing older, and increasing in stature; but I do not think my mental capacity was increasing in the same proportion as my corporal. I pondered a good deal over things I had read; but "Robinson Crusoe" was uppermost in my mind. I read it so often that I could repeat a great many chapters of it. I tried to learn to sing; but the teacher said there was no music in me. I was equally bad off in dancing qualities. In short, though I was reckoned forward in physique, as Dr. Slawter called it, I was rather backward in intellect; this did not discourage me. Not knowing the destiny that awaited me, I was as happy in my ignorance of scholastic qualities, as in the enjoyment of doughnuts, pumpkin pies, and cider cake, with a keen appetite for all good things, — a condition I have not yet outlived; I hope I never shall; although I must confess, when I look back, I am surprised to find how little I knew of human nature, which ought to be our study first and last and all the time. I have seen that idea in a book, conveyed in the following concise and beautiful sentence: "The proper study of mankind is man;" that includes woman, of course, as a prominent feature of the species.

Time kept going on in Cranberry Centre pretty much as it does everywhere else. People were born and died; the poor became rich not very often, but the rich not unfrequently became poor, and that's a hard case anywhere. I used to think seriously about that when I heard of any poor family going to the poor farm, who, when I first knew them, held good positions, and were well-to-do. Sometimes the extravagance of the wives and daughters, sometimes the misfortunes of the sons,

and sometimes the habit of too often going to the tavern or the grocery, swallowed up all the homestead; and the poor-house at last was the refuge of the old folks, and often the orphan infants of the second generation. My father, I am sorry to say, was not as regular to his meals as he used to be. Getting into office, and occasionally visiting Boston, as he often did on the new railroad, changed his mode of life, and not for the better. Our house-keeper, Aunt Dolly Spooner, used to shake her head, and say, "It was a pity, and it was all from politics; for since the indignation meeting my father was mixed up in all the movements of the day in this direction.

My father, satisfied with his first matrimonial effort, made no second attempt, and Aunt Dolly, since the death of my lamented mother, had ruled the house in a most unexceptionable manner. She was always kind to me, and before she had arrived at an age to forbid any hope of her being my step-mother, her propriety of conduct was acknowledged by the proper authority of the place, — our neighbors and friends. Scandal will thrive anywhere, in any soil, particularly where there are women to sow the seed and carefully irrigate the soil in the encouragement of its development, if such a process is necessary. So there was scandal even in Cranberry Centre, involving my father's name with Aunt Dolly's; one disappointed damsel avowing to my father's face, that if he did not marry Aunt Dolly he ought to have done so, to save appearances.

For the motherly treatment given to me, she was credited with the desire to be the second Mrs. Batkins. She gave me good advice, and while talking with her about my being soon out of my time, she said, "Jefferson, don't never go into politics, and, if you can help it, don't get married till you are more than forty years of age." I always believed in Aunt Dolly, and I do to this day; but still I must confess there is something in human nature, — and the more I study it, the more I find it to be true, — that when you are told not to do a thing, the more

you want to do it. Now, I confess, I had a strong desire to go into politics, and a very strong inclination to go into marrying; but though I did both, it was only late in life; and the reasons for resisting these strong but natural ambitions will be discovered at a proper epoch of my life. In about a month I should be one-and-twenty years of age. I had no strong points of character. I was full of resolution when I got roused, but did not carry out my views with great rapidity. I think one of my great qualities was caution. Speculations never tempted me. I was careful with what small sums of money I accumulated, and never borrowed a cent up to the time of my majority. Folks don't usually tell of any of their failings; but I am not ashamed to furnish anything that will give an idea of my character. "Just as the twig is bent," and "Tall oaks from little acorns grow," are among the axioms of my earliest recollections. I have said I was a believer in Dr. Slawter's theory of inheriting qualities from parents. My father at first had the reputation of being a mean, close man. After the indignation meeting, he became generous and liberal, which goes to show that the invention of railroads was a moral agent in the improvement of character. I really believe I was naturally mean and, inheriting it, of course I could not help it. I did not like risking money that I could not see any equivalent for, or any way to get it back. A little of my own human nature at this time may be gathered from an incident which I am about to relate. This was put into a paper some time ago; but I am the man and Cranberry Centre is the place where the fact occurred.

We had a hired girl, a plump body, about ten years older than I was. She had lived in Boston, but for some reason preferred to come into the country. She was full of jokes, and, as Aunt Dolly said, was always ready to carry on with any fellow; and somehow or other I did feel as if I was in love with her. It was a plaguy curious sort of sensation anyhow. In a frolic she kissed

me one day. I blushed at the time. I was uneasy except when she was about. She always seemed to appear to me wherever I was, or whatever I was doing; if I went to milk a cow, feed the swine, or drive the cattle to pasture. I had a kind of feeling that I almost wished that I was a pair of footings, or anything else that passed through her hands washing-days. She used to talk a good deal about getting married to different fellows, who used to be coming there, and whenever she did I used to feel as if I would poison any fellow that should dare to do such a thing; and so I told her one day. She said she would not speak to any other fellow, if I would marry her. She vowed she loved me, and so "bewildered and bedevilled me," as Aunt Dolly said, that I agreed to marry her, — so Sarah said. I suppose this was my first love. They say everybody is bound to have such a thing. I was not of age, but still I really think I made some promise to marry her, and after that I used to go walking round nights with her, coming home a little late and entering at a different door. Some folks noticed it; and I was bantered a little by my young-men companions. Aunt Dolly saw it, cautioned me against the Jezebel, as she called her, threatened to turn her away and tell my father of my danger. A truce was made, and my fair Sally Trivetts was urging me to fix the day of marriage. She had proposed a visit to the next town; to do this we must go over a bridge, or take the railroad train. One was more expensive than the other; but she decided that we should go on the cars. My conscience troubled me very much. This was a turning-point. I dressed in my best; so did she. She went out as usual, at the back door, while I went out at the front. I felt as if I had been stealing a sheep and didn't know what to do with the mutton, and half made up my mind not to go; but somehow, without any real cause, I was afraid of her. I had heard of men being put in jail for not marrying girls; but was not, at that time, aware of my legal defence, — that in law I was an infant, though in fact nearly six feet high. I joined her, and we walked

to the station. I went up to the ticket-office, and was about to give my money for the two tickets. The double price touched my quality of caution. I purchased one ticket, and when Sally asked for her ticket I told her that I guessed she had better pay her own fare, for if we should not get married I could afford to pay for but one, and lay out the money for no use to me. She looked at me as if she would kill me, and, shaking her clenched hand at me, exclaimed in a loud voice, that could be heard by everybody about the station-house: "Jeff. Batkins, you are the meanest cuss in Cranberry Centre." Well, I said nothing; but I thought I was. We did not go to the next town that night; she walked home alone. I followed, after getting the money back on my ticket. Miss Trivetts told Aunt Dolly that she would not sleep another night in the homestead, and, without giving any reason, for her conduct, received her wages, due, left for Boston in the morning train, and from that day to this I have never put the sight of my eyes on Miss Sarah Trivetts. Now, there are not many men, writing their lives, that would tell this against themselves, particularly after they had been elevated in public esteem, and won the honors as I have. It was a mean proposition, but just think of it! suppose I had married Sarah Trivetts, what a change in the history of my life!

Not long after my adventure with Miss Trivetts, one night, my father and I discussed the preliminaries of arrangement to be made, after I had arrived at that age in a man's life, when, thereafter, he has the right to trade for himself, and to sue and be sued, and enjoy all the luxuries of independent and free existence. My freedom day was approaching. He was to give me a new and complete outfit, the expense not to exceed thirty dollars, for coat, vest, trousers, and hat; my boots were good enough, he said, and there was no need of extra display, in that direction, on the occasion. There were to be no festivities at the homestead, though Aunt Dolly, good soul, put in her word in my be-

half, without effect, however, at the economical resolution of my father. "Put it off," said he, "until thanksgiving-day, and then, if you choose to invite your friends in the evening, I will pay the bill for refreshments. I agreed to this. I had a few friends among the farmers' sons; but no one that I looked upon as indispensable to my existence. I was singular in this respect, perhaps; but so it was. A loud knock at the door put an end to our deliberations. Aunt Dolly had attended to the summons, and admitted Gideon Bodge, the constable of Cranberry Centre.

Gideon was a character of the past; as constable, pound-keeper, and tax-gatherer, his time was pretty well occupied in the service of his fellow-citizens. He led the choir in the meeting-house, and whatever service he performed, a charge was made, or the money collected on the spot, — his choice always, but not always adopted. He was never known to do anything gratuitously, of his own suggestion. He was a single man, and though nobody was ever heard to speak well of him, he performed his duties faithfully; but always insisted that the laborer was worthy of his hire, and that the surest way to make enemies was to have too many friends. "No friendship in trade," was his answer, if any person proposed, for any reason of relationship, neighborhood, or previous official perquisites, that he should discount on fees, or other pecuniary operations.

He was not liberal, even in the use of words, and spoke only just so many as would convey his meaning, and sometimes so scrimped the supply as to render almost unintelligible the drift of his communications.

But whenever his lank body, covered with a suit of gray satinnet, tightly fitting his limbs, and his advanced head partly hidden by a wide-brimmed brown hat, showed itself, you might be sure he meant business; for no other purpose was he ever known to enter, uninvited, anybody's premises. As a rule, he never spoke first, but waited for the usual salutation: "Well, Gideon, what now?" and he was thus addressed by

my father, who appeared somewhat astonished at his entrance.

Gideon replied, "That plague, Martha, has come again."

My father uttered an oath in addition to an expressive wish that Martha was dead. Putting on his hat, he walked out with Bodge, saying, "I'll see what's to be done;" leaving Aunt Dolly and myself together. I asked who this Martha was. Aunt Dolly informed me. I will inform my readers hereafter of her connection with some incidents of my life, which at this time were among the hidden things of a great future.

## CHAPTER VII.

### I KEEP A STORE.

THE thanksgiving day referred to in the previous chapter passed away much after the style of other thanksgiving days. I shall not give an account of our doings on that particular occasion, as everybody in New England knows what a thanksgiving day is. To be sure, it is a different thing from the real old roast-turkey, plum-pudding, pumpkin-pie, getting-married, going-to-ball thanksgiving day, of the old times. In works of fiction that I have read, in which the development of the character of the descendants of the Pilgrim fathers appeared to be the principal object, thanksgiving day has been glorified, and its instinctive suggestions duly recorded and expatiated upon. I am not writing the history of New England, and therefore this is one of the institutions I shall only refer to, leaving the matter to such books as have been written on it, or leave to the present posterity the task of inquiring of their predecessors, who may be living, as to what constituted the observance of thanksgiving, in accordance with the proclamations of the governors of those days. I do not aim to instruct my readers in morals or religion; but as thanksgiving day is a different day from what it used to be, so have some other matters undergone the change consequent upon, or previous to, all great improvements, ever since the flood, because all that happened before was destroyed, except the animal creation, including, I suppose, birds, fishes, and creeping things; and little is known as to the state of science and the fine arts.

previous to that watery epoch. I perceive how rambling are my thoughts.

At the time of which I am writing, my notion of the flood was vague and unsatisfactory; at this day my notions are somewhat changed, and I cannot help thinking that if the whole world was then destroyed, it would be difficult now to repeat the operation, relying on the principles of natural philosophy, and the astounding discoveries and inventions of the nineteenth century. It is an inborn quality of our national character to go ahead, and I find it again difficult to restrain myself to Cranberry Centre and the era of which I write. Under the light of my experience, I am impelled to the consideration of the future at the expense of the past. I am aware, that at this time it is improper to refer to the telegraph and ocean cable, except as to their being in the brain of the inventor, and yet, when we of this day reflect upon the flood, and Noah's arrangements for self-preservation, we cannot keep out of sight the fact, that if steam and the ocean cable had been among the resources of the people of Asia, a trip to America, where the signs of a deluge are not so manifest, — that is, on a large scale, — might have saved a great many more than were saved in Noah's specimen of naval architecture, and thus interfered materially with the claim of Columbus and the Pilgrim fathers in the discovery and settlement of America. I have read this over, and am rather astonished at the vast grasp of mind such a change of affairs comprehends. Such is the expansion of human thought. I could not have done this at the time of which I write, because the brain I had then is not the brain I have now. Doctor Slawter said that once in seven years the whole body underwent such a change that there was not a particle left of the matter used, in running the human machine, that was in it seven years before.

The railroad passed through the town, which was considered of sufficient importance to be made a watering station. Every

train would bring passengers, who remained a day or two; some of these became permanent residents. The town was to be improved generally. My father had joined agricultural societies, and with his offices began to live in a gentlemanly style. Once the governor visited our house, and I had the honor of blacking a real governor's boots, who, from perambulating the suburbs of Cranberry Centre, had aggregated so much of its free soil on his boots as to compromise his ideas of gentility. I brought the boots to the governor myself; he thanked me, and said he would not insult me by offering me a pecuniary reward. I should not have considered it an insult, though I was the only son of a justice of the peace and a county coroner. There was some talk of making Cranberry Centre a city. It was said Boston influence defeated the plans. We had increased largely the numbers of inhabitants; not always were the new-comers of the best classes. We had a fire now and then; occasionally an outbreak among the foreign population that had gathered about a region of Gypsy Village, known as Skunk's Misery. The vagrants who resided in the village proper had a larger field for the practice of their operations; they had ascended from the lesser crimes of robbing hen-roosts and clothes-lines to the cultivation of a higher style of depredation. Larceny from the stores was increasing, and sometimes a burglary was attempted, not always with success. There was also an establishment near by, — what is now known as a "social evil." At the time of which I write, the particular institution referred to had not so pronounceable a name.

All these innovations gave extra duties to Gideon Bodge. This in no way disturbed him, as "all was grist to his mill." I do not think I had kept pace with the improvements consequent upon the railroad passing through the town. Early in life I had an idea that I should like to be rich; but my weak point was a fear to let go what I had for the chance to get more. I tried my hand at a little barter trade, and did pretty

well sometimes. At turkey-shootings, I used to take a chance now and then; but if the best shots in three took the turkey, I would sell my chance as often as take my last fire. When I once got money into my possession, I did hate to part with it, and that is the truth. The old proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," saved me from land speculations, insurance companies, bank investments, and matrimonial enterprises.

Some time after I was of age, Deacon Smoothe died. His store and stock was for sale, and my father, assisted by "Mrs. Simms' man," purchased it, and put me in it on wages and a third share of the profit. A sign was put up over the door. Ah! I see it now: "J. S. BATKINS AND COMPANY, successors to Deacon Simeon Smoothe. Dry Goods, W. I. Goods, Groceries, Medicines, Fancy Goods. Produce bought and sold." I thought the store was larger than necessary, and rented a part to a tailor. His sign was added to the building: "Tailoring done here." The room over the store was let to a teacher of a singing-school, and the building had more of the appearance of business than in the days of Deacon Smoothe. I used to go over to the other side of the road and contemplate the change. "J. S. Batkins," — that was me, and no mistake; the "Company" was Jethro Batkins and "Mrs. Simms' man." The tailor had no name up, nor the music-master, and I received the credit of, as they would say now, running the whole machine. How often we get credit for more than belongs to us!

Things appeared on the start to be kind of curious. I was paying wages to myself and had partners on my sign. I will not anticipate here the state of things that came out of my first attempt at commercial endeavors. The clerk that had been with the deacon for some time was retained, as he knew the most of the customers, and "Mrs. Simms' man" said it would be judicious to employ him, as he had some capital, and might set up an opposition store and divide the trade, if not rob my establishment of its traffic altogether. I had no experi-

ence in shop-keeping. I used to go to the store for things, and in that way knew the method of purchasing at retail. Selling, I supposed to be something easily learned. The purchasing of stock was for the time left with the clerk, who made frequent visits to the city for this purpose, during which time I was in full possession of our selling department.

I was in business in a store, where, after many years of strict attention to business, the deacon had secured a competence for his family. My father and "Mrs. Simms' man" had furnished the capital, and therefore I was justified in following their advice as to the administration of affairs. I said the clerk remained upon a small salary, and a percentage of profits, from the silent partners' share, always taken in advance. I began to think that his share was larger than mine. Whenever we took an account of stock, the nominal profits were considerable; but I could never realize more than my salary. I had often heard that "figures will not lie." I think that may be true, as to the figures; but they do bring out different results, according to the use made of them. Book-keeping was not among my accomplishments.

One of my weak points, at this time, was a readiness to believe almost anything anybody told me who appeared to be friendly. I began with the idea that the great mass of people were honest. This notion is a little brewed out of my perceptive faculties; still, at times it has had a powerful influence on my actions. My adventure with Miss Trivetts had led me to a general distrust of women, — particularly if they spoke to me in that soft way so natural to their sex, and so fascinating to ours. I don't know what to liken it to, unless it be the power the cat has over the canary bird, and given to them for the same purpose, — to charm the victim and then destroy him. My opinion then was, that, if a woman wanted to marry a man, there was no reason why she should not begin the courting. If the story of Eve is a true one, she must have proposed to Adam. At

the time I am writing, public opinion sustains this view, although it is not my intention to enlarge on the question of woman's rights, in this chapter. I had been in the store more than two years, when I considered it right to inquire into the affairs of the firm. Our business had been good apparently; that is, we sold a large amount of goods; but according to the books kept by Mr. Bean, my clerk, we owed about as much money as the stock was worth. On the other side, money was due to us. But one thing that surprised me more than anything else was the large amount of counterfeit bills that was always returned to us, after Mr. Bean had been to Boston to purchase supplies. I was no great judge of paper money, but Mr. Bean pretended to be, and yet we were every day receiving more or less of the spurious kind. I was careful, in taking my wages, to secure gold or silver money, which I put in a savings-bank of my own. I made my mind up that I would not lay away paper money, if I took my share in copper coin. I always did have a dislike to bank bills, though sometimes I did get a counterfeit half dollar or so for real silver.

I am determined, at this time, to let the matter of counterfeit bills remain, until the sequel of shop-keeping affairs comes up in due form.

Our partnership lasted between four and five years. During that time there were, of course, many changes, both in the town and in my acquaintances; but I shall only notice those that have a bearing on my own life. I was never above my business. In the store I always put on a green apron and jacket over the arms of which I had linen sleeves, which were washed once a week or so, and relieved of the different mixtures of molasses, butter, and other matters which would collect during a week's work. Mr. Bean, when he was in the store, attended mostly to the dry goods department, and principally to the ladies, who called for silks and dimity, — an article much used in those days, — and for this purpose he was well adapted. It used

to be a saying then, if a fellow was suitoring to the girls, he was after the dimity, — a saying I dare say well remembered by men of my age, whether they practised in the fashion or not. I attended to the women-folks, when they came after groceries; but, if you have the intention, you can frame your conversation in the same style with those who came for soap, clothes-lines, butter, cheese, rat-traps, cider, or rum, as with those who came for things to make into wedding-gowns, baby caps, and such-like furniture. Although I was the owner of the store, I did the hardest work. Mr. Bean looked after the lighter trade, and kept the books. I had not much time to improve my mind by reading. It used to frighten me sometimes to hear Mr. Bean talk of poets, and poetry, and novels. I heard him once speaking a piece, as I came into the store, to some ladies. When they were gone I asked him what it was. He said it was from Byron, — Lord Byron, I think he called him; a person I had never heard of then; but a little later I inquired of the minister. He said he was a dissolute man, and no youth should ever read his works. That gave a momentary start to my human nature; but when I inquired the price of the book I concluded I would follow the minister's advice; so I went back to Robinson Crusoe, and forgot Byron and his works. Since then I have heard a good deal of him; but now I am too old to begin to read the book. I do not think a country store is the best place to develop genius, or to prepare one to be a governor, or a president of a college, or for any such eminent position. Still, there is opportunity to do some thinking, and to see something of people's dispositions. I used to be deceived sometimes; but one thing I can say, if I was cheated once by any person it could not be repeated in the same way. The ingenuity of some people is astonishing. In order to put a stop to so much trusting I put up a sign, "No Trust." This Mr. Bean removed, and substituted, "Six per Cent. discount for Cash." Nobody took any notice of that. I then pro-



posed to put up, "No credit given here." Mr. Bean remonstrated, said we should drive all our custom to the opposition store. After a while, I found, in an old almanac, a piece of poetry, and hired a painter who owed us, and would never pay, to paint it out on a board as follows: —

"Since man to man is so unjust,  
I cannot tell what man to trust;  
I have trusted many to my sorrow;  
So pay to-day, I'll trust to-morrow."

This I put up in a conspicuous place in the store. Folks would read it; but I did not see that it had much effect upon them to my benefit. Mr. Bean said it was an insult to our customers, and removed that also. Some of the women had the most insinuating ways, and invited me to call and see them. This I was afraid to do, for I remarked this: if you get on intimate terms with your customers, you can't so well ask them for their bills; and no friendship in trade, — Gideon Bodge's motto, — after all, had something in it. He was a constable, to be sure, and to be obliged to carry your friends to jail does seem to be not over-pleasant, I confess.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SEA-CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

THERE was a gay woman, whose husband was said to be gone to sea, who had some relatives in Cranberry Centre, and she came up to stay until he came back. She was always talking about when her ship came home she would pay her bill. In looking over her account, on my side of the store, I found she had a great many almonds, raisins, wine, and West India goods, such as, in those days, were kept in grocery stores. She was a smart-looking woman. She came in one day, dressed in a yellow nankin, tight-fitting garment, trimmed with white cord, and little lumps of something looking like thimbleberries, if thimbleberries were white; on her head a broad-brimmed straw hat she wore, which she called a gypsy, with red ribbons and roses all over it. "Mr. Batkins," said she, "I have news from my ship. I have just come from Boston, and my uncle has made me a present of this new suit. How much do you think my hat cost?" I told her about half a dollar. "Ten dollars," said she; "is it not a beauty?" This set me back on the thought that was getting possession of me, in case she should be a widow. I was dumb; but I was soon electrified by her saying, "Mr. Batkins, I want you to send to me, this afternoon, a few things," — she handed me a long list of articles, — "and bring your bill with you this evening, and I will settle all together. My uncle is going to send me some money from my husband, by the last train." Away she flew out of the store. I busied myself in putting up the articles, and when Mr. Bean came in, I requested him to make out the bill, which he



did, adding to the account the yellow nankin, and the daisy trimming, which she had from my own stock. I said nothing, but after walking two or three times across the store, suppressing some very wicked words which were trying to get out of my mouth, I resolved I would go with the bill, and tell her in plain words what I thought of her and her uncle's dress. I had a mind to take Gideon Bodge with me; but concluded, on the whole, to go alone, and act as if nothing had happened, until I saw her and ascertained if she had received the money by the last train. I went home, dressed myself in my best suit, having told Mr. Bean I should not return after supper, and started on my errand.

If I thought it would throw any light upon the subject, I would describe the house where this widow lived. I do not give her name, because she has relations living, and some of them are voters; enough to say, when I came to the gate, and saw the best room lit up, I hesitated, and half made up my mind to go back, and send Mr. Bean with the bill. I saw a shadow move on the curtain, and shortly the front door opened. "The sea-captain's wife had seen me, and hastened to invite me in. "Walk in, Mr. Batkins," said she in a loud voice. I looked round to see if anybody that I knew was in the road. That was one of the times in my life when I would have agreed to give a dollar, if I could be at home with Aunt Dolly, or in the store measuring out meal, or even cleaning the oil-can, which fell to my share of duty, instead of my clerk's. I don't know what I said, or how I really got in. She took my hat, and asked me to sit down. I did so. "Has the last train come in?" said she. I told her that it had. The thought came over me, if she don't know the train is in, she has not received the money. "Well, Mr. Batkins, then I shall have to ask you to wait a little while. You brought the bill?" — "Yes, ma'am." I handed it to her. "Dear me, is it so much?" — "Well, I had no idea I was so extravagant. I don't know what my husband will say, when he comes home, do you?"

I did not, and so I remarked; but I thought I knew pretty well what I should say, if I had been her husband. A knock at the door was heard; in those days bells on front doors were not so much the fashion. "Ah," said she, in the most honest way in the world, "perhaps that is the money. Will you walk into this room, Mr. Batkins, until I settle with the messenger, as perhaps you would not care to be seen, at this time of the night, collecting a bill." — "Certainly," I said. She rather hurriedly put me in the direction of the door. I entered the room; she closed the door after me. What occurred in the best room, for some time I never had any knowledge. When I had recovered myself from the confusion I was in, I discovered I was in a bedchamber, probably hers. At first I saw nothing which could in any way distinguish it to be a lady's chamber. There were lots of sweet smells, that made it suspicious. I could hear voices, but could not make out words. There was a large mirror upon a table, in which was reflected as much of my person as the glass was capable of holding. I looked as if I felt uneasy, and I was. It just occurred to me that I had left my hat on the floor near the chair, where I sat down. If there had been a door leading from this room to the road, I should have run home without my hat. I might jump from the window. While I was debating what to do, the voices became louder. One, a man's, was loudest: "I will know who he is." The door was suddenly opened, and before me stood Aristarchus Bean, my clerk, who exclaimed, "Batkins, you are a villain!" All the rest was confusion. I think we had a sort of struggle. I was unconscious of what followed, and the next morning I found myself in bed, with a contused face, and was informed the doctor had ordered leeches, and expressed an opinion that I was injured dangerously. My father was much alarmed; but when I asked him what had occurred, he said that Bean said I had been thrown from a wagon, and so it passed. The same story had been told to the doctor, who, in due course

of time, came to make his second visit. I was not long in recovering from the effects of my visit to the widow of the sea-captain, whose ship, so far as I know, has not returned to this day. The secret was between the three, — myself, my clerk, and the lady of the nankin dress. This was another turning-point in my career; hereafter it will appear in its proper connection when the mystery of the sea-captain's wife will be explained.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AN ACCIDENT.

THE store was kept open, during my temporary illness, under the sole care of Mr. Bean, who had employed a boy from the opposition store to assist him in the work which had been usually attended to by me, senior partner of the firm of Batkins & Co. As a proof to the correctness of circumstances as given by the newspapers, I here copy a statement of my "accident," as it was published in the "County Gazette": —

"We are under the necessity of informing our readers of a painful accident, which occurred last evening, to our friend J. S. Batkins, merchant of Cranberry Centre. He was thrown from a wagon, in consequence of the fright of a spirited mare, driven by Mr. Batkins' well-known partner, Mr. Aristarchus Bean. We are uninformed as to the business upon which these two gentlemen were engaged on the evening of the accident, but believe they had been attending a meeting of some of the most influential citizens of Cranberry Centre, in order to accomplish the establishment of a bank in that enterprising town. The scene of the accident was near the house of the wife of a celebrated ship-master, now absent in China. Mr. Batkins was taken into her house, where every attention was shown to the unfortunate sufferer, until the arrival of Dr. Slawter, who was called. He directed his removal to the homestead, where he now lies in a critical condition. We are happy to hear that Mr. Bean escaped with no serious injury, a few scratches only remaining in consequence of the disaster. The horse and wagon have not been heard from since. A liberal reward will be paid for information respecting either, by Mr.

Batkins, senior, or Mr. Bean, to be left at the store of J. S. Watkins & Co."

This account appeared to me to be reasonable, all but the bank, as I had had no talk with anybody about a bank. Everybody knew, that knew me, or of my opinion in the matter, that I was opposed to all banks, and hated paper money, as it is said the Prince of Darkness hates holy water. I did not deny the statement however, and when asked for any particulars I of course could give no account of anything. But, although I told no lie, my conscience whispered that I was a party to the fraud; however, as it was published by that respectable authority, the "County Gazette," no one doubted its truth, and by the time my face had recovered from the pommelling, received in a manner I really was unconscious of, the accident was an old affair, and other matters crowded it out of the topics of daily conversation. The questions asked me by some people, in the light of the truth, were amusing. One man asked me what the color of my horse was; the idea of the thing set me a-laughing, so that I should not have wondered if the man had thought I had lost my reason.

I was called upon by the minister and other distinguished people, during my illness; but as the doctor had positively forbidden anybody seeing me, I was spared the mortification of repeating the particulars of an affair that in reality I knew little about. The women circulated a report, that, in consequence of the attentions shown to me by the wife of the sea-captain, my gratitude had taken the shape of a more ardent and sometimes more expensive sentiment, and had hinted that if her husband should be lost at sea, I was ready to make good the loss to her domestic tranquillity.

My reader, who has been made acquainted with the action prior to my illness, will at once perceive it was a fabrication, though he is in possession of knowledge beyond that of the gossips of Cranberry Centre, who never until the day when

this book is printed, will be informed of the true state of the case. I think it proper to add there was but one individual who suggested that we had attended a dinner that afternoon at the County Agricultural Society, and perhaps we had been overcome by the wine used on the occasion to drink the health of the gentlemen farmers, as the members of this society were called in derision by some of the old-fashioned soil-workers. As this scandalous report was circulated by a notorious tippler, whom my father, in his capacity of justice of the peace had once committed to the workhouse, and as my reputation as an abstemious man was unassailable, no damage was done to me by the insinuation.

My first interview with Mr. Bean, after my recovery, was an interesting one. He received me at the store in an unusually bland manner. He always appeared to defer to my opinions, and yet invariably had his own way. My idea was, after the usual salutations, to proceed at once to business, to demand an account of business matters, and discharge him on the spot from my employ. My resolution in this was a good deal stiffened by advice given to me by Aunt Dolly during my illness, when she faithfully watched over me, giving to me my prescribed gruel, applying oysters to my discolored eyelids, and performing such other functions as nurses in the line of duty are expected to perform.

"Good-morning, Mr. Watkins," said Mr. Bean. "I hope you have entirely recovered."

"I am better," was the curt reply I made, with an expression which, if he had been a good physiognomist, would have caused in him some apprehension as to the nature of my next question to him. I cannot say what he thought, but his next movement with his tongue was suggestive of the greatest amount of assurance and self-possession before or since seen by me. "Mr. Watkins," said he, "was it the wheel of the wagon that struck your nose, or a stone in the road?"

I looked at him with amazement. "Mr. Bean," said I, "what do you mean? Was I riding with you on that evening?" Our conversation continued: "Mr. Batkins, I only ask you what somebody asked me." I replied, "I thought it was a stone in the road." — "What did Dr. Slawter think about it?" I was taken off my guard and gave Dr. Slawter's views. "He said evidently the contusion was made with some blunt body."

"Yes, Mr. Batkins." He clenched his hand into a pretty firm bunch of bones and sinews, holding it up close to my eye, and twisting it about with most irritating flexibility. "Don't that look to you something like the blunt body that came into collision with your nose?"

"That was the idea I had of it, until I read the account in the newspaper. As I did not know how I got home, I was willing to think I might have been thrown from a wagon after my meeting you at the house of the sea-captain's wife; however," said I, "Mr. Bean, we must close accounts. Give me a statement of affairs in the store, and then I shall dispense with your services after next Saturday night."

"Dispense with my services? You can't do without me, Mr. Batkins; you would fail in a month. I could ruin you if I would; but I have none but the most friendly feelings towards you. I have nothing to say about your private affairs. I don't care how many people you supply with groceries at your own expense; I don't care how much counterfeit money you take; but you must allow me my share of the perquisites of my position. Do you suppose, for the paltry salary I receive from you, I would bury myself up here in this miserable one-horse town? No, sir! My relations with the sea-captain's wife were of the most friendly character. Under the pretence of collecting a bill, you visit that lady; taking advantage of your situation as the head of the firm, you made infamous proposals to her. I found your hat on a table in her parlor, and you — where did I find you? — in a place I had

never been permitted to enter, — her bedchamber. Now you will discharge me, will you?"

I said "Yes;" but within me that shaky monitor, my conscience, said "No."

"I confess," he continued, "in the first rage of my jealousy, I endeavored to discover the owner of the hat, and when I dragged the villain into the light, Mr. J. S. Batkins, it proved to be you. In your struggles, one way to escape, and mine in another to prevent it, we fell. As you practised a mode of fighting I was totally unacquainted with, such as biting and scratching, seizing me by the hair, which you perceive is of the flowing order of the Adonis, you had an advantage of me; yours, being cut close, after the style of Brutus, there was then no other way for me to act than to attack the common sense, supposed to be resident in your cranium, by a blow calculated to hit you somewhere between the eyes and nose. It succeeded. I was at liberty and you were bleeding on the floor, commiserated and assisted by the woman who was the cause, innocent, I believe, of all the mischief."

Aunt Dolly's advice came to me again, and as it is sometimes well to "assume a virtue if you have it not," so is it well sometimes to assume a courage if you have it not; rather safer the virtue than the courage, as the assumption of courage may lead to a fight, if the other party happens to have the true quality. I managed, however, to say to him, "Mr. Bean, after what has happened it cannot be to our mutual comfort to be together in one store."

"I don't know how you feel, Mr. Batkins, but it will make no difference to my comfort. On the whole, I expect to profit by it; else do you suppose I should have furnished the circumstantial account of the accident for the newspaper?"

"Did you do that, Mr. Bean?"

"I did, Mr. Batkins, for the benefit of us all, — the

captain's wife, my esteemed employer, and myself. Thus out of evil, the great mind may work events for good. I covered the whole thing, and advertised our store into the bargain."

The customers began to come in, the press of business compelled us to attend to the calls in our department. Mr. Bean was engaged in measuring tape and calico, while I, as usual, was diving into the sugar-barrels, and filling the measures from the contents of cider barrels and brandy casks. That Bean was a good salesman there was no doubt. He had just that flattering, insinuating cast of the eye and pucker of the lip, that when he projected soft words at your objections to price or quality of goods, it hit your opinion, and rather than be offended at the fate of your conquered prejudices you felt obliged to him for convincing you of your mistake; and then the manner of his passing his long fingers through his Hyperion locks beat all the barbers I ever saw at their work. Nevertheless I pondered over his ability to injure my character among my fellow-citizens if he let that "cat out of the bag" into which he had put her; the more I thought of it, the more nervous it made me. As to the captain's wife, I should not dare to look into her face again; and what would Dr. Slawter say? My father, whenever I said anything about the store affairs, would only repeat, "Jefferson, you are unreasonable; you get your wages, and you are learning the business. You must not expect to have everything go smooth. Life has its ups and downs. I have had mine."

Since the days of gingerbread and peppermints, and other occasional instalments of old-fashioned confectionery, I had not had what I call any of the ups of life; and so, in my reply to my father, I summed up all my bits of hard luck, even to the last accident, which, not to make an anachronism, I named the "upset," which had compelled me to take a new interest in the conduct of Mr. Bean, and rendered necessary the ser-

vices of Dr. Slawter, for the first time since the days of mumps and measles. I think I did not lose anything by my sickness, in an intellectual point of view, for the doctor instructed me considerably in the anatomy of my frame, as he was explaining to me the phenomena of a pair of black eyes, and the probable effect of oysters in reducing the inflammation. The oysters were expensive, as they came from Boston; it did seem a pity, if anybody was fond of shell-fish, to throw them away after they had performed their mission upon my dilapidated organs of vision; and that reminds me of one thing, in the proper choice of words; and I might as well give the doctor's views here. When I said dilapidated, he said, that although my eyelids and contiguous parts were in a bad state, they were not dilapidated, — because lapis meant stone, from which came dilapidated, — and could not be until turned to stone, — a thing not known in his reading or his practice. I asked him what folks meant when they said a person was stone blind.

"A figure of speech only," said the doctor. "Figures are never to be used in speaking of the science of pathology."

When, in the course of time, the doctor presented his bill for payment, my conscience twitched me in consequence of the precision with which the charges had been made, reminding me of my part in the deception practised upon my friends and the public by the ingenuity of Mr. Bean. It was the doctor's practice, particularly in surgical cases, to put on the record the cause and manner of the accident, which he faithfully transcribed in the bill. I put the doctor's bill in, because it was the first bill I had ever paid for medical services; and because it is documentary evidence as to the origin of my tumefied and discolored visual organs.

CRANBERRY CENTRE, March, 18—.

MR. JEFFERSON S. BATKINS, to ADONIRAM SLAWTER, M. D.

For professional services, dressings, visits, consultations, and advice,  
 from March to April, 16 visits, at 50 cents each,.....\$8 00  
 Medicines,.....2 00  
 New York oysters, for eyes,.....50

His injuries being caused by being thrown from a wagon, as  
 described by Mr. Bean.

\$10 50

Rec'd payment,

ADONIRAM SLAWTER, M. D.

Everybody will agree with me that this was a moderate bill, and I commend it to the consideration of the physicians of the present day, and for their study. But, moderate as it was, as it had to be drawn from my savings-bank, it was like pulling out my teeth to take as much from my stock of money, particularly when it brought vividly to my mind the picture of the whole affair, including the bill for groceries and nankin, which the wife of the sea-captain had not liquidated. I was sitting behind the counter, revolving over in my mind how to extricate myself from Mr. Bean's power over me, when who should enter the door but Aram Andriss, the lawyer, proprietor of "Simms' Folly," known as "Mrs. Simms' man" to that portion of the people of Cranberry Centre who were morally and religiously inclined. He said to me, "How d'ye do, Mr. Batkins? I am glad to know you have recovered from your accident."

I said I was better. He then inquired if I had found the horse and wagon. I replied I had not. He said he was sorry for my loss, inquired after my father's health, and wished to know if Mr. Bean was in the store. I said I thought he was, and asked him if I should call him. He said he would not give me that trouble, but would find him himself. Mr. Bean at this moment was in an apartment divided by a partition from a part of the dry goods division of the store, — an arrangement made by Mr. Bean, which he called the counting-room, by which title the place was always spoken of when any

private business was to be attended to, and was often the scene of discussion by parties who did not care to express their views on politics in the store among the promiscuous gathering of customers.

As "Mrs. Simms' man" left the counter, over which he had held the conversation with me, he said, "Mr. Batkins, I have heard it stated as a probability that the horse and wagon had gone into the river from the bridge, a large portion of the railing having been discovered to be broken, on the morning after the accident. The town is liable for the damage, and if you will give me a description of the property, the value of the horse and wagon, I will commence an action against the town of Cranberry Centre, if they decline to give you satisfaction." I told him I would think about it, and let him know. He passed into the counting-room, leaving me to consider his proposition and to estimate upon the value of the horse and wagon, which from the knowledge the reader has of the case he can judge how easy it was for me to do.

The reader might ask, if the horse and wagon did go into the river, why it never had been found; but, by reference again to the facts, he will perceive, as both horse and wagon existed only in the imagination of Mr. Bean, search would be unnecessary and fruitless, even if made by those who had read the account of the accident in the "County Gazette." Of course I had no idea of bringing a suit, or even of asking the town authorities to pay Dr. Slawter's bill. One of the scarecrows of my life was the law. The mere idea of it, in the case of Miss Trivetts, almost made me suffer a fit of sickness. While "Mrs. Simms' man" was engaged with Mr. Bean, I continued to wait on such customers as came in, and then to ponder over my situation. After some time had elapsed, "Mrs. Simms' man" came from the counting-room, followed by Mr. Bean. They passed by me without noticing me, and after a few words of conversation,

both making reference to me occasionally by pointing with their hands reversed, the thumbs extended over their shoulders, "Mrs. Simms' man" walked away, and Mr. Bean re-entered the store, beckoned me to him with a most mysterious air, and said he had something important to communicate. I reminded him that I had not yet seen what he termed the trial-balance of the books, and asked him if he would be good enough to finish it, as I had agreed with my father to bring it home with me, in the evening, that we might come to an understanding how we stood.

Mr. Bean said it was not quite completed, and if it were, he could not meet Mr. Batkins at Mr. Batkins, senior's, house on that evening, as he had made an engagement for us both to be present at a meeting of citizens, at Mr. Andriess' house, at the time mentioned, namely, this evening at eight o'clock.

I had never been inside of this man's house, though my father had, and was rather glad of the opportunity; but now there appeared to be something to my mind suspicious about it. I asked him, however, in a manner not calculated to let him see my condition of mind, what the meeting was for. "To arrange the preliminaries for establishing a bank in Cranberry Centre, to be called the Grocers', Producers', Farmers', Traders', and Mechanics' Bank," was Mr. Bean's reply. I ventured on a joke, — a dangerous thing to do with Mr. Bean. Says I, "Mr. Bean, this is not the meeting we were going to attend when we were upset in the wagon, is it?" I supposed he would laugh; he did not even smile, but, running his long, slim, white fingers through his Hesperian locks, he said, "Certainly, Mr. Batkins, and it was adjourned until this evening in consequence of our accident."

I looked at him; he never changed his countenance, but remarked that I had better go home and dress myself to look like a gentleman, and, if my suit I had worn on the occasion of my

visit to the sea-captain's wife was not damaged by the fall from the wagon, I had better appear in that. "But," says I, "Mr. Bean, I am not in favor of banks, you know." — "It is for your interest to be; wait until you attend the meeting; you may hear something that will change your views. I will remain here and finish the trial-balance, while you go home and prepare for the meeting."

The promise that he would finish the trial-balance inclined me to assent, and I may as well state here that though this document appeared to be necessary to settle matters at the store, I had no idea really what it was, and looked into the old Bailey's Dictionary of my father's in vain for a definition. I, however, left the store, and proceeded to the homestead to dress up for my visit to "Simms' Folly."



## CHAPTER X.

## MY FIRST VISIT TO SIMMS' FOLLY.

IN giving a brief sketch of Cranberry Centre and its structures I purposely omitted a famous assemblage of buildings, known for many years as Simms' Folly, in consequence of a supposition, never objected to, that no person in his right mind would put so much money into buildings as these cost, in a town of no more pretensions than Cranberry Centre.

So it was; and as my personal history and exploits are not easily separated from this magnificent pile in some respects, I shall endeavor to make my reader acquainted with its exterior and interior, as he will in time know more of its builder and original occupant and his successors.

I find, in writing this history, a difficulty, which at this time I do not find a way easily to overcome: at the time of my first visit to Simms' Folly I was ignorant of matters that afterwards I knew more about; and yet I cannot refer to them in this chapter, as it would disclose events and evidence that did not come to my knowledge for a long space of time afterwards. If I had then been thus informed, much that did happen would not have happened at all.

I find myself in a dilemma. I must write as if I was in the same state of ignorance as I was on the memorable day, on the evening of which I first entered over the principal threshold of this celebrated place, or else — There can be no else. I cannot, in justice to my story, let the reader know any more than I did at that time.

I can only add, I write veritable history, and if this chap-

ter does not fulfil the general expectation, I hope the failure to interest my reader will not be attributed to the subject itself, but to my inability to give full force to the powers of language used in its development. It is difficult to restrain the speculations of my mind, as I record the past; hence occasional digression will, perhaps, in part, suspend the march of events.

These obstacles to a straightforward progression can only be properly appreciated by those persons who have been in my situation, and to those I appeal for a general consideration of all my errors in this new field of labor.

To write of myself is no easy task, under the circumstances surrounding the attempt. Feeble, indeed, would be the style, if it at all resembled my intellectual capacity as the events transpired, as I stated before on this memorable occasion. From all that I can gather as to the use of any descriptive statement of places in words, it is that by such happy selection of phrases, and such proper adaptation of them, an object constructed thus will appear before the vision of the reader, as if it were pictured out on paper, and actually before his eyes in painted colors.

This may be true of some word-paintings, as I have heard them called; but I have things in my mind, that I do not propose to put in as against this idea, that I do not think could be described faithfully in words, or by painting either, though some other sense than hearing or vision might be able to recognize them if present for inspection.

I did hear of a picture of a battle, where everything was so perfectly done that a friend of the artist said he could hear the noise of the cannons, and the groans of the wounded men. If that is so, I am afraid that my picture of Simms' Folly will not do to hang up in the same collection.

Here it is. Suppose, my reader, you had been at that day travelling on the main road from Cranberry Centre to the next



town, on its western boundary line, after a New England sunset, which varies somewhat according to the season. The first thing perhaps, after a glance at the clouds, that would claim your notice, would be a stately edifice, rising high above the foliage of a surrounding forest of trees. I cannot describe the architecture of this mansion-house. It was erected in imitation of a chateau near the city of Paris, the property of a nobleman, but not so extensive as that the plans of which had been imitated. About the space of ten rods from the road, an expanse of greensward, nicely trimmed in the summer, separated the first line of oaks and elms from the common travelled way. This was enclosed by a wall of masonry; a large gate in the centre, supported by two decorated columns, when opened, permitted the passage of carriages, over a smooth road, to the grand piazza, — a principal entrance to the house. On either side of the gate an opening was left sufficient for the accommodation of visitors on foot.

Barns, stables, lodges, hot-houses, aviaries, and other useful appendages and accompaniments of luxurious life occupied appropriate situations, at proper distances from the chateau. In the gardens all sorts of flowers flourished; rare exotics, and more humble, New England wild growths, transplanted to beautifying, but enervating soil. Some of the finest specimens of fruit-trees then known, were cultivated with great care. I shall not tire the patience of my friends with any description of the interior of this American palace. According to reliable accounts, no private residence, even in the cities, could be found surpassing Simms' Folly in internal finish, or decoration. The apartments were furnished in accordance with a princely style of foreign splendor. Few of the inhabitants of Cranberry Centre had any true idea of the place, or of the doings within its aristocratic walls.

I did not think when I began to write my life that I should notice every article of dress worn by the people I met, or

with whom I had business, or friendly acquaintance. It appeared to me to be of no great consequence as to the color of the cloth; and as to the fashion, that changes so often I could never keep the run of that. I do not intend to describe my own costume at all times.

I notice among the women-folks, whether of the kitchen or parlor, if you speak of any particular person, the first questions generally are, What did she have on? How did she look?

Sometimes I shall depart from my intention, when I think it proper, or when there is as much or more in their dress than in any other characteristic, or when the people do not wear such clothes as are becoming to their sex, or age; in all other cases, unless I make a different statement, it may be taken for granted that those I mention are decently clad.

So about chairs and tables in folks' houses. I do not desire to have my reader too often reminded of a catalogue of articles for sale by a vendue master, when a person breaks up house-keeping.

I think, with a little imagination, after the picture I have written, any person might have a good sort of notion as to how things looked in the best room in Simms' Folly on that occasion.

I shall not call the hired help in Simms' Folly by their names, nor shall I endeavor to give any insight into their modes of life, or personal peculiarities.

My curiosity was excited to see the inside of this enormous homestead, or palace as some people called it; yet I told my father not to be in a hurry, for as to the business we were on, — the raising of a bank, — it went against my grain to have anything to do with it; for even at my age, at that time, I believed in consistency. I thought it was a jewel equal to diamonds, if it had not the same market value.

My father said, in his younger days it was a hard thing

to undertake to get into Simms' Folly. It was the headquarters of aristocracy; the man who built it being of immense wealth, growing out of his financial operations, which some said were no more nor less than robbery. On this point I have to state that I have been unable to rid myself of an idea then formed, that financiering was an invention of somebody to cheat the honest part of the world's people, under some mysterious pretence to make money out of figures on paper, until at last some people's houses, lands, and cattle, gold and silver, changed owners, and those knowing ones divided the profits, while some handsome printed pieces of paper certified how many shares they were proprietors of in a bursted financiering scheme; and that is why I had no desire to go into this new plan of "Mrs. Simms' man" for a bank in Cranberry Centre.

We were walking up one of the handsome gravelled paths, edged on each side with little stones of different colors, as my father was telling me about the stories of this palace, and the high times they had when Mr. Simms was alive.

He said, the first time he went in, he went as far as the kitchen, in consequence of assisting one of the hired men, that he knew, to get a pipe of wine into the cellar. In those days people who could get a pipe of wine were not ashamed to put it into their cellars, or to keep a decanter full of old cogniac, Santa Cruz rum, or Holland gin on the sideboard in their parlor or dining-room. I never knew whether Mr. Simms was a member of the General Court, or not; but I did know a member who kept good liquors in his closet, who went his whole heft, voice, and vote for the prohibitory law — cider and all.

We had arrived at the front door. A man — I believe he was called John — stood ready to receive us. He asked whom he should announce. My father, in a firm tone, replied; Mr. Jethro Batkins and his son Mr. Jefferson S. Batkins. John took in our names, and returned to show us the way. We

followed him. I had left my hat outside; I did not know what to do in such an elegant place; I was afraid to step upon the handsome carpet. "Mrs. Simms' man" came to meet us, shaking us cordially by the hand, invited us to be seated, and rather awkwardly, I have no doubt, I deposited myself in one of the handsomest chairs I ever saw before or since, close to a table of the most curious kind of marble on the top, and with legs that looked more like serpents than anything I ever looked on before, only they had wings and such other marks on them as I never knew any kinds of snakes to have.

As I sat looking at this table and the papers that were on it, Doctor Slawter came in. He was very polite, looked sideways at my eyes, not yet entirely put to rights, then joined in our conversation. A little later Mr. Dovedrake, the minister, was shown in.

"Mrs. Simms' man" received the doctor and the minister in the same affable manner as he had welcomed us.

I thought the minister bowed, or, as we used to say in schoolma'am days, made his manners a little too much like a dancing-master for a minister.

We all talked as folks usually do when they have nothing particular to say. As yet nobody had mentioned the subject of the bank, any further than to refer to a subscription book lying upon the table. There was another printed book that we all looked at. On the cover was pasted a piece of paper, on which was printed the name of a distinguished lawyer of New Hampshire, who afterwards made his home in Massachusetts. I shall withhold the name of the owner of this financial volume, while I state the title of the book. It was "Gouge on Banking." There ought to be a book, in my opinion, with the name Banks on Gouging, written square up to the meaning of the title-page.

At this time there entered into the room the Hon. Seth Spring, the member to the General Court from Cranberry

Centre. Little did I think then I should ever say he was one of my predecessors in the State House of the Commonwealth.

I apologize in advance for a digression. What comes to my mind now I must write. Although it is of the future, I hope to be excused, you understand, if I anticipate the announcement of the "County Gazette" some years afterwards, as follows: "Our townsman, Jefferson S. Batkins, was elected yesterday as representative, in opposition to Seth Spring, Esquire."

What a difference between then and now! — the then present and coming future face to face. What a scene! Then, as the saying was, I did not know my own shears. The Batkins of the then and now! My contemplation of the change astounds me.

"Seth Spring, Esquire!" on that occasion I had the honor of my first introduction to this distinguished and celebrated personage.

It will not be supposed that I had not known my learned predecessor before. At sight I knew him well; but I had never been before introduced to him. He had always been an object of admiration to me as he walked through the streets of Cranberry Centre, in my boyhood's days, when lawyers, doctors, and clergymen, appeared to me to be above all other men in the ordinary walks of life. I somehow got my idea of gentlemen from these classes, as their clothing and general management of their ways were so different from the farmers, tradesmen, and mechanics that made up the bulk of our rural population.

I shall describe Mr. Spring, or Squire Spring, because his manner and style was somewhat out of the run of the rest of the gentlemen "born and bred," as Aunt Dolly designated these favored specimens of created things. I am not the biographer of Seth Spring, and shall not go back to his parentage

and birth. I shall only give the stamp of authority to his doings, while my fellow-citizen in Cranberry Centre. He was one of these people who looked older than his years. He had what was termed a resemblance to a hawk; but I should say that a little change would be necessary in the build of the front of the house "he lived in," as Doctor Slawter used sometimes to call a man's body, to cover that ground. If the hawk's face was lengthened a little upwards, and then flattened to give the whole a somewhat triangular or flat-iron look, imagination, vivid enough, might do the rest. His skin was dark; his hair thin, a little whitened, was brushed up from his ears, over a partly bald crown; he allowed the growth of so much beard as would permit a portion called whiskers, to be cultivated into a point at the edge of the jaw-bone under the ear.

All this information I give, that it may be seen what care he gave to his personal appearance at that time. When he was in his best shape, on Sundays, or when he attended the courts, or on other public and important occasions, he was clad in cloth cut and made up in Boston, by one of the then celebrated firms of merchant tailors, who had his sign over the door of his shop, then known as the "emporium of fashion." I never saw the place, — that was my father's evidence on the subject. The locality of this fashionable tailor was in the vicinity of the old State House.

Mr. Spring's stature was somewhat at variance with the rule of proportion in laying out man's structure. He was one of those persons who, at all times, could not be said to be either tall or short. He "sat high," and "stood low;" that is, his body was longer than his legs, you understand. I suppose the matter will be readily enough understood without further attempts at explanation.

Those now living who may have seen the late statesman, Webster, may remember his style of dress, and thus form

some idea of how Seth Spring, Esquire, looked, when covered with the blue coat, buff vest, with bright buttons, and dark trousers furnished by the Boston tailor, who, for all I know to the contrary, had the name of Daniel Webster on his books, and made his clothes. His white cravat, double-banked ruffled shirt-bosom flowing in the wind like a drift of snow, over the high and stiff collar of his coat, with the jaunty twirling of a bamboo cane always carried in his right hand when walking, distinguished him as a man of consequence, as, with nimble-footed gait he moved to the place of his destination.

If ever a person's step and way of movement of the head expressed the idea, "I am the man," Seth Spring's, at that time, did it to perfection. It used to be said of him by the common people that Seth Spring "felt his oats." About election time he knew almost everybody that voted, and used to call them by name when he met them at the store, at the tavern, or in the road. He used to ask some of the women folks how their babies did, and carry candy in his pocket for the babies, some of the mothers said. I only report it; I do not know it to be a matter of fact. After election he would get to be a little close-fisted with his money and aristocratic in the selection of his company. He was considered the smartest man in Cranberry Centre at that day. A judgment may be formed of the estimation held in Cranberry Centre of his sagacity, shrewdness, and general mental capacity, from a saying, never objected to that I ever heard of, that if anybody could get ahead of Seth Spring that one could get ahead of Beelzebub himself. Now, I believe, in the nature of things no man can be perfect; every one has a tender spot; it is only necessary to find it. I am not sure where mine is yet. I have been cheated, and expect to be again, and I am aware this is not the place to allude to what happened thereafter, when the Hon. Seth Spring and Jefferson S. Batkins came to be better acquainted.

I am to state here that I looked upon him as a "Magnus

Apollo." This figure of my idea I discovered afterwards, for at that time I had no knowledge of heathen deities and the demigods of classic days. I had the feeling, nevertheless, of a kind of man-worship, and I was proud to think I should now be introduced to this great man of Cranberry Centre.

Many will remember, in the deportment department of the schools in country towns, kept by school ma'ams of the old pattern, politeness was vigorously taught, and we were obliged to practise the bow and scrape with the hand held to the mouth, and dropped with a curve, at the end of the salute, at the side. I was awkward in this respect; but I went through the motions often enough not to forget the principle upon which the movement was planned; this stuck to me through my life, and I put it into operation after my best pattern on the occasion referred to, when the following introduction took place: "Mr. Batkins, sir, I have the pleasure to introduce you to the Hon. Seth Spring." Though Mr. Spring was tall, I was taller. I made my bow, held out my hand, and said, "I am happy, sir, to make your acquaintance." — "Happy to know you, young man," said he; and when I was about to seize his hand, supposing he meant what he said, he withdrew it after simply touching mine, with an air as if I had some awful catching humor, and he was afraid of the poison. My father, being an old acquaintance, he asked him some questions about winter grain, and a horse he wanted to trade with him for, and then began a conversation with "Mrs. Simms' man." I had the opportunity to watch his motion with his arms, when something important and emphatic was escaping from his mouth, I suppose, as he did when he was debating with the lions of the Massachusetts General Court. I wished I was at home with Aunt Dolly, for, to tell the truth, I felt small among the assembly at this time. I tried to talk with the doctor, but he seemed to be desirous to join in with Mr. Spring and "Mrs. Simms' man." After a while I thought I would

try what my father would do to keep me from appearing so like nobody; but he also was not inclined to continue to talk with me, and went over to the minister, who sat looking gravely into the fire, and, I thought, thinking perhaps of the sermon he was to preach the next Sunday. But though my father had a pew in the meeting-house, and paid his taxes, he was not a constant attendant at meeting time, and though a "justice of the peese" (as he sometimes wrote it at the end of Jethro Batkins, or an official paper), he could hold a conversation longer with the blacksmith, the cattle-drovers, and the horse-jockeys than with the minister. He could joke the doctor some; but the doctor was too much for him. After a while my father left him, and I thought I would try my hand with the minister. They all got together round the table. As I gathered from a word I heard drop now and then about the "bank" — "making of the town" — "secure the trade" — "pay good interest," they were busy in the matter of the new bank.

I thought I would talk about the bank to the minister. Seating myself by his side, with my feet upon the fender, I asked him if he was in favor of the bank. He said he was inclined to be, but did not understand much about banking. That was my case, of course, but I had no idea of confessing it to him; so I began to enlarge upon specie and counterfeit money. I thought I would say something from the Bible that would apply to my notion of such matters. He gave me the opportunity, by saying he could not invest much in the institution, though Mr. Andriess had thought it would be well to have his name on the list of stockholders, and he added, "He has kindly agreed to loan me the money to pay in the first instalment." — "Well," says I, "that's friendly. I suppose you prefer to lay up your treasures where moths will not corrupt nor thieves break in and steal." — "Yes," he said, and looked at me in a very equivocal manner, and

asked me if I had recovered from my accident. This startled me so that I lost my balance. My feet slipped from the fender, and I was measuring the floor with the whole length of my body. I recovered myself with the help of the minister, who, in his sudden surprise and effort to assist me, also met with an accident. Either the dye-stuff, in the cloth out of which his trousers were made, had rotted the fabric, or the friction between his body and the chair in which he sat to write his sermons, had made it too thin to stand extra pressure, or some other cause had permitted them to split, with the usual noise attendant upon such a fracture, placing him at once in a most unclerical predicament. For the moment it disturbed the deliberation of the party at the table, who upon discovering we were on our feet returned to the animated discussion our mishap had interrupted. I had torn nothing, — the minister had; and I then made a resolution that if I should ever be a minister I would never wear black trousers without having another pair underneath, in case of accident. After an apology the minister, moving in an oblique line, left the room, as no one offered to supply him with a substitute for the damaged trousers. Again I was alone. I resumed my situation at the fire, when, unannounced, who should come in but Mr. Aristarchus Bean! He paused and inquired if Mr. Batkins was here, then pretending that he had not seen me he walked up to me, placed in my hand a bundle of papers, saying, "Here, Mr. Batkins, is the trial-balance and other papers necessary for the settlement of our affairs to-morrow." I commenced looking at the papers, he offering to explain to me their meaning and use.

At this moment the party at the table arose as if something had been settled. Mr. Andriess seemed in great spirits, and said, "Gentlemen, it is all right, and if the Hon. Mr. Spring will present the petition for the charter at the next session of the Legislature there can be now no doubt of its success."

"I will do my best," said the Hon. Seth; "but I have no doubt it will be opposed by the member from Leadenville and all the interests he can command."

For a moment, as if by general consent, the consideration of the bank ceased, and inquiries were made for the minister. When I had related the particulars of the mishap, there was a general smile, with great expressions of regret at the absence of the minister. I do not know how it is, but a certain sort of accident is always a source of merriment to the looker-on, and the kind of individual who may be the subject of it increases or decreases the degree. I don't know why there should be anything provocative of laughter in the fact that two gentlemen fall together, and the broadcloth or cassimere of a clergyman proves too weak for the occasion. Mr. Bean, after I had expressed this opinion in an audible tone, and with a countenance indicating my sympathy for the minister's condition, and some show of anger at their want of it, came up again to me, and said he thought the parson, as he called him, would recover from the effect of the accident to his trousers sooner than I should from my fall from the wagon. With this speech he gave me one of the most tantalizing and malicious stares possible, saying, somewhat smothering it between his teeth, "Batkins, I've got you for always."

The doors leading to another apartment were opened; a table loaded with delicacies and luxuries appeared. I had never seen such a sight before, and rarely since. I shall not describe the articles of food. I cannot remember them, and of course I kept no catalogue. All I have to say is that, at the invitation of "Mrs. Simms' man," we sat down at the table, — the Hon. Seth Spring on the right side of "Mrs. Simms' man," my father to the left, Dr. Slawter next to Mr. Spring; three gentlemen whose names I have forgotten, who came in late with Mr. Bean, had seats assigned to them; the chair intended for the minister was unoccupied; I sat opposite to Mr. Bean, who I thought purposely served me very

shabbily in the division of the flesh and fowl that were so liberally placed at our disposal.

I wish I could give an account of what was said and done at this supper, or dinner, or whatever it might be called, besides eating and drinking. I drank no wine myself, neither did Mr. Bean. I wished the minister had remained, for I should like to have seen what effect wine would have had upon him. He did partake, I believe, on certain social occasions with his parishioners. It was not considered out of the way for clergymen to imbibe in reason. If it had the same effect upon him that it did upon Dr. Slawter, who was not intoxicated of course, only a little exhilarated, the minister would not have been safe in his seat without two or three pairs of trousers, unless made of canvas or some other unyielding material. Toasts were given from one to the other, many of them alluding to what the doctor called the embryo bank. The Hon. Seth Spring, being called upon, rose with such a smile, — any painter that could make that smile on canvas would be immortalized. The allusion made to the representative of Cranberry Centre was the cause of this smile, and if a smile could be expressed in words, I would describe that on my face as my pen traces the words "representative of Cranberry Centre." At this moment I almost arose from my seat as I remembered how in the days past — days then to come — I smiled when I responded to that call; but I must curb my enthusiasm and keep back until the proper time. It was wonderful to me to see how the wine had taken down the aristocratic top-loftiness of Mr. Spring. He referred to all present in some complimentary way, except to me. I was dismissed with a phrase addressed to my father, who had been putting the sugar to him, as Aunt Dolly used to have it: "Your son, when you are gone, Mr. Batkins, will undoubtedly do as much as you have done for Cranberry Centre." My father could never make a speech off-hand, but now, as he had put down occa-

sionally strong potations of brandy, in addition to the wine, his powers of volubility were materially lessened. Mr. Bean made a very neat apology for a speech, and to have heard him you would have supposed that he was studying for the ministry, and expected to preach to a congregation principally composed of ladies, so fine and nice were the few sentences he uttered, his lips always appearing to be in condition for kissing somebody. He had the most effeminate manner of speaking, with the most positive and determined method of enforcing his views, of any man or woman I ever saw. Women who have this way, 'tis said, are the most dangerous antagonists a man can have, no matter what the subject upon which they become belligerent. In the midst of our, or their, glee, — for I was rather serious and was thinking of the task I had in hand on the morrow, namely, the dissolution of the commercial firm of *Batkins & Co.*, and closing partnership of any kind with *Mr. Aristarchus Bean*; I was also anxious that my father should get home before the effects of the strong drink should be manifest, which mastered him when away from home carousing late at night, — “*Mrs. Simms’ man*” rose to make the closing speech, and had commenced by thanking us for the pleasure we had given him by calling to see him. He said he had no ambition to gratify, did not desire public station, but in the present, and in the future, as in the past, his designs were only for the good of his fellow-townsmen. His soul, he said, was alive to the interests of humanity, and his heart beat with no malice towards his fellow-men. He wished the minister were here to say for him to the parish at the next meeting that he intended to join the worshippers in that ancient temple, devoting his means to the preservation of justice, morality, and charity. His good name had been assailed, but he defied any human being to prove him guilty of any injury to his fellow-creatures either in thought or deed.

When “*Mrs. Simms’ man*” sat down, there seemed to be nothing else to be said. All rose at once, and notwithstanding the invitation to remain, the party gradually left the supper-room; in the parlor there was a general shaking of hands. John assisted us to find our hats, and amidst a general expression of hilarity we left *Simms’ Folly* for our separate homes.

I hope I have not been tedious in my description of my first appearance among distinguished persons. It was a great matter to me. How can I ever forget my first introduction to the *Hon. Seth Spring*? Here I sat, with my feet under the same table with *Dr. Slawter*; and but for the accident which deprived us of his sociable qualities, the minister of *Cranberry Centre* would have furnished me with sufficient evidence of the difference between a minister among his flock on Sundays, and the minister at the incubation of a financial and worldly egg, — the *Grocers’, Producers’, Farmers’, Traders’, and Mechanics’ Bank of Cranberry Centre*.



## CHAPTER XI.

## DISSOLUTION OF THE FIRM.

MR. BEAN had had some talk with Squire Andriss, I supposed upon the subject of the store, and the settlement of the accounts of the firm; and as he was a lawyer, and his friend, and interested in the business, I did not think much of the matter. I had understood they both came from the same town. I asked Bean once if this was so, but received some evasive answer, as I usually did when I asked for any special information as to his antecedents. As we walked down the avenue on our way to the road, I was about to speak to Bean without having my father hear my question. My father and myself were walking arm-in-arm together; in an attempt to approach a little nearer to Bean, by dropping my father's arm, I discovered my father's inability to stand unaided. Bean passed on, saying "Good-night, Batkins; to-morrow will prove a busy day." I returned his good-night. My father attempted it, but failed. With some little difficulty, I assisted my father to the homestead, gave him in charge of Aunt Dolly, and retired to my room. I could not sleep; that nightmare, Bean, was my constant companion all night, that is, in my dreams. With him I was riding in a wagon, or trying to get away from the sea-captain's wife.

As I increased in years, three things had been constantly presented to me as temptations, and as constantly was I engaged in resisting their influences, tending to weaken my intention of resistance. I repeat them here; — politics, marriage, and the principal weakness of my father, — intemperate

use of stimulating drinks. Thus far I had been successful, and I had passed one of these dangerous periods of a young man's existence. The more I thought of Dr. Slawter's notion of inheriting qualities, the more resolute I have been in my own case to upset the theory. My father was a politician; he was married, but did not repeat the ceremony when he had the opportunity; and as to the use of ardent spirits, if I were not writing a true history, I would leave that out for my father's sake; and yet, bear in mind, I am afraid I shall be a victim to the first-named temptations if I succeed in avoiding the last. That dinner did not start an active movement in my brain for wedlock or for brandy; but the speech made by the Hon. Seth Spring, I confess, made the idea steal over me that if a day should come when I should represent Cranberry Centre, as he did, I should have to wear stronger trousers than the minister's, or I might meet with the same accident that sent him home without the pleasure he came to enjoy. When I awoke, I found myself in the attitude of Mr. Spring, at the table, actually making a speech to myself. I was alarmed by a knock at the door. Asking "Who's there?" Aunt Dolly, in a trembling tone, inquired, "Jefferson, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, Aunt Dolly," I replied; "go to bed, that's a good soul, do."

Hearing the natural sound of my voice quieted her. She went down to her room, and secured the balance of her sum of sleep, which I had subtracted from her in speaking a piece to imaginary fellow-citizens. This showed in the main that Dr. Slawter was right. I did not return to bed, but dressed after shaving, and to fill up the time to the breakfast hour I turned over the papers given to me by Mr. Bean, and was endeavoring, with all the arithmetical powers invested in my not a large fund, to understand the meaning of this mysterious trial-balance, which was to prove how accurately the books of



the firm had been kept, and exactly what my share in the profits of the business would be after a partnership of five years' limitation. At the usual hour I went to the store, carrying the papers in my pocket, with some sheets of figuring, upon which I had traced my views of the result, partly from memory, and partly from private memoranda in my almanac, or other parts of my journal of events, and with what I could understand of Mr. Bean's trial-balance. The store was closed; upon it a piece of pasteboard, upon which was printed, in the style for which Mr. Bean was peculiar: "Taking an account of stock; open to-morrow with new goods." This he had placed there when he left in the evening for promiscuous visiting, as he termed it, to terminate at Simms' Folly, where on time he arrived. I opened the store-door and one shutter, to let in light for the stock-taking, and other duties in the direction of the day's work.

Mr. Bean's books were specimens of neatness and elegant penmanship; his chirographic practice, as he called it, was truly wonderful, totally different from my efforts with the pen. Notwithstanding I had the assistance of good teachers of business hands, and running hands, with ornamental and fine hands, the only result was a mixture of the bad qualities of all with none of the good of either. I confess I am a bad writer, and that I was not allowed to write in these books, and scarcely to look into them; a sort of order-book, made of brown paper, was the only field of book-keeping I was allowed to make a mark upon. One of the conditions of his engagement, besides the general one of instructing me in the mysteries of buying and selling the commodities we dealt in, was to make me perfect in a new style of book-keeping by double entry, with all the rules of banking and exchanges. I took from the case the large and handsomely bound book marked "Ledger," for the purpose of seeing a statement of my own account. For this favor I had asked him once a week all the

time we had been in business together; his answer invariably was, "It is not posted," or, "It is not balanced." Now I determined to see for myself. I opened it, looked at the alphabet, and found on the first page "Batkins, J. S." While in the act of turning the leaf, the shutter was closed; my gentleman clerk entered, and took the book from my hands, asking me what the devil I was doing with his account books.

I plucked up courage to reply that I thought I had as much right to examine the books as anybody, being the principal in the firm of Batkins & Co.

"You think a great number of things, Batkins, and so long as you keep your thoughts to yourself, they will harm nobody. Have you told anybody what you saw last night at the Folly?"

"I have not seen anybody but Aunt Dolly and yourself; how could I tell anybody?" said I, losing my courage somewhat.

"What is it you are putting down in a book you carry in your pocket every day?"

"That is my private journal, Mr. Bean."

"Do you put down anything to my debit?"

"To your debit? — what's that?" I asked him.

"Why, against me. I saw you occasionally writing in it last night at the supper."

"Yes, the speech Mr. Spring made." I had done this.

"Let me see that book, Mr. Batkins."

"No, Mr. Bean," said I; "it is a private journal I keep. It has nothing to do with the store or the firm."

"Do you want to be thrown from a wagon again, Mr. Batkins?" and here he clenched his hand, putting it close to my eyes, as he did on a former occasion, in reply to an inquiry I made as to what was the cause of the confusion to my face. I had made some remarks as to what I thought of Mr. Bean in

the case of the sea-captain's wife, and I refused to give him the book.

"Well," said he, "I don't know as anybody could read your stupid scrawl. So this time I let you off; but be careful you don't put anything I say or do to you, on any piece of paper, or I will send you off the bridge to look after the runaway horse and wagon." He went to the back of the store, lit the lamp in the lantern, and came back to the counting-room.

"Now we will look over the books, Batkins," he continued. "You mean about right; but you are the greenest man of your age I ever saw. Why don't you get married to some smart woman, and let her put you up to a thing or two? Now I am ready — go ahead. What will you do first?" He pulled down the great ledger again.

"Mr. Bean, first I want to know how we stand; how much my share of the profits of the business is, and then I want you to pay it to me in hard money; and, if there is anything due to you, I want you to pay yourself, and leave the store to me. I will settle with my father and "Mrs. Simms' man;" that is, your friend, Mr. Andriss."

"Yes, Mr. Batkins, I see; I have closed the ledger on the account of the firm. I have prepared the statements of all our accounts, joint and personal, with the trial-balance sheet, all ready for your examination, and here they are." He laid the papers on the desk. "I don't suppose you can understand much about it; but this is about the way the thing stands: Stock cost originally six thousand dollars; profits, nominally, say about one thousand dollars per year, to be divided into three parts, — Mr. Andriss, Mr. Jethro Batkins, Mr. J. S. Batkins, have each a third for four years, nine months, eighteen days to date, April 1. The other partners have drawn up, besides, their interest on capital invested, and fifteen per cent. allowed for depreciation of stock. !

"There's your account, Mr. Batkins, and here is mine. When these are settled to your satisfaction, there will be no trouble about Mr. Andriss or Mr. Jethro Batkins."

I opened the paper, and read as follows: —

## J. S. BATKINS, DR.

April 1. To balance of salary account, . . . . .	\$2,375 00
" " counterfeit money account, . . . . .	3,000 00
" bills guaranteed by J. T. B., as per deferred account between, . . . . .	650 00
" bill Mrs. —, charged to J. S. Batkins, . . . . .	600 00
" balance due Mr. Bean, as per account, . . . . .	2,00 00
	<hr/> \$8,625 00

## PER CONTRA, CR.

Services to date, at \$500 per year, four years, nine months, eighteen days, . . . . .	\$2,397 50
Share of profits, net, . . . . .	1,666 67
One-third value of stock at valuation, . . . . .	\$6000 00
Less 15 per cent., . . . . .	900 00
	<hr/> \$1,700 00
For expenses of sickness in service of firm, as per Dr. Slawter's bill, . . . . .	10 50
For a hat injured collecting a bill, . . . . .	3 00
Repairing boots, etc., . . . . .	75
	<hr/> \$5,778 42
Balance due J. S. Batkins & Co., . . . . .	<hr/> \$2,846 58

I remarked, "Mr. Bean, how is this? You make it out that I am in debt to the firm."

"Yes, Mr. Batkins, that appears to be about how it is. Upon examining my account, you will see how we stand."

I opened the paper, and read as follows: —

## MR. J. S. BATKINS, TO ARISTARCHUS BEAN, DR.

April 1. To advice and instruction at sundry times, book-keeping, and mercantile transactions, . . . . .	\$500 00
To damages done to a lady, compromised by Mr. Bean, . . . . .	500 00
To concealing the cause of his accident, . . . . .	500 00
	<hr/> \$1,500 00

I looked at Bean and at the papers. I was as if thunder-struck. My breath nearly left me. "I do not know about these accounts, Mr. Bean," I said. "It appears to me there is something wrong in all these figures. I do not see, as I have only drawn my salary, and you have handled all the money, how I can owe you, or the firm either."

"There are the accounts, Batkins. You wanted a settlement; you wanted to close the concern, and get rid of me. This is all the way you can do it. No use of talking. My books are correct. You can pay back your salary, redeem the counterfeit money in cash, and I will take your note for my private account, endorsed by your father, at six months, with interest."

"I shall do no such thing, Mr. Bean. I am the head of the firm, and you are only my clerk. I shall talk with Mr. Andriss and my father before I settle. You are trying to cheat me, Bean."

"Batkins, if you say a word to Mr. Andriss or to your father, before we settle, there will be another job for Dr. Slawter, and perhaps for the lawyers too. I will advise the sea-captain's wife to bring an action against you, as sure as you are born."

I said, "Mr. Bean, I have been deceived in you."

He whistled, and wrote in his book. I had no idea of paying back my salary, for the fact was I had expended a part for my expenses; not much, to be sure. I had signed no paper that bound me to pay any losses. I had no property except the cash, and I felt like standing up in my boots against paying, until I knew more about it. To be sure, my father had endorsed some notes for me; but Mr. Bean said they were all paid but two. I had known some of our neighbors, who had been ruined by signing for other people, but I did not object when Mr. Bean asked my father to sign for me; for, as we were making money all the time, I did not see that

my father was in any danger of losing his farm while I knew what was going on, and I supposed he did. I told Mr. Bean that we would not go any further into the matter, and if it was all right, there would be no difficulty in settling.

Mr. Bean was angry. He said to me, "Mr. Batkins, there are the accounts; pay back the salary, settle the counterfeit money charge, give me for the creditors the stock and lease of the store just renewed, and I have no more to say; but if you offer to take any legal advice, I will publish in the 'County Gazette' a full account of your intriguing amour with the sea-captain's wife, with the contradiction of the wagon accident, which I will say I put in at your request, and also show by the books the extravagant supply of merchandise furnished by you to this lady of the nankin habit and gypsy hat."

"I furnished her, Mr. Bean?"

"Yes, you. Here it is; just look at the amount of the last charges which you pretended you were going to collect. Here it is in the book, sir, copy from your original entry: 'Mrs. ———, sea-captain's wife.' I told you, sir, I did not think it was safe to give her so large credit without an order from her husband; but you said you thought she was an honest woman, so that the firm would not lose by the operation. There it is, charged to you, J. S. Batkins, and so carried through all the books. Now, you go to law, if you like; the books, sir, are not to be disputed. I kept them, sir. I kept them."

Although I did not understand book-keeping by double entry, I saw clearly this fellow had me at disadvantage. I did not at that time understand fully the meaning of "intriguing amour." When I went home I asked Aunt Dolly. She could not inform me. I did not care to ask my father; but by searching in old "Bailey's Dictionary" I made it out.

Now, as the reader knows, his story was all false; but that terrible idea of documentary evidence frightened me into a

capitulation. I attempted a laugh, to convince Mr. Bean that I saw through his plan; and so I did, far enough to see that he intended to cheat me, and would probably succeed. Mr. Bean muttered between his teeth, "You will not laugh that way, but out of the other side of your mouth, when you get into jail for your frolics. The captain is expected home in a month or so, and if this gets to his ears, I would not give much for you."

This did put a bad sort of look upon matters, although, for I have told the whole truth, anybody could see I was the victim instead of an evil-doer. I made another attempt to get a fair settlement, and said, "Mr. Bean, I have a proposition to make. I will leave this out to three honest men to settle the whole concern."

"Certainly, Mr. Batkins, but what will you gain by that? We shall have to show the books to the referees just the same."

"Well, then, let Mr. Andriess and my father, who are partners, settle our accounts."

"They are not partners; they furnished the stock; their accounts are made up," said Bean, playing with a pen held between his lips, and whistling occasionally through the feathered edge of his financial sceptre.

I asked him who received the other two-thirds profits.

"Unless we get them from you, there is nothing to divide; if there is any, the amount would belong to me, as the managing partner of the firm of Batkins & Co."

"I agreed to give you a salary for your services."

"I know you did, — a small one, five hundred dollars a year."

"Well, that was all I had, and my name was on the sign as the head of the firm."

"That was more than you were worth. I have named the terms of settlement; you can have until to-morrow night to decide. I intend to shut up the store, according to the notice

on the shutter. You can go home and work on the figures, and perhaps, with the light I have given you, you will see it all right; but, Batkins, don't you go to any lawyer; don't you bother Mr. Andriess; don't disturb your father with any idea that there is any screw loose. Mind what I tell you, or you will see in the next issue of the 'County Gazette' an account of the failure of the firm of J. S. Batkins & Co.; and when the true state of the affairs of the sea-captain's wife is made public, the cause of your bankruptcy will be clear to your friends and creditors."

I believe; when he had finished, my hair positively stood up like a brush. I was stupefied. He put on his hat, jostled me to the door, put me outside and locked it. "Excuse me, Batkins," said he; "I am busy; I will call up and see you in the course of the evening. Don't you open the store to-day with your key. Good-morning."

Away he went, whistling, across the road. Seth Spring met him. After a few words of conversation, they walked together, arm in arm, I suppose, to the new bank, for they were going in that direction. I watched them until a turn in the road shut them from my sight. Lest I should forget some of Bean's remarks, I put them down in my pocket-book, put my papers in my coat-pocket, and was about to return to the homestead in a very uneasy state of mind. A gentleman came up to me. I had not seen him until he was at my side. He said, "Good-day. Mr. Batkins, I believe?"

"Yes, sir. You have the advantage of me. I do not remember to have had the pleasure to meet you before."

"No, sir; but I was sure it was you. My name is Reedy. I am from Boston on some business for the banks. Your father, I believe, is a justice of the peace?"

I said he was, and a coroner too. I thought I would give the old gentleman another lift on the offices. Mr. Reedy appeared to have a smart way with him, as most of the people

did, who came from Boston. I continued: "Did you come to see my father on justice business, or on coroner's business, Mr. Reedy?"

"I do not know yet, Mr. Batkins; perhaps neither, and perhaps both."

I said, "Are you a lawyer?"

"I am not."

I put further queries to him: "Do you understand book-keeping by double entry?"

"I do," he replied.

"Well, sir, what do you want of me?"

"A little private conversation, Mr. Batkins, for which, for convenience' sake, if you have no objection, I should be happy to go with you into your store."

I explained to him, briefly, the state of affairs at the store; that my clerk had the key, and until his return I could not get in.

"Well, anywhere but the street will do," said he.

The idea came to me that if he understood book-keeping by double entry, he could explain to me about the trial-balance, and perhaps advise me how to get ahead of Bean, without the books, or knowing anything about the sea-captain's wife; so, without any further ceremony, I invited him to the homestead. He accepted the invitation, and together we walked home.

## CHAPTER XII.

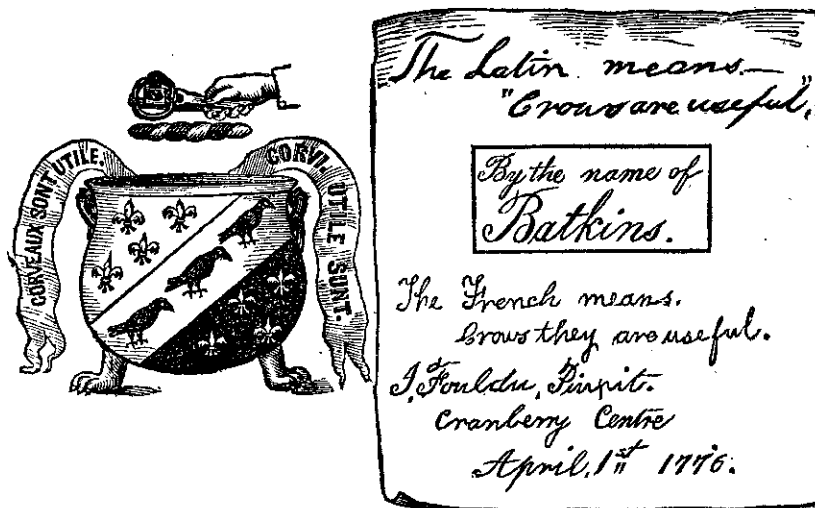
### THE HOMESTEAD.

THE homestead of the Batkins' family was well known to the people of Cranberry Centre. The house was two stories high in that part fronting the highway; the roof descended to the rear to within six feet of the ground. It was after the pattern of many wooden structures erected in the country a hundred years ago, with, as usual, a heavy stack of brick chimneys in the centre, up the flues of which, mixed with the smoke of hundreds of cords of hickory and pine wood, had been carried the vapors of many a savory dinner eliminated in the process of cookery and upon which the Batkins' family and their friends had thriven and waxed fat. My grandfather's vanity had been a large barn; this was preserved, as had been the old cider-mill and well with the old sweep and iron-hooped bucket. These, I have no doubt, in the season of cider-making, had been used to assist the yield of the pomace when put under the press, after the fashion of the day, forming that stimulating fluid resident in the juice of the apple, so welcome to the farmer during a hard day's work, or at the fireside gathering on a winter's evening, where the past, the present, and sometimes the future are discussed as the mug of old orchard passes from hand to hand. This beverage has since been made contraband by legislation. From time to time additions had been made to the old house; a considerable space of soil was covered by new buildings of various shapes and dimensions, until that composite style of Yankee architecture, so frequently seen in New England villages, had been arrived at, illustrative of the different phases of rural life,

as wealth and family had increased, since the original founder ventured to marry and invite his neighbors to the raising of the little new house, in which were enjoyed the festivities usually closing such occasions.

We had no carpets on our floors; here and there were ovals and squares made from braided rags of different colors and patterns, sewed in circles and other figures, — some by my grandmother, a few by my mother, and the more modern styles by Aunt Dolly. I do not think it necessary to describe everything in the best room, or to give a list of our rooms and household furniture.

Hanging over the fireplace in the best room was a picture in a handsome frame, said to be the coat-of-arms of the Batkins family. Written on a piece of paper and pasted on



the back of the picture was an explanation, partly in Latin, partly in French. The doctor gave the meaning one way, the minister another, the school-master another. Above is a copy of the picture, which may explain itself.

Upon a peg in a beam, opposite the fireplace, near the wall, was suspended by the collar a military uniform coat, worn by my grandfather — a military genius — in the Indian skirmishes and in the Revolutionary war of '76. Attached to the breast of the coat was a leaden bullet that killed one of my distant relatives who had been in the fight of Bunker Hill. My grandfather had a gold ring put to it, and fastened it to his watch-chain with his keys and seals, as people now wear different ornaments as keepsakes. The coat-of-arms and the bullet were the objects of pride to my father, and discoursed upon when strangers visited the homestead. Here a race of Batkinses were born, reared, and died. Weddings, births, funerals, and other family meetings and merry-makings had been celebrated and talked of for years. We had chairs and tables, a clock that struck, kept the day of the month, and to my surprise, when I was a youngster, it had a moon that changed through the quarters and came out full as regularly as the moon out-doors did, and does it to this day.

On the way from the store I had given Mr. Reedy some account of our family. When we arrived at home I walked with him into the best room, and introduced him to my father, who, as he termed it, was a little set up, — not having quite recovered from the effects of the strong wine so liberally provided at Simms' Folly.

My father was glad to see Mr. Reedy, as he was anybody from Boston; and although the delivery of words from his mouth was not as rapid as usual, he still managed to inquire for some of his old friends, who made Boston their home. As Mr. Reedy's visit was upon business, I retired, that their conversation might not be interrupted.

At this moment Aunt Dolly entered the room; seeing that my father had company, she was about retiring. But my father requested her to remain, and introduced her to Mr.

Reedy, saying, "Miss Spooner, this is Mr. Reedy, from Boston."

Aunt Dolly hoped Mr. Reedy was well, and inquired how all the folks did in Boston; said she "had just come from the kitchen, and was not fit to be seen."

Mr. Reedy complimented Aunt Dolly on her appearance. My father said, "Mr. Reedy wants to inquire something about Marthy that used to live here," — his way of pronouncing Martha, — Aunt Dolly did the same, saying, "I never knew any good of her."

My father, Aunt Dolly, and Mr. Reedy were hard at work with their tongues. After a short time Aunt Dolly left them, saying, "I wish you good-day, sir," as she passed me at the door repeating to herself some kind of left-handed blessing upon Martha, in her expressive judgment "a good-for-nothing hussy!" thus finishing her somewhat excited speech.

Many of the neighbors visited Aunt Dolly, and not a few of the young women consulted her about the mysteries of knitting, cake-making, and other of the household fine arts. I never had much talk with them, and I did not exactly then understand the way the girls manœuvred when they wanted to give a young man a chance to do a little courting, if his fancy ran that way. Looking back, I see where I missed the chances, and if Aunt Dolly had not figured against the girls when they were round the house, I dare say I should have had a chance to know more about it. I did catch myself once feeling after the fashion I did with Sally Trivetts; a little more respectable kind of emotion, I do think, but still much of the same sort. It was about Miss Pike who had relations in Boston; some of them went from Cranberry Centre, and settled there. Just as I entered the house with Mr. Reedy, Miss Pike was going out. She was none of your airy and flaunting girls, but as prim as a minister's daughter. The nearest she ever came to saying anything that I thought showed an interest in my welfare, was

just before she went to Boston. She said, "Mr. Batkins, Aunt Dolly is getting old; if your father don't get married pretty soon, and bring home somebody to look after things, you will have to get married, or hire a new house-keeper;" and I really thought she looked as much as to say, "You can have me for the asking." I do not know but I did her injustice. I know she refused good offers, and left Cranberry Centre with the reputation of being a nice old maid.

My father left the room, as he said, to look over some documents connected with Mr. Reedy's business at the homestead. I thought I would now get Mr. Reedy's opinion as to Mr. Bean's book-keeping by double entry. I then explained a part of Mr. Bean's propositions, and how matters stood between Mr. Bean and myself. He looked at me with a very curious twinkle of his eye, and a good-natured twist of the mouth, then at the papers which I had placed in his hand. He inquired of me how long Mr. Bean had been in Cranberry Centre, and what had been his character. I gave him all the information in my power. Something seemed to amuse him.

"Mr. Batkins, this appears to be the work of some adroit person, who would cover up his intentions of making a false account. Where are your books?"

I replied, "They are at the store."

"Without an examination of the books, I can give you no assistance in discovering the errors, if there are any. I notice here you are charged with an amount of counterfeit money. Was dealing in counterfeit money any part of your business?"

"Not at all." I then explained to him Mr. Bean's views on that point.

"What have you been doing to displease Mr. Bean, Mr. Batkins?"

I replied, "Nothing; he has been doing many things to displease me. I never did anything that I ought to be

ashamed of, but Mr. Bean threatens to say I have; and, if he does, as he says he will do, I shall never dare to show my face in Cranberry Centre again." I related to him the affair of the sea-captain's wife, wagon story and all, as far as I was concerned, in what I should now call an allegorical way; that is, I asked Mr. Reedy to suppose it was somebody else who had been in such a scrape, and that Bean said he would give an affidavit, if necessary, that I was the person.

Mr. Reedy gave me a sort of a droll look all over, from my head to my feet. "Mr. Batkins, I do not desire to inquire into any secrets of yours; but unless you have the courage to face Mr. Bean in a court of law, I think you had better make some settlement with him; and I should like to be concealed somewhere, with the opportunity to witness your negotiation."

I said, "Mr. Reedy, do you advise, after losing my share of the stock, that I should pay him back my salary?"

Mr. Reedy said, "I do, Mr. Batkins, if you cannot make better terms."

"May I ask you, Mr. Reedy, why you want to be concealed when we make the settlement?"

"I desire to study the character of Mr. Bean."

I asked him if he saw anything peculiar about me, why I should be selected to be so dreadfully imposed upon by Mr. Bean.

He put on one of those droll squints, and said, "Mr. Batkins, you have a countenance expressive of great honesty and timidity, and I should judge you were a person of very confiding character. I do not think you were intended by nature to engage in business of a very complicated kind, and, to be frank, your education has not improved you sufficiently to enable you to compete with such an able financier as Mr. Bean. I do not know what I may hear at your interview with Mr. Bean. My presence concealed can do no harm, and

may be productive of good. If I might suggest a time and place to close this settlement, I would name this evening, and in this room."

I said to him, "I will follow your advice; if you will take dinner with us to-day, in plain farmer-fashion, I shall be pleased to have you."

"I have promised as much to your father, who was polite enough to anticipate you in the matter of invitation; if my business here permits, I will accept your hospitality. Good-morning, Mr. Batkins," he said pleasantly.

"Good-morning, Mr. Reedy," I said, with a blue look at the papers he handed back to me as he left the room.

I went upstairs to my sleeping apartment, where all my treasures were kept, and examined my stock of specie; I did not require any trial-balance to prove the state of my finances. All I received was on one side of the days in the old almanac, and what I spent on the other. Every month I footed it up, and there was just what I was worth, with the exception of my interest in the store, some sheep, and other little matters about the homestead. As I looked at my savings, I did hate dreadfully the idea of their going into Bean's hands; and I am not going to deny, at this day, that I felt something besides the loss of my money whispering into my ears that Mr. Bean would be served justly if he was hung to death or killed in some other unpleasant way. If I was drawn on the jury, I would not convict a man of murder, who should be tried for killing such a snipe as I thought Bean was, under circumstances similar to mine.

I made up my mind as to what I should say to Bean when the time came. After a long "session," — I did not think it was a "session" then, you understand; that word crept out of my mind on to the paper, in consequence of my future position, which need not be further explained, and I shall let the word "stand" as "reported," — there it is again!



I went down to the eating-room; Mr. Reedy had returned. Aunt Dolly had roasted a pair of fowls, and boiled a hand of pork, with such trimmings as she "knew could not be had out of a thrifty farmer's house," as she said, "for love nor money." There were puddings and pies, nice pickles and jams, with all the nick-nacks that go in to make a country dinner inviting to those who are more fond of something to eat than the sight of handsome platters and gewgaws, with no substantial provender.

Aunt Dolly, in her best "bib and tucker," sat at the head of the table, while the "hired help," a buxom girl of twenty years, fixed up for the occasion, waited on us, not perhaps exactly in the fashion of a Boston tavern, but with alacrity and good humor.

Mr. Reedy praised Aunt Dolly's cookery, exhibiting the sincerity of his compliments by the quantity of fowls and pork he removed from his plate to his own interior man, in obedience, as he said, to the fine appetite a walk about the town had given him.

My father's eating activity, as usual, was not in proportion to his drinking; but at this time, as it was only cider that he caused to disappear from the ample dinner-pitcher, to be sure, in long "swigs," as he termed them, I had no fear of his tongue, or, in fact, of his behavior in any form.

It was observed that I did not appear to have a good appetite. I excused myself in the best way I could. The current of my thoughts was discovered, but not remarked upon. In a partially abstracted state, to Aunt Dolly's question, if I would have a piece of pie, I replied, "Not a *bean*." That was it, — *Bean* was in my mind. He stood upon every platter on the table. I saw his head pop out from the cider jug; I swallowed him at every mouthful I attempted to take. The dinner was finished after a while, and I waited till the arrival of Mr. *Bean*, which was not long after the candles

were lighted. Mr. Reedy walked into a closet that led from our best room, through to the great entry, as had been agreed upon, just as Mr. *Bean* had entered the door of the house. I was prepared for him at the table, in the drawer of which I had deposited the papers which were to be discussed. The knowledge that Mr. Reedy was to witness the interview gave me some courage, and I had determined not silently to be abused by the overbearing Mr. *Bean*. I assumed an erect attitude at the table, and in reply to *Bean's* salutation of "Good-evening, *Batkins*," I mixed up as much defiant expression with my invitation for him to sit, as was possible. His keen eye had observed the change in my address to him from the morning's timidity to the evening's scornful indifference. "Who's been here, *Batkins*?" I answered, "Nobody that need concern *you*." — "Well, *Batkins*, short stories. Where's the money? I have no time to waste; hand it over. When that is in my hands, here's your discharge, with the notes and bills."

He laid the package on the table, neatly folded and tied with a red-tape string. I objected to having the bad debts charged to my personal account. I objected to the charge of the sea-captain's wife's bill. *Bean* stopped me, and said that was all right. When I mentioned that I thought, even if it was so, I might offset my sickness, loss of time, and suffering, he stopped me again. "*Batkins*, you have been taking legal advice. Such a thing would never have entered your stupid head. Look on the credit side. I have allowed you the doctor's bill, for the hat you said you had lost, and for repairing your boots. Go on to the next."

I said, "Well, Mr. *Bean*, I am not satisfied, but I will go on to the next." I then inquired about his bill which I held in my hand, and I asked if these charges against me were entered in the books of the firm. He said "No; that was a private account." I said, "You never taught me book-keep-

ing by double entry. I never did anything but write in the paper blotter." Bean said that was not his fault. I had no genius for book-keeping or commercial pursuits, and when he agreed to teach me business, he did not think the understanding was that he should furnish me with additional brain-comprehensive powers. He took the bill from my hand, threw it upon the table, saying, "That bill is right. Go ahead, Batkins! I'm in a hurry."

After a moment's consideration I separated the papers, singling out the trial-balance sheet as the basis of operations. "Mr. Bean," I remarked with all the coolness I could command, "I don't quite understand this. I want a little more explanation."

Bean started up. "I thought all was settled; that all I had to do was to come this evening and take the balance. Do you think I am a fool, Batkins? Come, hand over." He sat down, throwing his feet upon the table-top, repeating in a slower tone, "Hand over the balance, Batkins, and we are quits."

"Mr. Bean, I have changed my mind as to this matter a little. I am willing to do what's right; but I shall not give up all my salary. I will go to law first, captain's wife or no captain's wife."

Down went his feet from the table. He rose from the chair. "Batkins, somebody has been talking to you. You have been taking legal advice."

"I have taken no legal advice, Mr. Bean; but I have inquired of a friend of mine from Boston as to the items on your bills, and he says the charge for counterfeit money should not be made against my part of the account; if it was charged to profit and loss, one-third would come from me, and that is all."

"I did not come here to open these accounts again, Batkins."

"If I have to pay for the counterfeit money I want it, Mr. Bean. I never took any of it."

"That is destroyed, of course. You do not suppose I would permit it to be circulated again, do you? Come, hand over."

"Well, now, Mr. Bean, put it in another manner. I cannot afford to settle in this way."

"Batkins, I always knew you was a fool; but I did not think you was a sneak. I rather think I shall let things go till the sea-captain comes home, and let him haul you over the coals. What a pretty story for the 'County Gazette'! 'The ancient, injured mariner versus J. S. Batkins,—the smooth-faced, double-dyed villain!' How would you like that kind of talk about you? 'Not the first of his villanies,' will be the editorial comment, and I the witness of your profligacy; 'bring down the gray hairs of your father with sorrow to the grave.' How do you like the sound of that, Batkins?"

I was horrified, and Mr. Reedy was listening to this all. I thought I must do something to make it appear that I was not completely a coward. "Bean, I tell you I don't care anything about the stories. I am determined not to be swindled; but if you will take five hundred dollars and make it square all round, I'll give as much as that to settle, and be clear of you forever."

"I can't afford it, Batkins; for five hundred dollars I will give you the papers, and sign off for all demands; but unless you pay the whole, I'll follow you up on the sea-captain's wife. I advise you to make a whole thing of it, and I give you my honor that I will be shady on the wagon story forever, unless you play some trick with me."

"Well, Mr. Bean, give me the receipt; there's the money." From a drawer I took a bag with exactly five hundred dollars,

and placed it on the table. He was busy writing. "I want the books of the firm, Mr. Bean," I added.

"Certainly, that's fair, you shall have them. We will go down to the store this evening, and I will deliver them to you. There's your green jacket and apron, with the canvas sleeves. I don't suppose you will go into the store business again; but you may, and if you do, they will be useful to you; they are yours freely, or any other little matters of personal property that may be valuable to you, to remind you of the happy days you passed in the firm of Batkins & Co."

I did not want to go with him, and yet I wanted the books. The jacket, apron, and sleeves I had already brought home. I took the papers, gave him the gold, and thus the bargain was concluded.

As he played with the money-bag, he said, "Batkins, you are not the worst fellow in the world, after all; but I will give you a little advice. You belong to a kind that were made to be beat in everything. I have had one chance at you, and I don't want any more," he continued, counting the money as he was saying so.

I thought he had beat me out of almost my all, and I could not help telling him so.

He continued: "Batkins, if you do not interfere with me, I will not interfere with you. My books are all square, and I know where the money is. If you do ever say anything to mortal man about me, to my injury, you know where I am. The fall from the wagon will not be a circumstance to the way I will be revenged on you. Now, come down to the store, get the books, and we will part friends."

I put my papers in the drawer, and followed Mr. Bean into the road. We walked to the store, not a great distance. We entered. He was full of jests and merriment at my expense. As he lit the lamps, I discovered in the store a new sign painted in flaming colors: —

"ARISTARCHUS BEAN,

Dealer in Produce, Groceries, and Dry Goods."

"What do you think of that, Batkins? That's a little ahead of the old one, — don't you think so? It is going up to-morrow. Won't you come along? At seven o'clock to-morrow down will go the Batkins' concern, and up go the Bean's."

I remarked that I thought it was a handsome sign. He took the books from the case, and piled them up for me. As the reader may suppose, they were quite a load. I bade him good-evening, and in a short time deposited my books in the entry of the homestead. Mr. Reedy was in conversation with my father. He smiled at the load of books, and said perhaps I should find amusement in contemplating the contents during my leisure hours. I left my father and Mr. Reedy in conversation, and went to my own room with a part of the books, and after looking through a few of the columns of charges and figures, I made a resolution that I would never again go into a partnership in business with man or woman; that I would never purchase anything but with the money; that I would never sign a note or anything else, for myself or anybody else, where money was concerned; that I would never borrow money, nor lend money, hereafter; that I would never have a paper dollar in my possession over night, if I could in any way change it into money. With the papers of settlement in one hand, and my other on the pile of account-books, I solemnly said to myself, I will not depart from this resolution so long as my name is Batkins. I made sundry notes in my journal, counted the remainder of the money I had in my bags, and, after disposing of several little matters, retired to my bed, and slept quietly, suffering no longer from that nightmare of the previous night, Aristarchus Bean.

Thus was closed the partnership accounts, as I thought, of the late firm of "Batkins & Co."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CRANBERRY CENTRE PROSPECTS.

As I walked about the town, the principal topic of conversation was the new bank. There was quite an emulation among the women-folks, to put down their names as stockholders. Fifty dollars was the price to be paid for a share. There were quite a number of old maids, or spinsters as they called them, who had stowed away, in stockings, and other odd places, about that amount of money, in pieces of gold and silver. The minister preached one sermon about worldly matters, and touched a little on the bank question. This had an effect, it was thought, on the female subscriptions, ladies generally doing about as their ministers say. For myself, I had made up my mind to have nothing to do with it.

By report, I learned that my father had signed for some shares. On my return from down town one day, in conversation with Aunt Dolly, I discovered that she had caught the bank fever, and, as the house-keeper of the Hon. Seth Spring's mansion had put down for one share, Aunt Dolly thought, for the reputation of the Batkins' family, she would "go and do likewise." So one was put down for Miss Dolly Spooner.

The bank was set a-going. Hon. Seth Spring was chosen president. Mr. Peter Feathergilt, who had removed over from Leadenville, was chosen cashier. He was in the shoe and leather trade, and had been a man of considerable importance. Mrs. Feathergilt, it was talked among the women-folks, had been elevated to the control of the domestic affairs

of the Feathergilt establishment, from a humble position in a neighboring State. She held no situation in the bank. She was a stockholder. There was a Miss Feathergilt, and a Mr. Horace Feathergilt. The coming of the Feathergilt to Cranberry Centre introduced, it was said, a new social era, creating, as it were, wealth, beauty, fashion, and an aristocracy of trade.

The bank was considered the first great step towards bringing Cranberry Centre into the line of progressive villages, or towns ambitious to be cities, and to keep the people from too close understanding of their own government affairs. What was it to be one of the selectmen? To be an alderman or a councilman was another matter. I did not then see it; but I have somewhat modified my opinion.

For some time the open land near Gypsy Village had been divided into building lots. Streets, avenues, and squares had names both sonorous to the ear, and of political significance; as Washington Street, Independence Square, Jefferson Park, Madison Avenue, Columbus Road, Spring Place, in honor of the Hon. Seth Spring. These names were painted on neat sign-boards posted in conspicuous situations.

My father and myself were urged to join in the speculation. We declined for the present; and, to tempt us, I think, to go into the enterprise, the narrow passage between two of the grand avenues was called "Batkins' Lane." I often strolled over to this part of the town when I was in a contemplative mood, watching the progress of some small buildings being erected upon parts of this land by the Feathergilt people, for their operatives and families to dwell in when the Feathergilt interests were entirely transferred to Cranberry Centre.

It was proposed to make Cranberry Centre productive as a shoe town, as also, in course of time, to change the character of the vagrant dwellers in Gypsy Village by the example of industry constantly before them in the persons of the shoe-

makers. The immigration from Leadenville and other places, of those leather-working families, made that part of the town busy. Carpenters and masons were in demand. Here and there a new store set up its sign and temptations to purchasers. The bills of the new bank were circulating freely; everybody appeared to be set in motion by some new power, and some of the most sanguine predicted that at no distant day Cranberry Centre would be the great commercial rival of Boston; possibly the State House would be erected on the hill known as Skunk's Misery, if the State would make a ship canal from the river to Boston Bay; and some argued, whoever lived to see it when completed, even metropolitan New York might find no contemptible rival in Cranberry Centre.

I must confess I did not share in these delusive prophecies. But I could not be blind to the progressive steps following the incoming of these shoemakers. A rise in land was now upon every tongue. Our homestead, our farm, was in a superior position, though far away from the prospected State House, upon the hill of Skunk's Misery. Attempts were made to persuade my father to cut up some of his farm acres into two-thousand-foot lots. These at that time had no effect upon any of the household. Aunt Dolly considered a flock of shoemakers coming into a farming town as no better than an army of locusts, and as destructive to green trees, garden flowers, and other of her rural delights.

It was considered judicious to have a vendue of some of the lots at the new city, as some called the place. Plans of the grounds were printed, with handsome pictures of the elevations, as they were called, of some of the buildings to be erected. The public good was to be liberally considered. A Lyceum building, with a front of columns, and statues of Greeks and Romans; a church with a higher steeple than the old meeting-house. Through the large windows, an organ was seen. Already a congregation had been found to fill this un-built temple, in consequence of this prospective organ in the

perspective of the plan. Some people said the Railroad Corporation was at the bottom of the speculation; some said the new bank; others named "Mrs. Simms' man" and the Hon. Seth Spring as the movers of the scheme. I was very certain that Mr. Bean was let into the secret, as he had engaged in distributing plans, and talking it up wherever he had the opportunity.

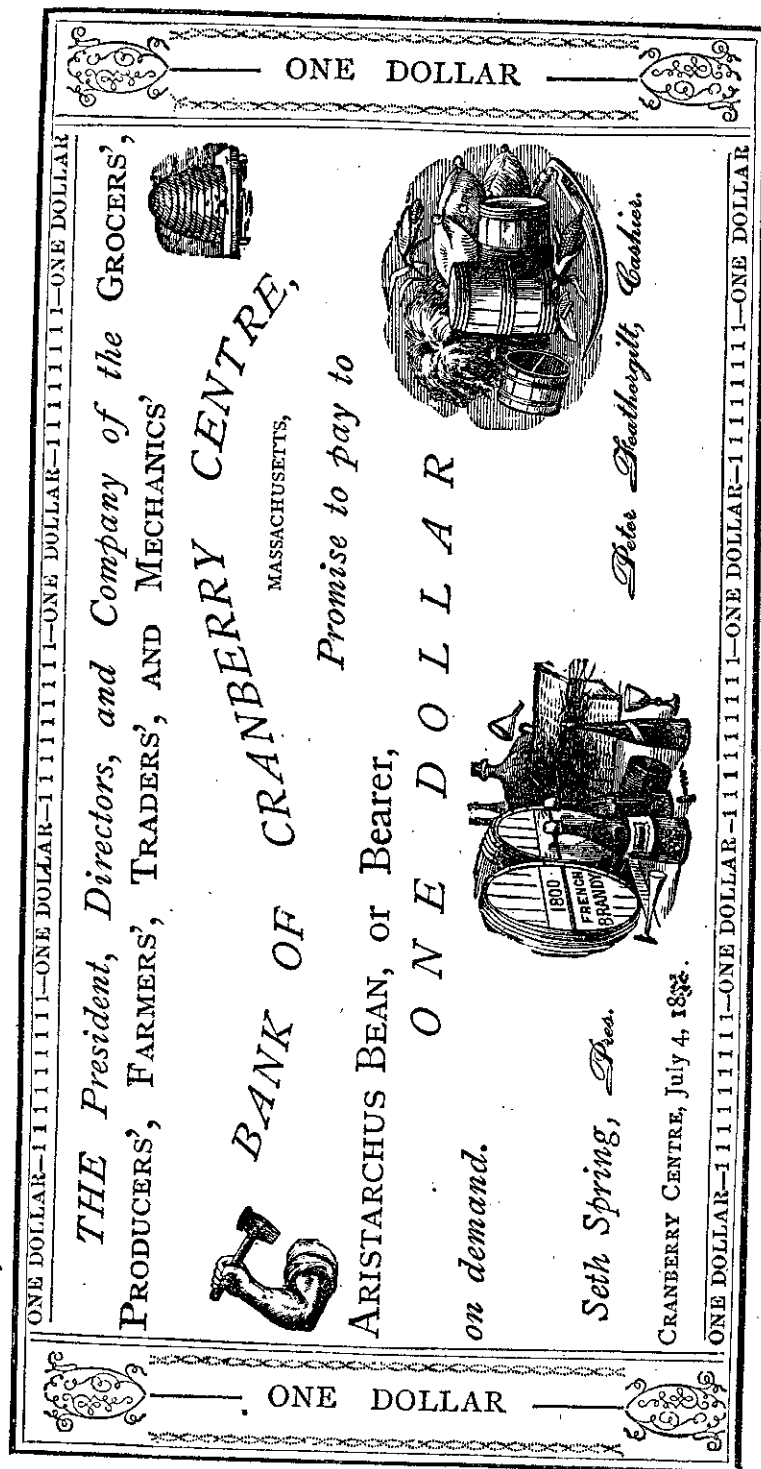
At last the sale day was announced, the catalogues printed, and free tickets on the railroad from the neighboring towns could be had at the station-houses.

In what was to be the fashionable part of the old town changes were also going on; old houses were being remodelled, and new structures erected. Some of them, particularly those for the Feathergilt family, were expensive, and combined the faults and beauties of the French and American styles, mixed in different degrees, according to the want of taste in the architect, or builder, or in compliance with the amount the parties were willing to abstract from other investments to apply to this. Such was the state of public matters. My own affairs were not yet changed much by the activity of the general mind. One incident is worthy of note, as it suggested to me a course of reading which could do me no injury and might be beneficial to me in many ways. I received a letter as follows:—

"MR. BATKINS:—My muther o'd u a dolar; which here it is. It was for part bred for us and part rum for father, which is ded, and a string of beads for baby, which is named for u, Mr. Batkins. We are gone to liv in the city. Muther is oblige to u. Her name is Lukus. "ARTEMUS HER SUN."

I give a copy of the bill on the next page.

The appearance of this letter, with the enclosure, induced me to search for the charge in the books of Batkins & Co. It is a good thing to have the mind engaged in the pursuit of anything. As I had no clue to Mrs. Lukus' account, I begun at the beginning of the first book, and continued the search until I found it in my own handwriting in the brown-paper blotter,



as it was called, among those items never destined to a double entry. I duly marked it paid, and thought I would employ that bill, thus received from an honest woman, in the service of some other honest woman, poorer than Mrs. Lukus — she having lost her husband — was now supposed to be.

There was instruction in reading over these books, as the accounts, settled and unsettled, in some measure, I thought, indicated the character of those persons whose names were filling the pages of Mr. Bean's well-kept journals and ledgers. I marked those I considered inevitably bad, those I thought doubtful, and those that I thought, with a little persuasion from a good collector or a lawyer's letter, might be paid. It was curious to observe the evidences of economy in those who paid their bills regularly, and the extravagances of those who were slow, or did not pay at all. If a book of my life were the proper place, I would insert the bills of some persons who are still living, to show them how they were fed and clothed, at the expense of Batkins & Co., during the five years of my commercial life.

If the law were not such a strange combination of blunders, justice, and wickedness, as administered in some countries, I would print the items for a month or so on the debtor side of the sea-captain's wife's account. The items on the credit side would do no harm to anybody. But she may have descendants; they may be voters; I may be up for office, and this would be brought against me as a breach of confidence, and might assist in my defeat.

I often have observed it, and my book will prove it, that obliging some of my friends by furnishing their families with groceries or dry goods, converted them into enemies whenever I asked for the payment of the bills; they not only spoke disparagingly of my establishment, but bought their goods for cash of persons who would not give them credit for a row of pins. This is the old story; I put it in here because it is part

of my experience. The bill of the Grocers', Producers', Farmers, Traders' and Mechanics' Bank, I kept in a frame. Every one who called on me read the names of the two distinguished officers. Mr. Aristarchus Bean's name, as the creditor of the bank, was a good advertisement, and assisted in bringing business to his store. I have given my opinion of this gentleman. He was always polite to me in the streets when we met, and although, from my own experience, I considered him as great a scoundrel as any out of prison, in the State, I returned his salute, and did not dare to make known the manner in which he had cheated me. Every day he was gaining in popularity, and was constantly seen with Mr. Spring, Mr. Feathergilt, and other rising men, of similar position. I gradually contented myself with the superintendence of the farm. Another lawyer had come into the town, and my father was less disturbed than formerly by applications for his services as justice of the peace or as coroner. I was still undecided, as to myself, and the way of laying out my money, amidst the temptations to double my investments, as some others had done.

My father had some of the bank shares, and had just received a dividend with the rest of the shareholders. It was a little nearer eleven o'clock than usual, — that was his hour of imbibing, frequently enough to keep him "set up" for all day; but still he was firm on his feet, — I was at my books, or rather at Mr. Bean's books, studying up my list of bad debts, when he came in with a handful of the bills of the new bank, just issued to pay dividends. "Jeff," said he, "do you see these?" He spread them about as skilful card-players handle cards.

I looked at them, and remarked that they were handsome bits of paper, and, if I ever bet, I should be willing to lay a dollar on it, that the time would come when they would not be worth more than pieces of shaving-paper of the same size.

"Prejudice, Jeff! I have had a talk with Mr. Spring and Mr. Feathergilt about you; they say you must get into the ring, and if I should judge by what Mr. Bean and Mr. Feathergilt say, you might have the assistance of Mr. Feathergilt's only daughter, who, no doubt, wants to be married."

I smiled, and said, "Let her." I had seen the young lady on the street, and at church, but I had not thought of matrimony.

"It is about time, Jeff, for you to set up for something. You have had commercial experience. I understand from Mr. Bean that you are perfectly satisfied with the settlement made with him."

I winced a little. I recovered shortly from this reminder of Bean's talent, not believing he had revealed the truth to my father. I simply said I was not aware that that affair had advanced me in public opinion.

"Oh, yes," said my father; "the few days you were confined to your room, there were more inquiries after your health, Aunt Dolly said, than there would have been if I had died; some nice young ladies, too, Jeff."

"Yes," I remarked, not displeased; "our customers, I suppose."

"Well, Jeff, there is one thing about that accident I never understood, — whose horse and wagon it was you had on the night of the upset."

I could safely say I did not know. I am sure I did not. That is precisely what I did say.

"What was the color of the horse, white or black?"

"I have no recollection," was my reply. "It was dark," — yes, I was in the dark, — "so dark you could not tell whether the horse was white or black."

"If it had been me, the people would have said the old fellow had been drinking. There's one thing you must remember, — was you driving, or Mr. Bean?"

"My impression is, I was not driving."

"That's what I thought; that's what I told Dr. Slawter. Says I, Jeff could not have been driving."

Now, I had really told no lie, but I had permitted my father to be deceived. I had a great impulse to tell him the truth; but my good intentions were overpowered, and I allowed the deception to continue.

"Well, Jeff, my advice is, put the profits of the store in the bank stock, not keep it idle in your trunk; or, if you want to put it in the soil, they say the new city lands will be worth double in a year. Salt some of your money there."

I said, "I will think of it."

"I will give up the working of the farm to you, if you say the word; but my advice is, rise with the town; get to be chosen into some office, if it is only pound-keeper. I really would like to see a Batkins governor of the Commonwealth, Jeff. Well, what do you say?"

"I'll think it over, father. I'll think it over."

He went to put his bank bills in the drawer of the old secretary, where the earliest Batkinses kept their money. Some of the old continental congress money was still there and is to this day. I used to look at these paper-mill apologies for money, and that's how I got my ideas against any currency but gold, silver, and copper. My father was right; I should do something. I did not really like to put myself between the handles of a plough, after being engaged in trade. I thought some of going into the butchering business; but I had not the nerve to kill animals in a cold-blooded, dollar-and-cent, business way. My father had touched the string that always played a tune in my brains, — I mean the idea of politics, and that was the thing I was endeavoring so hard to avoid; for I had an idea it would make or break me. The fact is, I wanted to go in, and yet I did not dare to say so, even to myself; and then the hint that Miss Feathergilt was at my dis-

posal for a wife, — both these topics acting on my mind at the same time, one pushing one way, and one pulling the other, had the effect to drive me into the road, where I revolved the matter over in my mind, without coming to any conclusion.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE LAND SALE.

WHEN the day arrived for the vendue, Cranberry Centre was all astir. I have before remarked, in the case of the bank, the people seemed to carry in their countenances the idea of increased wealth, and some of them did not seem able to keep their feet on the ground long enough to walk, but absolutely danced, skipped, and almost flew during the busy hours of the day.

The gathering at the place of the vendue was promiscuous. Four red flags had been planted at the four corners of the lot. This was my first sight at a vendue. I wish I had the power to describe all there was to see and to hear. The gathering at the "indignation meeting" was small in comparison, for the number of inhabitants had increased, and the free tickets on the railroad brought visitors from the neighboring towns.

I did not attend this land sale with a view to buy land. In my own name I did not hold a foot of soil in Cranberry Centre. I was there to assist by my presence the success of the scheme. I preserved one of the painted plans of the new city, and have had it copied. As one of the documentary proofs of the truth of my history, I have marked the spots where I stood at different times during the sale. The elevations, as they were marked by the surveyor and architect, I also preserved. I shall annex them to this book, so that any person who doubts the veracity or the correctness of my statements can visit Cranberry Centre at his own convenience and expense, except he happens to be a government official; then,

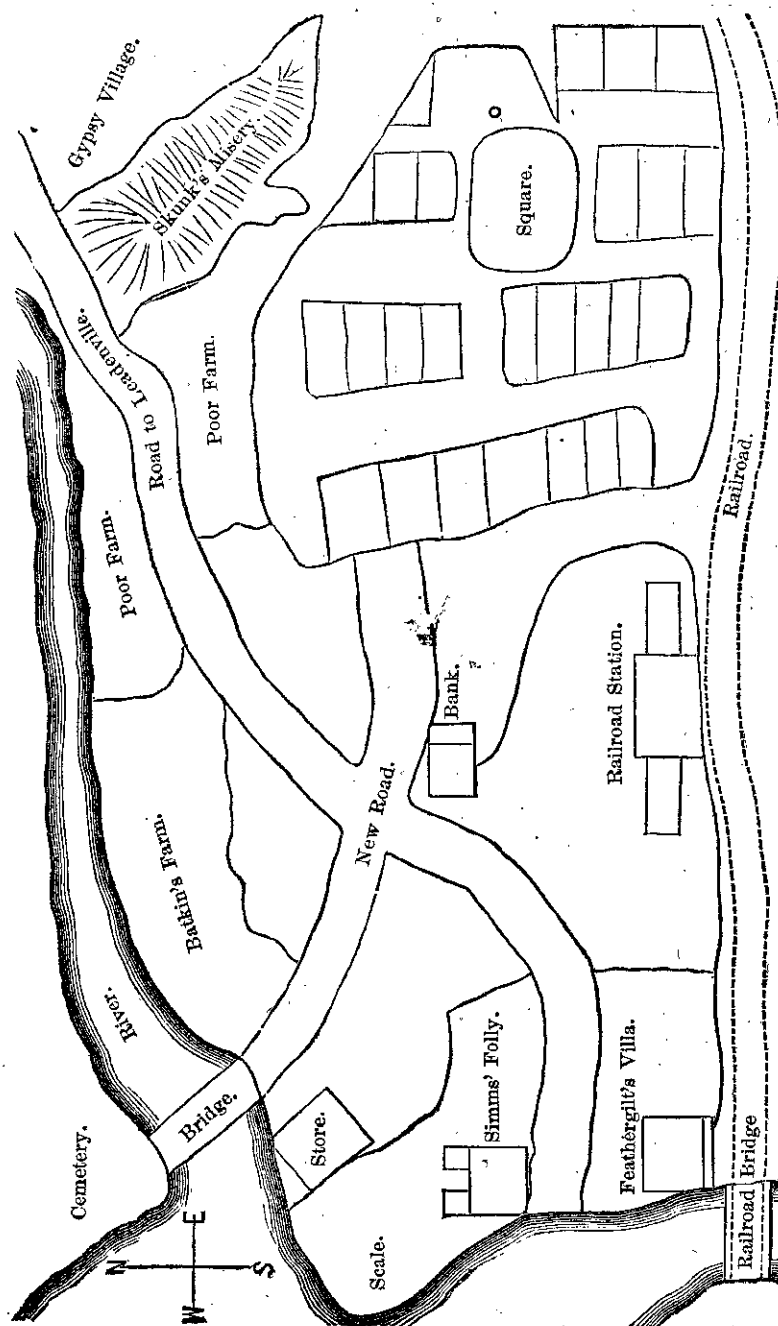
in that case, he can make out his bill and charge it to the accounts of such committee as he thinks can best afford to liquidate it. This advice may appear as if somebody had given me an idea — I admit it — and this information may be of important use to committees on public buildings, who are about inaugurating plans and projects for the public good. A list of the original estimates for the buildings can be seen, and those interested will discover how far short the actual expenditure was, compared to the estimated cost. I believe this method is improved upon, the rule now being, low estimates and high expenditures. I shall attempt no explanation.

In addition to this, there was handed about to some people a bird's-eye view of Cranberry Centre, with the residences of prominent citizens of the town marked in red ink, public buildings in yellow ink, sites sold in blue ink. In red and green ink the names of the prominent citizens whose houses and villas were thus displayed, were placed on the margin of the map, with reference figures upon the houses. I do not suppose that any of these arrangements are new to land speculators, or to my readers. They were new to the people of Cranberry Centre, and as connected with this epoch of my life must have a proper representation here. It may be dull work for the present day, but, as I remarked before, this is my life, — and also in part a history of Cranberry Centre.

I heard, as I walked among the different parties on the ground, various opinions as to the prospects, as also the criticisms upon some of the "well-to-do" folks, of whom it was remarked of one: "It is not long ago that my father saved the whole family from the poor farm. Now I am not good enough for them to speak to."

While I was thus engaged in observation upon the general gathering, I saw my father coming across lots, and beckoning me to him. He had just come from a house, around which

## PLAN OF THE LAND.



were wagons, carriages, chaises, and other vehicles, some with finely dressed ladies lazily leaning from the cushions to chat with the better-dressed people who were about them.

Before I arrived at the house, I distinguished Hon. Seth Spring, the Feathergilt's old and young, Gideon Bodge, "Mrs. Simms' man," Dr. Slawter, the minister, and sundry other people to whom perhaps, as yet, the reader will not care to be introduced. Mr. Bean was talking to a gentleman I had never seen before. He was the auctioneer, who had been sent from Boston to conduct the sale, — our auctioneer, Mr. Slowkall, not having been thought competent for so extensive an affair. Mr. Bean left the auctioneer, and came towards us. Speaking to me very politely, taking off his hat, he said: —

"Batkins, I am glad to see you. Buy, Batkins, — there's money in this land, — buy it."

To my father he said, "Uncle Jethro," — many people addressed my father by that title, though so far as we know, or the town records show, he could not be uncle to anything of the human kind, — "Uncle Jethro, Mr. Spring and Mr. Feathergilt have something to say to you."

My father left us, and Mr. Bean inquired if I had a plan of the lots. I told him I had.

"Perhaps not the right one, said he; let us see it."

I took from my pocket the plans and the notice. He looked at it, shaking his head.

"That's not it. Have you not seen the bird's-eye view, Mr. Batkins?"

I told him that I had not.

"Well, walk in, Batkins, before the sale begins, and get one of those bird's-eye views. It makes a very handsome picture, — handsome enough to hang up in anybody's parlor."

He took me by the arm, and led me along, introducing me to some gentlemen whose names I scarcely heard, and hurry-

ing me on to get one of the bird's-eye pictures. Beckoning, as he went, to another smartly dressed gentleman, who had just arrived, asking him the same question, — if he had seen the bird's-eye plan, — we entered the house. A table was set with decanters, bottles, tumblers, crackers, cheese, cigars, and other evidences of what some people call having a good time. On a table were the bird's-eye-view plans. I was invited to drink, — I declined; to smoke, which I declined also. I took a piece of cracker and cheese, and my friend, — as he called himself, — Bean, handed me a bird's-eye plan.

Those who have attended land sales I dare say understand what I at that time did not. I asked no general questions, but my good friend Bean explained to me the idea of the luncheon to which some had been invited, while a great many had not. It was an object to have a large attendance. Now, as I have stated, the town was divided on the temperance question, and those who were known to indulge in mixed beverages were invited to see the bird's-eye plan, or those not committed against the use of liquor. It was known that I was a temperance man on principle, and from choice, with no desire to infringe upon the rights of my neighbors. I regretted that my father did not take the same view as I did; but Mr. Bean wanted me, as he said, to be in with the right sort, and therefore I was invited to see the bird's-eye plan, as has been described.

The people were now moving off, and it was said the sale was about to begin. There was a good deal of whispering and going to and fro from one to another; Mr. Bean, as usual, being the busiest man of all.

The auctioneer at last left for the platform with Mr. Slowkall, and his clerk, with pen, ink, and book. He mounted a chair upon the platform, took off his hat, looked about him, up at the sun, and round the town, flourished a white handkerchief, and begun his speech: —

“Gentlemen, we are upon the eve of great events. Some-

times, when the serenity of the cerulean arch above our heads is undisturbed by a cloud, there lurks the whirlwind, the hurricane, and the devastating tempest. For the first time I find myself in this ancient town, Cranberry Centre, gentlemen, heard of in my infancy. The desire of my manhood is at last accomplished. I am here to assist you in a great work, a glorious work, — to expand your capabilities, to make your fortunes, to enrich your heirs. This soil, virgin from the days of creation, will soon be made to teem with the products of your industry. I come to sell it, sell it, gentlemen, to the highest bidder; not as a whole, — the company would not so dispose of it, — but to give all a chance. You have seen the plans, the elevations, gentlemen, and many of you have seen the bird's-eye plan, which shows the liberality of the land company, whose representative I am to-day.”

Here the doctor and I exchanged a smile, which the auctioneer seeing, discoursed upon as follows: —

“My friend, here, smiles, and I don't wonder at it. The ladies smile upon us and cheer us with their presence. Nature smiles, — a good omen; you have seen the plans; you know the terms of sale,” — which he here repeated. When he had finished, he said, “We are at your mercy. What is the bid for lot No. 1?”

Nobody seemed inclined to say anything. After the usual invitation to bid, from the auctioneer, somebody said, “One cent a foot.”

Well, now that sounds small, I dare say. My father said he had seen the time he could have bought it all for ten dollars an acre; and when an acre of land is sold for one cent a foot it counts up something.

The vendue master kept talking, and nobody offered to give more. Mr. Bean came to me. Said he, “Buy it, Batkins.” I told him I did not come to buy.

“Two cents from the gentleman?” pointing to me; the

auctioneer repeated the sum. "Two cents a foot, — going. Your name, I think, is Batkins?"

I nodded my head.

"Shall I have three?"

"Yes, sir," said I; "my name is Batkins."

"Gone to Mr. Batkins, for three cents per foot."

"No," says I; "I didn't bid. You asked me if my name was Batkins; I said yes."

"You will never be sorry for your bargain. Mr. Jefferson S. Batkins, I believe?" and the clerk put down the name.

Bean came up to congratulate me. Says he, in a quiet way, "Don't back out, Batkins. I will take it off your hands."

"Which lot do you take, Mr. Batkins? From one to twenty, you have your choice."

"He takes the whole twenty," said Bean; "in all about fifty thousand feet."

All I could say was useless. The auctioneer put up other lots. Some were knocked off to Seth Spring, some to Mr. Feathergilt, some to Mr. Bean, one lot to Mr. Sully, one to Milksay, one or two of the smaller lots to two shoemaking-looking men, — these bringing from one to one and a half cents per foot. Then suddenly appeared a cloud, indicating a shower. The vendue master thanked the company for their attendance; said the sale would be postponed, and proper notice would be given. The prices were too low, but he thought next time they would be higher. Might he ask Mr. Batkins if he would give a bond a month hence for a part of his purchase at five cents per foot? He had been offered that price privately and refused. He supposed the man had missed the train, or that range of lots would never have been sold so low. He made it a rule never to bid himself at a public sale, or Mr. Batkins would never have had the bargain he had this day made.

The crowd had begun to disperse. I was invited by Mr.

Feathergilt to take a seat in his chaise with his daughter, as he wanted to have a little talk with Mr. Spring, and was going to ride home with him. I could not say no before so many people. I walked with him to the carriage, was put in, with a compliment for my sagacious investment.

Mrs. Feathergilt was in Mr. Spring's carriage. Mr. Feathergilt had driven his daughter to the sale, and she was now under my care. A gust of wind, blowing up the sand into all kinds of shapes, for the moment blinded my eyes, as well as my fair companion's; thus I avoided a discovery on her part of my embarrassment at finding myself with her in such a conspicuous position, about to drive her through the streets of Cranberry Centre. And now again the whirling columns of dust were flying about, lit up by the light of the sun into a sort of yellow snow-storm, putting dust and gravel for snow. I took the reins, gave a sort of cluck to the horse, who started with spirit on his homeward road, my father appearing to be much pleased.

## CHAPTER XV.

## CAUGHT IN A SHOWER.

IN reply to my father, who occasionally expressed his opinion of my neglect of instruction upon matters which a study of some popular works would give me, I stated — what he already knew — that I was averse to reading books, not having a very high idea of learning. I told him I preferred to study human nature, in men and animals. I had been studying the faces of the people at the land sale, and among the rest the members of Mr. Feathergilt's family, who were considered in Cranberry Centre of that class called by those of less pretensions, the "upper crust," which, as Aunt Dolly explained to me, had some reference to the top piece on the mince pies. I was making my own estimate of these people, when I was so unexpectedly introduced to the young lady. I dare say I may get my ideas somewhat mixed, as I endeavor to give an account of this ride, growing out of our being caught in a shower. Showers are common enough, and almost everybody has, at some period of their lives, been overtaken by that natural display of aquosity and noise, called a thunder-storm. Matters so common would hardly seem of much importance in the life of any individual, unless he had been struck by lightning. It is true, I had not. Many persons have dated much of their happiness or misery from some accidental cause, not unfrequently from being caught in a shower.

When I was quite a lad, I confess I was afraid of thunder, and, if in the night, crawled into Aunt Dolly's room for protection. I afterwards discovered that thunder was only a

noise, and harmless; that the lightning was like the fire and shot from the cannon, and did like mischief, if it hit. I cannot say now that I have the same fear at an explosion of this natural battery during a thunder shower, as Dr. Slawter called it, while one day explaining the philosophy of it when caught in a shower at the homestead. I am not ashamed to confess that I am not entirely free from apprehensions, if I am on the road during a severe thunder shower. I have heard that some of the bravest men in battle have been so frightened at thunder storms as to hide themselves in a cellar during the passing of a shower. No one is to be blamed for moral cowardice in such matters.

On this occasion I was not to be alone; still I was not with Aunt Dolly, the friend and protector of my youthful days. I managed pretty well to conceal my trepidation, if I had any, although I had the responsibility of driving a lady, to be sure not a very young lady, to whom I had just been introduced, who was, or if not now, had been, quite a belle in Leadenville. I was simply an individual, who in a horse-trade perhaps might prove, that my eye-teeth had been cut, a well-to-do farmer's only son, and an ex-storekeeper, as Bean sometimes called me; and besides driving in a shower, I might be expected to entertain in conversation a lady, who had visited Saratoga, Boston, and other popular and fashionable resorts of the time. I had seen her on the streets swinging her parasol over her shoulders in a gay style, and walking along with an air as if either she or her father owned pretty much all creation.

I regret that I cannot describe this lady to my friends; she was rather short, and while her face was slightly yellow and thin, the rest of her person appeared to be pretty plump. I don't think I could say her hair was exactly what I have heard called gold color. It had, like her face, a sort of yellow complexion, only a shade or two darker. I did think her nose

naturally was a little red. I would not be certain, but there was just such an appearance of the skin as I have noticed on the neck of a turkey, before Aunt Dolly put it to roasting, after she had been shaking the flour-box over it. She had a sharp-looking eye, on each side of her nose; one appeared to be looking at the other, just as I have seen a rat when he was cornered, with a dog on one side, and a man with a club on the other. She did not look unlike a rat, — that is, a good-dispositioned, well-fed, handsome rat, when her features were in that condition expressed by writers as being in repose.

It is often a good illustration of the character of a person, instead of describing the features in detail, to simply state that this one looked like a fox; that like a dog; that like a lamb; that like a lion; and so through the list of quadrupeds. It is the same with beasts and fishes; and you will find, upon comparison among your friends, where they have this physiognomical likeness, the characteristic qualities will be found in the same proportion. I have not much to say about how much cultivation and intellectual gymnastics, religious impressions, or other emotional machinery may have to do with concealing, sometimes, this natural reflection of mere animal instincts. I believe this, — and in this opinion I am sustained by Dr. Slawter and other physicians, — that under the influence of certain passions, all that goes to make the social distinction between lady and gentleman disappears, and the individual develops so much of the animal that there can be no doubt that all the education, all the reason, given to man and refused to the brute, will not always obliterate the nearness of relationship, and, in many cases, that is nearer and more demonstrative than we are willing to admit. So I say Miss Feathergilt looked like a rat, Mrs. Feathergilt not unlike a seal; that is, her facial expression and her movement, so far as the human face divine is concerned. Yet there is no relationship, that we know, existing between the rat and the seal. One is more amphibious

than the other, although "there be land rats and water rats." Mr. Feathergilt in likeness might be said to partake of the characteristic expression of a horse and a fox, — the large, intelligent eye, the massive forehead of the first, with the pointed nose, sly and knowing action of the mouth of the distinguished representative of sagacity, cunning, and flattering way of putting his opinions, as illustrated by fables that have done justice to his character as a diplomatist and natural-born thief. Now I admit your mind must be educated to see the counterpart of these portraits in the faces of your friends. So say many doctors, and I agree with the results of their scientific observations, though I arrived at my views in a practical way. If you could enlarge a rat to the size of Miss Feathergilt, change its style of movement and bodily form, and put it into just such costume as a lady of Miss Feathergilt's position would select, the likeness would be more complete. So in the case of this lady's mother: hang over a seal's head a wig resembling Mrs. Feathergilt's hair, with a cap and ruffles, a proper quantity of green and yellow ribbons, or flowers and leaves, with a cashmere shawl enfolding the form, so that it was concealed, and you would admit the similarity. Those who have watched the behavior of learned seals, dogs, and pigs, will perceive, just in proportion as their artificial education has proceeded, so will their mental expressions be more or less like the person who taught them. Whoever doubts the fundamental basis of this argument, let him study the faces of his friends and relatives, and sometimes his own in a mirror, and after that I shall be glad to hear and answer his objections.

Now, it may be asked here, what is the foundation for such a theory, admitted perhaps to be plausible, yet only fanciful? I will answer. I have no doubt my opinions will be the subject of comment, if I am so fortunate as to have them circulated, and I would answer conjectured objections as I go along,

but I think the printer would object. I do not consider myself capable of giving the best shape to my own ideas, but if it be admitted that the original man was the last living thing created, — woman included, of course, — would the instincts given to other animals, for their preservation and comfort, be taken from man, simply because to these instincts, necessary also to his preservation and comfort, there had been added the power of reason to control, but not to destroy them? Brain action impresses the features. The superiority in intellectual expression of such persons as have been favored with individual culture over those whose companions have been for the most part dumb animals, or men scarcely a grade above them, and recognizable only sometimes by the gift of a human voice, may be thus understood.

Much of this was in my mind as I took my seat in the chaise, with the little, rat-like Feathergilt, as in no offensive sense I have designated her. I had studied the group as they were together, though, if I then had been asked to give my opinion in writing, I am free to say I could not have done it with the same facility as now, thanks to a little more experience, and not a few conversations with my friend Dr. Slawter, and others, as I have stated before. With all my shortcomings, I could drive, very well, a horse, or a pair put to anything on wheels, a yoke of cattle, or a double team attached to a breaking-up plough, a load of hay, or a tree necessarily requiring this aid to move it. So that I was not so much out of place at the side of Miss Feathergilt, with the reins in my hand, as some people might imagine. I will not say I was at ease. I was not. Driving to mill, Aunt Dolly to meeting, or my father to a cattle-show, I was used to; but with a tolerably young, fashionable, and unmarried lady that I had never spoken to before, at my time of life, was another thing. Then the chance of being shut up almost from public view, by the boot of the chaise, was not, in view of things, a matter of comfort to me.

My conversational powers with ladies were quite limited. If questioned on some subjects, I might answer.

The distance to Mr. Feathergilt's villa was a trifle more than a mile and a half from the new city. I had in hand a fine specimen of horse-flesh. If I had been alone, I should not have objected to the drive. At the start, I remarked that the horse was speedy. Miss Feathergilt said he was; that he belonged to her brother Horace, and asked if I knew him. I said I had not the pleasure to know him. She said Horace was a good brother, but he did not take her to ride; and that all the girls were in love with him, and that his ways were very fascinating. I listened.

"Mr. Batkins, please don't drive too fast; it gives me the headache. We need not be in a hurry. We are safe out of the rain."

I said, "We are."

"You met with an accident, I believe."

I said, "Yes."

"We were very much alarmed when we read the account in the newspaper of your being thrown from your wagon. Were you much hurt?"

I said, "Not much."

"Father said at the time, you could not always tell how much a person might be hurt; when the external appearances are trifling, there may be an internal injury that will last a very long time."

I said I was not hurt internally. This reference to the accident did not improve my disposition to aid in the conversation by any lengthy remarks, and I rather fidgeted with the reins; the whip touched the high-spirited horse, who began jumping and rearing, requiring considerable coaxing and pulling, before I got him down to a steady trot. During these manoeuvres Miss Feathergilt screamed, womanlike, and seized my hands, interfering somewhat with their free use, enabling the horse to resist my efforts to restrain him, besides



convincing the animal as I thought, that the reins were not managed in the most skilful manner.

Just where the road branched to the nearest way to Feathergilt's villa, the horse was at his highest point of restiveness. I did not dare to turn him, so kept on the road leading in a different direction, and towards the next town. I said:—

"Miss Feathergilt, I will turn back directly; we shall not lose much time."

She apologized for her fright, saying she had never seen Prince—the name of the horse—act so before, adding, "I think the shower is over, and if you have no objections, as we appear to be on the road to it, I should be pleased if you will drive me over the bridge."

Of course I could not refuse, so I said, "With pleasure, Miss Feathergilt."

"Thanks, Mr. Batkins; but it does sound so odd to be called Miss Feathergilt, when I am riding. To be sure, I only ride with pa and brother Horace. They always call me Amanda; that is my given name, Mr. Batkins."

I said it was a very handsome name indeed, and I did not know any lady in Cranberry Centre, of that name.

"I am glad it pleases you, Mr. Batkins. That is a name I shall always keep, though I do not think it sounds bad with Feathergilt."

"And that is the name you do not intend to keep," I replied, with a smile.

"Well, I do not know, Mr. Batkins; pa and ma think and say that I do."

I said nothing.

"Are you married, Mr. Batkins?"

"I am not," was the prompt reply.

I never did undertake what I considered a smart thing, or a joke, without being sorry for it. This pleasant hint at the probability of her changing her name had started an

idea in her mind that I was making a kind of indirect attempt to bring her out on that subject. Some time after, I learned the reason why the little eyes sparkled at my answer, and the next question followed with rapidity and evident gratification on her part.

"Are you engaged, Mr. Batkins? I think that is what Horace said, that you were engaged. Of course I knew you were not married."

"I am not," was the prompt reply.

"Well, that's just the way folks will talk. There was a report that I was engaged to Mr. Bean. The idea that I should be engaged to Mr. Bean! Father thinks everything of Mr. Bean; but then he is too young, too fascinating. By the way, do you know how much Mr. Bean thinks of you? He says that though you do not show out much, you will some day be one of the greatest men in the States."

I said I was much obliged to Mr. Bean for his good opinion.

"He said he felt dreadfully when you fell out of the wagon."

I said, "He ought to have expressed some feeling;" that "but for him the accident would never have occurred."

We had by this time reached the bridge; the sun had emerged from the dark clouds, shining with full force on the water, which caused Miss Amanda to go into an ecstasy of delight, exclaiming, "How splendid! What a beautiful scene!" The toll-gate was closed. I pulled up the horse; the tollman received his money, opened the gate, and we were rattling over the bridge.

She said it was getting warm, and she thought, if I had no objection, we had better have the weather-cloth rolled up, and put the chaise-top down, the air was so refreshing. I had no objection to rolling up the cloth, as my legs, none of the shortest, were uncomfortably situated in respect of freedom of motion. I said to her, after we had crossed the bridge, and



while the horse was walking up the hill, I would secure the boot of the chaise, as I called it, and also depress the top,—although, to tell the truth, I did not care to be seen driving this young lady, with her ribbons flying, and her yellow-complexioned hair assisting the ribbons in the gay display.

The rattling of the wheels upon the loose planks of the bridge made conversation in an ordinary tone not an easy task. She kept her parasol moving about in different directions, sometimes driving it into my face, and for the time shutting out the view entirely.

“O Mr. Batkins, this is exhilarating!”

I thought she would jump out of the chaise with delight, and I am not sure that it would not have happened, but the leather was only loosened at the top loop. A carriage was coming towards us. She made some remark that I could not exactly hear, and I inclined my head to hers, stooping a little to understand her better. The near wheel struck a stone, which sent her suddenly towards me, and the action brought the parasol so as to cover both our heads; at which the party in the approaching carriage bawled out, as they passed us, “Pretty well done; try it again!” She heard it, of course, and, looking me full in the face, said she wondered what the impudent fellow meant. “You don’t suppose that he meant that you kissed me, Mr. Batkins?”

I said I thought not; but as I had no experience in such matters I could not tell. I am not certain that, if I had been the party in the other chaise, I should not have had some such idea, if I had supposed such things ever did occur on a public road in the daytime.

We had now crossed the bridge, and the horse appearing to be inclined to walk, I set myself at work rolling up the boot. I gave the reins into the hands of Miss Amanda, who said she could drive as well as anybody. I had observed on one side of the road a limb of a tree was projected over the travelled

path on that side. The horse started into a gentle trot, which, in the attitude I was in, catching the straps, gave an irregular motion to the chaise; the horse gave a sudden shy, and, the next observation I made of the limb of the tree was at the horse’s head; and before I could secure the reins to check the horse, or turn him, the limb struck the top of the chaise. I stooping to avoid the blow upon my head. Miss Amanda, sensibly enough, seeing the danger, fell down from the seat, her weight upon my legs, which disabled me still further from directing the horse. The effect of the limb upon the top of the chaise rendered unnecessary any further attempt on my part to comply with Miss Feathergilt’s request to put down the chaise-top; it was effectually done. She fainted. I put her upon the seat, using a fan and a bottle she had with her, to aid in resuscitating her. It was not long before, as they term it, “she come to,” somewhat bewildered, saying:—

“What a wonderful preservation!”

I said, “Yes, marvellous!”

“You are not hurt, Mr. Batkins?”

I said, “No.”

“Ah, well,” she said, in a condoling tone, “it is not so bad as being thrown from a wagon.”

I hesitated, then said “it was not.”

I made the best arrangement I could of the shattered chaise-top, and asked her if she did not think we had better return.

In the mean time there were signs of a repetition of the squall and shower. She said she would like to ride a little further, and I began to think, if she did get a little wet, I wouldn’t mind my share of the rain. To be sure, I had some misgiving as to the damage my hat and best coat might receive in the event of being without shelter, as the disabled chaise-top would not afford much protection. We were going along again, and for some time Miss Feathergilt was silent. She hummed tunes partly to herself; then asked me if I was

fond of music. I said I was tolerably fond, when a good band played. She asked me if I could sing. I told her I could not. She had taken music lessons, and could play on the piano-forte. She commenced a fashionable song, stopped suddenly, and asked me if I was fond of reading. I replied, "Not much." She wanted to know if I had read "Charlotte Temple," or "Eliza Wharton." I said I had never heard of the women, and perhaps my readers never have. She said they were both novels, and beautiful ones; that she cried over them, when she first read them, just as if they were real; and they were founded on facts. I had no doubt of the effect they had upon her, and so expressed myself. "What is your favorite reading?" — I told her, "Robinson Crusoe." She said she had never heard of it, and wanted to know if it was anything like "Pilgrim's Progress." She said her mother read that, and the "Arabian Nights." She asked what "Robinson Crusoe" was about. As that history was my favorite, I could talk about him, and informed her somewhat of the experience of that famous mariner of York. She wanted to know if there were any women on the island. I told her it was a desolate island. Miss Feathergilt, after a sound which escaped from her inmost recesses, as she termed the place of its origin, and which I afterwards learned to be a sigh, said, "Well, I do not believe it could be a good novel, if there were no women in it, nor lovers." I remarked that it was not a novel, but a true history of Mr. Crusoe's life and adventures. She listened, I thought, with considerable interest to my recital of some of "Man Friday's" misadventures and misapprehensions, and asked if he was really a black man. I assured her that I had never heard it doubted before. She said she would get the dear Crusoe from the library, and, if she liked it, she should buy it for her the next time he went to Boston. She said she was one of that kind that, when she liked anything, she did like it, and she did not care who knew

it. I was pleased with her decision, as it was in approval of my literary tastes. As a matter of fact, I am aware that girls do not take to "Robinson Crusoe," as they term it, and I thought I would endeavor to read "Charlotte Temple," and "Eliza Wharton," out of compliment to her promise in relation to my weakness perhaps, or fondness for Crusoe's life, written by himself.

There was a pause. I was musing. I felt awkward. Miss Feathergilt broke the silence in a few remarks about riding by moonlight. She thought that a charming way to pass time, "particularly if happening to be in company with one one is inclined to admire, Mr. Batkins."

I said, "No doubt."

"Have you ever been in Boston, Mr. Batkins?"

"I have heard that I once visited Boston with my mother, when I was an infant; but I have no recollection of it."

"How old are you, Mr. Batkins?"

I replied, "In the neighborhood of thirty or so."

"Dear me!" she said, "I thought you were older than that. Not that you look very old; but then, you are so tall."

"How old do you call yourself," — I was about to say Amanda, — "Miss Feathergilt?"

"O Mr. Batkins, that is a question you ought not to ask a lady. I am a little older than my brother Horace."

I began to think I had made a mistake in asking such a question, and suggested that I did not expect her to tell her age. We were now riding along at the top of the horse's speed, over a level plain; the sun was fast sinking, and a strange mixture of clouds was gathering. I dare say the scene was one of great beauty to those who understand such matters; from my observation and a hint or two on the signs from the almanacs, I differed from Miss Feathergilt, who saw in the prospect ahead a long and beautiful moonlight evening. This she said in so many words, and added that if her father

or Mr. Bean was driving, she would not hesitate to ask either of them to drive her to West Cranberry, where she had a cousin, whom she should like very much to see; but as she supposed my young lady would be waiting for me, and she should not like to have anybody made to feel unpleasant on her account, she would not ask me to go any further than the four corners, — about two miles further on, — and she would ask Mr. Bean to drive her to her cousin's the next day. I wondered if Bean was trying to marry this girl, or how it was.

As I was not disposed to have her think any young lady was waiting for me, I said, "Miss Feathergilt, there's no young lady to wait for me, or any lady but Aunt Dolly; and if you wish to see your cousin, I shall be pleased to drive you to West Cranberry."

She seemed pleased at this. The clouds continued to get together, and I felt sure it would not be long before there would be a collision above, which would materially shorten our ride. Now and then a gust of wind, with a sprinkle of large drops of rain warned us of what was coming.

A little way from the road was an old, two-story building, with a long, open shed. It seemed scarcely habitable, but a smoke from the chimney indicated that it contained human beings. The shattered condition of the house, and the surroundings, — broken fences, dilapidated walls, and wrecks of farm utensils, — were proofs that the inhabitants must be of a class of shiftless, decayed agriculturists, so often seen on the outskirts of very respectable towns. I had no knowledge of the locality; but in view of the threatening signs between us and the sky, I was looking at it as a probable port of safety, as a sailor would say, when the hurricane came.

We had not long passed this monument of the ruin of somebody's other days' hopes, when it seemed as if the wind would whirl the chaise, horse, myself, and Miss Feathergilt up into

the air. The leaves were flying from the trees, and some good-sized limbs were crackling and breaking away.

"It is coming," said she.

"It has come," said I.

I let go the boot, and turned the horse around until the tempest had decided which way the wind would blow, after the first experiment of blowing from all quarters at once should have succeeded or failed, as the case might be. Now came a flash of lightning, with a quick-following thunder-clap. I tried to make a temporary shelter with the damaged chaise-top, when I requested Miss Feathergilt to hold on with one hand until I could get the strap of the boot fastened to it. I made out to hold on with one hand, keeping Prince to his work with the other, the best way I could. The black cloud, in which was concealed one of the finest hail-storms I think I had ever seen, was moving on.

"It is too bad!" said Miss Feathergilt. "Now we shall have to go home, and have no moonlight ride. It would have been so pleasant, Mr. Batkins, to have listened to your story of Mr. Crusoe. If there had been a Mrs. Crusoe, I should have liked it better."

"Crusoe" was my weak point; but, as the hail was coming into the chaise, my whole attention was directed to the best and shortest method of getting back to the friendly shelter of the poverty-stricken shed, — which doubtless had many openings through its moss-covered and water-logged roof; still it was better than anything else we could get out of the foul-weather protectives of Feathergilt's chaise.

Thunder, lightning, rain, and hail were upon us; the wind whistled. Miss Feathergilt, alarmed, said it was dreadful. She let go the strap; I was afraid to do the same with my end of the leather. I gave Prince the reins, and allowed him to gallop into the yard, bringing him up handsomely under the old shed. From the appearance of matters now, it was quite

possible we should have to pass some time in the chaise, or accept the hospitality of the old house, if we were fortunate enough to have it tendered to us.

It had become quite dark. At the farthest corner of the building a light was seen. The roof of the shed proved to be more water-proof than I had given it credit for. I asked Miss Feathergilt what we had better do. She said she was not much wet, and she was willing to remain in the chaise until the shower was over. She would tell me about "Charlotte Temple," and I might tell her about "Robinson Crusoe." I said so be it; and she had better begin. She did begin. She said on the title-page there was some poetry, thus: —

"She was her parents' only joy, —  
They had but one, one darling child;"

and then another verse, that ended with: —

"But, ah! the cruel spoiler came."

I listened to all she said, thinking, however, more of the awkwardness of my situation; but it was not until afterwards that I comprehended, in its full length and breadth, the foundation I had made for the gossip and scandal of Cranberry Centre.

Occasionally I heard doors opening and shutting in the old house. Miss Feathergilt continued her narration, pausing at times to ask me, "Is not that good?" "Is not that nice?" "Is not that a shame?" as the sentiment or action of the story appeared to her. I responded, yes, or no, as I gathered from the tone of her voice the direction of her wishes. My nerves were in a twitter, and I verily thought I should jump out of my skin, as my attention was called to a sort of two-voiced-whispering, almost under the body of the chaise. By the light reflected from an open door, I beheld two slatternly

dressed girls, with shawls over their heads, who had evidently come out on a mission of discovery. One said to the other, "No." The other said to the one, "Yes; I tell you it is a feller and his gal." The one said to the other, "Be still; don't let them hear you. Perhaps it is a man and his wife." The other, with a "Pooh!" and a "Hush!" somewhat prolonged, said, "Do you suppose, if they were man and wife, they would be such fools as to sit there in the cold in the chaise all this time? The man might, the woman would not. Would you now, Clarissa?"

Clarissa admitted that she did not think she would, and remarked to the other that she would see who we were, and recommended the use of a lantern; but Evelina — the name of the other — said it was in the barn. There was now silence under the chaise, but Miss Feathergilt had been trying to remember something about a Miss Wetherby, in the story, and had succeeded, and so informed me: —

"This is it, Mr. Batkins. Perhaps you have known just such ladies: —

" 'But like the tulip caught the eye,  
Born just to be admired and die;  
When gone, no one regrets its loss,  
Or scarce remembers that it was.'"

"That is just what Miss Wetherby was."

I do not know what I said. I was as uneasy as if I was sitting on nettles, thinking of these girls making inspection as to who we were.

Both were wrong in respect to the propositions as to "fellow and sweetheart," or "man and wife." We were neither; but as to the other character assigned to us, I would admit in my own case the insinuation to have been true, if I had willingly occupied the seat referred to. I asked Miss Feathergilt if she heard the voices outside. She said she did not. I was listening for the next instalment of opinion from these fair

observers, and requested Miss Feathergilt to assist with her ears, which had the effect, as she complied with my request, to stop her story of "Charlotte Temple," which appeared to me, as far I understood it, not appropriate for the occasion.

The curious individuals referred to had changed their positions and were endeavoring to ascertain who or what we really were. One said, "They are both men." The other said, "No, they are both women." After a little more reconnoitring, one yielding and the other yielding, — splitting the difference, as people call this kind of compromise, either of money or relation of facts, — they fell back upon their first opinion, that one was a man and the other a woman, or a girl, without deciding whether the two were in expectancy or in reality in conjugal relations.

"Nice place for courting, anyhow," said one.

"I don't think so; rather cold love," said the other.

"Why, Mr. Batkins," whispered Miss Feathergilt, putting her head close to my cheek; she had to raise up a little to do this, and I instinctively to drop down a little. I felt her breath on my face, as warm as the steam of a teakettle, — "Mr. Batkins, do you hear what those people say? Are they men or women?"

Their voices were somewhat rough, though stifled by their endeavors not to be heard; yet I felt warranted to assert that they were women by so much of their costume as I had made out.

"Why, Mr. Batkins, what shall we do? Let us get out and show them who we are."

For myself I objected to this movement. I said if she wished to get out for any purpose, I would assist her. She declined, saying she could remain in the chaise as long as I could. There was more whispering outside. The rain had ceased, and looking through the glass in the back of the chaise I thought I could perceive some beams of moonlight. Cautioning Miss Feathergilt to be ready for a start, and recommending her to conceal

her face, I backed the horse from the shed, and as I turned his head in the direction of the road to Cranberry Centre the full moon shone in our faces. We had doubled upon the young ladies who had been watching us; they had not seen us, and could not recognize us. They gave us, however, a parting evidence of their good will, by wishing us a "Good-night, and better luck next time." The top of the chaise was let down, the boot removed, as a guard from the showers of mud flying from the wheels and the feet of the horse, as the vehicle was dragged through the puddles of the road at a rapid pace. It was not long before we were rushing back across the bridge, in violation of the law, the rattling of the loose planks suggesting a speed something in advance of six miles an hour. Neither of us spoke, until the lights in the windows of the houses of Cranberry Centre were visible, and among them, distinguishable by the extent of the illumination, was plainly seen the villa of Miss Feathergilt's father.

"We shall soon be home," said my companion; "but what will folks say?"

As I had no idea what they would say, I could not give her the information she required. I was so delighted myself with the prospect of soon being relieved from Miss Feathergilt's "Charlotte Temple" and "Eliza Wharton," that I cared very little what anybody might say. I was conscious of having done no harm to anybody but myself; and the damage to the chaise was certainly in consequence of no act of mine. Still I could not but remember the affair of the wagon, and was prepared to tell the truth, if I was questioned as to our late arrival.

It was nine o'clock as we turned into the yard of Feathergilt's villa. I drove up to the piazza, and handed Miss Feathergilt out. She rushed into the house, as a groom came to receive Prince and the remains of the carriage. I heard Mrs. Feathergilt say, "Amanda, where have you been?" and

while she was relating the adventure to the family, I attended the groom to the stable. He had discovered the condition of the chaise, only remarking, "You have had a smash-up, sir." I replied in the affirmative, and requested him to drive me to the farm in his wagon, after giving Prince to the care of Mr. Horace Feathergilt's man, who proceeded to give him proper care, while my friend was putting another horse to the wagon, in which he drove me to the homestead, — where Aunt Dolly had been some time expecting me to do justice to a nice supper of ham and eggs, with such toast, coffee, and cream as she knew so well how to prepare.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## EXPLANATION.

I DID not like to be badgered about our ride. There had been no particular anxiety felt at Feathergilt's villa in consequence of the absence of Miss Amanda. "She was with Mr. Batkins," her mother said, "and that was enough; they had been caught in the shower, probably, and had stopped at some neighbor's house; or perhaps Mr. Batkins had invited her to see his model farm." Mr. Feathergilt said he knew Mr. Batkins had the reputation of being a skilful driver; but still he was a kind of Jonah, as his accident when riding with Mr. Bean corroborated. "Yes," said Bean, who was at the villa; "but that was wholly my fault. I was driving that team. If Batkins had had his way, he would never have been thrown from the wagon."

When Amanda arrived, for the moment I was forgotten in the joy of her reception. This gave to me the opportunity to ride off with Tom, without comment; but, as I heard the matter from Bean, after the usual questions, "Where have you been?" "What has happened to you?" had been asked and answered, the gentlemen retired to finish the evening with a game of cards. Bean explained the game to me, offered to teach it to me; but I declined; and to this day cards are not among my accomplishments.

Amanda told her father as much as she thought proper of our conversation, concluding with a request to purchase a copy of the life of "Crusoe," and asked him if he had ever read it. He said he had not, but would purchase a copy for her. Mrs.

Feathergilt took Amanda aside, who had made a toilet for the evening, not forgetting to arrange the bunch of yellow hair, and asked her how she liked Mr. Batkins. She said, "Very well, only he don't talk much." She asked Amanda if he said anything that sounded like a proposition. Amanda thought he did once or twice; he asked her age. "I hope you did not tell him." — "Oh, no; I only told him I was older than Horace." Bean was about, as he said, Mrs. Feathergilt, therefore, not liking to be impolite, whispered to Amanda that she might sleep in her room that night, and tell her all that happened.

My recollections went to a matter beyond the ride, which I thought of sufficient importance to attend to early the next day, — and for that purpose I determined to see Bean and Mr. Feathergilt, — about the twenty lots of land knocked off to me by the chicanery of the Boston auctioneer. I shall not enlarge on such small matters as the condition of my clothes after the ride, or precisely what were my thoughts during the hours between my arrival at the homestead, and my departure on the next morning for an interview with somebody who would make me more comfortable on the land question. I had a desire also to see the Feathergilt folks, and get over the ride affair. As there was money in the one case, and only an accident in the other, my mind was pretty much monopolized by the former. My disposition was to avoid these little domestic matters, in which the woman element was predominant; but when my pocket was the question, I was assiduous on the right of property, to at least an approximate degree of energetic action.

My first visit was made to Mr. Bean. I had kept away from that scene of my commercial enterprise, the store, since my final departure with the books and papers. This incident in my life is strongly marked in my almanac journal, and I did think that I never should again enter its well-known doors while Mr. Aristarchus Bean was the proprietor. I think I am now

in or about the crisis of one of the seven-year changes, and new atoms — or, as Dr. Slawter calls them, molecules — are getting the better of the old ones, and if their action is in accordance with a republican form of government, that the majority should rule, my atoms are in a corresponding condition of action. I feel sensibly a change. The land sale, and the ride in the shower, perhaps may be causes, or they may be effects.

I found Mr. Bean busy at his books, and a little, queer-looking boy, dressed after the pattern I had adopted when engaged in cleaning oil-cans, grinding sugar, and such similar forms of muscular exercise. There was a difference in color of the store livery, my apron and jacket being green, while Mr. Bean's assistant's was red. Mr. Bean received me very affably; said he was glad to see me; hoped I had not taken cold in the shower. I assured him I had not.

"Well," he said, "I suppose not. In company with such an animated and warm-hearted girl as Miss Feathergilt, wet jacket or wet feet ought not to succeed in disturbing the proper balance of circulation in a young man like you, Batkins. How do you like Amanda, on the whole?"

"I did not come here to talk about Miss Feathergilt, but the house-lots that were knocked off to me at the auction when I made no bid."

"Oh, that is all right," said Bean. "I will lend you the money, or Mr. Feathergilt will, if you don't feel like paying all yourself."

"I don't want the land, Mr. Bean, and I will not take it; that's the end of it," I said, with considerable firmness of tone, and acted up to it with the closing of my lips tight over my teeth, and striking my clenched right hand upon the counter. The blow caused a large glass jar, in which were some fine specimens of candles, to topple from a box upon which it had been placed by the new shop-boy; between us we prevented it from falling to the floor. This narrow escape from committing



a damage to his property recalled me a little from the momentary display of decision I was making. I repeated my resolution less firmly perhaps, and added to it, by way of compensation for the subtraction of the vehement action, these words: "I mean what I say, Mr. Bean. I really do."

Bean laughed at me. "Batkins," said he, "I am doing a good thing for you, and by and by you will see it, and acknowledge it. Marry Feathergilt's daughter, and come into the ring with us, and it will not be long before you will be one of the 'biggest toads in the puddle.'"

I might not have used the language I now use, — I did not keep the record in full, — but my answer was in about this substance: "Mr. Bean, I do not desire your friendship. You have cheated me once. No man can cheat me twice in the same way. I did not buy the land. I will not have the land. I am not going to marry anybody; consequently I shall not marry Miss Feathergilt; and when I do think of marrying, I shall make my own selection."

"That's very well, Mr. Batkins. You have been on a rather suspicious ride with this lady. Instead of taking her home, as her father requested you to do, you carried her to the next town, stopped at one of the worst places in the country, and in the evening left her at her father's door, without any apology, and drove off to your home with one of Feathergilt's horses, with no word either to the lady or any of the family."

"It was all accidental, Mr. Bean."

"Accidental, Batkins? It was an accident, was it, that took you to the sea-captain's wife, that resulted, you know, in being thrown from a wagon?"

"I was not thrown from a wagon, Mr. Bean; you know better than that."

"Well, that is the way it is now understood. You will not get off so well this time."

"How did you know where we went?" I asked, with an air of incredulous coolness.

"Why, was I not at the villa, and did not Miss Amanda tell the whole story? Mr. Horace Feathergilt swears you shall answer to him for the scandal that will come to his sister's character. I should not be surprised if he should challenge you to fight him, or marry his sister; or the old gentleman might persuade his fighting son to yield to his views, and punish you in a legal way, by a suit at law for damages. You would not like to be arrested, Batkins, for abduction of a young girl, or for a breach of promise in case you marry during the single life of Miss Amanda Feathergilt."

I really had no idea any such things could happen; but I was perfectly aware that if it suited Mr. Bean's purpose to have it tried, it would be done. I had not forgotten Miss Trivetts, and how I felt then. Of course, my experience with the sea-captain's wife was too recent to have escaped my consideration. Bean had gone to his books, as if something had occurred to him suddenly, leaving me to talk to myself, or his shop-boy, or go away, just as I pleased. I knew his way. I was revolving in my mind how improbable it was, from my known character for rectitude, to be suspected of such a villainous plan as to run away with Miss Feathergilt, even if she had been willing, and everybody knew it; and then, a breach of promise appeared to me the height of absurdity. I was about to address him, when he returned from his books.

"Well, Batkins, you have thought the matter over, and I suppose you will do the right thing."

"I am always ready to do that, Mr. Bean. In this case, what do you call the right thing?"

"The right thing? Why, of course, first go and pay for your land, or fix it some way. They will lend you the money at the bank on your note endorsed by your father."

"No, sir, I will not do that. I will not give a note to anybody."

"Well, pay the money then."

"No, I will not do that."

"Well, Mr. Batkins, what do you propose to do?"

"I propose to explain to Mr. Feathergilt the mistake of the auctioneer. I propose to state to him also, and to his wife, and to Mr. Horace, how the affair of the ride happened, and trust to my character in the town to protect me against any insinuations from any quarter;" giving him at the same time the idea that the quarter I meant was about where he stood.

"Character, Batkins? All very well; but you are found out. Do you suppose anybody will believe your story after I shall have sufficiently ventilated the affair of the sea-captain's wife? What did you go to that old house for?"

"To get away from the shower. I did not know whose house it was, and I don't know now. Besides, you agreed, if I paid you the money, you would never say anything about that woman to anybody."

"Yes, so far as I was concerned; but when a man who pretends that his moral character can protect him from the charge of attempting to run away with the daughter of my dear friend, making his home desolate, he and his wife almost childless, their only son sisterless, — that is another thing; and justice, Batkins, justice demands that I should sacrifice all feelings that have hitherto led me to conceal your follies, I will not say crimes, from the worthy and honest people of the town. It was only my influence, Batkins, that prevented the sea-captain's wife, whom I will call Matilda, from suing you for assault."

He walked off to his books again. The shop-boy seemed amazed, though part of this statement was projected into my ear with that sort of shrill whisper, close to it, which increased the distinctness of the emphatic words. Though all a lie, the

circumstances of that unfortunate bill-collecting embassy gave the appearance of truth to all he might allege. In my mind, the complicity and relationship of these two individuals, Bean and the lady, were beyond conjecture or doubt. The farther I am from the scene of that evening's experience, the more clearly I see and appreciate the way in which I was so held in check by this fair specimen of the class who get their bread, not by the sweat of their brows, but by the villanous activity of their brains. I wavered, but at last said, "Mr. Bean, I think I shall take your advice in part."

He left his books, put on his hat, turned the key of the office, as he called the counting-room, saying to the shop-boy, "Artemus, I shall soon return; I am going to the bank. Come, Mr. Batkins." He seized me by the arm, and, moving with a quick step, he was hurrying me along at a pace no one in Cranberry Centre ever saw me moving at before, on my feet. Almost everybody we passed touched their hats to Mr. Bean; some of the people recognized me as he hurried me along. If it had been Gideon Bodge, instead of Aristarchus Bean, everybody would have thought I was under arrest.

I could not help thinking, as he was talking as fast as he walked, that I was then in company with one of the greatest rascals, in his way, of his age, in the republic. Subsequent events have somewhat modified that opinion; for the present I give him the credit of the discount, that hereafter it may be placed right in his account.

A building I had not seen was in view, — the land company's office. "We shall find him there," said Bean; "if not, we shall be sure to catch him at the bank." He was not in the land office, so, for the first time, I entered that place of abominations to me, — The Producers', Farmers', Traders', Manufacturers', and Mechanics' Bank.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## CHANGES.

MY business at the bank was soon settled. The terms upon which I was to keep the house-lots were so liberal that I could not refuse them. Mr. Bean was pleased; he congratulated me on my financial change. I was cordially received by Mr. Feathergilt and Mr. Spring. Mr. Feathergilt invited me to his villa, and I confess, as I left the bank, I had experienced a change, and felt, when I arrived at the homestead, like another man, as it were.

I subsequently made the call upon the Feathergilts, was introduced formally to Mr. Horace, and some friends of the family who were on a visit from a neighboring State. Mr. Horace made no reference to the ride with his sister, other than to say that he was sorry that he had not attended the sale, as, in that case, he should have driven his sister to the villa; by so doing, he should have relieved me of the unpleasant circumstances arising out of my kindly taking his place. Miss Amanda was very agreeable, laughing merrily at the incidents of the old house, particularly at the observations made by the females as to our supposed social position. She reminded me of her promise to procure for me "Charlotte Temple" and "Eliza Wharton," and repeated her earnest desire to commence reading my favorite "Robinson Crusoe."

I was pleased with my call; it proved that Bean's account of matters at the villa was his own invention. It appeared to me that peace was made all round; but to accomplish it I had somewhat yielded from previously established intentions. I had

entered Bean's store; I had transacted business at the bank; I had been in the land office; I had taken a deed of the lots in the new city; I had given a note; I had made a visit to the Feathergilt family at their elegant mansion.

I had changed. I felt the change; and as matters stood nothing appeared as the result of the changes likely to give me any particular uneasiness of mind. The time passed along, finding me engaged in the usual farm business, now and then making a dollar in a cattle-trade. I had become interested in sheep-raising, and one day I had been showing some of my fine lambs to the butcher, who made me an offer of a large price for two or three for slaughter. I had become quite attached to these little, frisking specimens of Angola breed, and the proposition set my teeth on edge, as if I had been eating a lemon, or suddenly had bitten upon a bone in a plum-pudding. I declined. I said, "For no money, Mr. Shrinker," — the butcher's name.

He smiled, played with the blade of a jack-knife he had in his hand, — he had been making skewers, — said he was sorry, for Mrs. Feathergilt was desirous of tasting the flesh of one of those foreign lambs, and he thought, as I was to marry Mr. Feathergilt's daughter, I should be pleased to furnish the family with a lamb or two, particularly when the price would be no object.

I told my friend, the butcher, that I had no intention of marrying Miss Feathergilt, nor supplying their family table with my Angola lambs.

"Well," said Mr. Shrinker, "perhaps it is the young lady who has the intention of marrying you, Mr. Atkins. She was with her father when he asked me if I could get an Angola lamb. I told him you had some, and I thought, under the circumstances, you would oblige him. She said she thought so too, and that she should admire to eat one of Mr. Atkins' Angola lambs. She knew, she said, 'if Mr. Bat-

kins wanted any of father's stock he would give it to him, whether it was an old sheep or a lamb.' "

The butcher laughed as if he had made a good joke; but, as I did not perceive exactly the humor of it, I did not laugh. As I walked into the house I thought strange about the lambs, and I wondered if Miss Feathergilt's desire to eat one of them was any evidence of her affection for me. Aunt Dolly seemed a little disturbed as she came from her pantry to meet me. "Ah," says I, "Aunt Dolly, what's the matter with the milk, the cream, or the butter?"

"Nothing, Jefferson, with either. All things are right in the pantry."

"What is it then, Aunt Dolly, that has put your good-natured face into such a pucker? Has father been talking loud to you?" as he did sometimes, when he was more liquor than Batkins.

"No. Jefferson, I don't see why the women don't let you alone."

"Why, they do, Aunt Dolly."

"That giggle of a girl, old Feathergilt's daughter, has been here in her carriage after you."

"Oh, yes; Mr. Shrinker, the butcher, just told me her father wants some of my Angola lambs to eat, Aunt Dolly; and I suppose she came to see about it."

"No, Jefferson, it is not one of your Angola lambs she wants. She wants you; that's what she's after."

"What, me? she don't want to eat me, Aunt Dolly!"

"I don't know what she wants to do with you. She's old enough to know better."

"How old is she, Aunt Dolly?"

"Older than you are, Jefferson, in more than one way."

"Well, Aunt Dolly, she looks pretty well of her age, don't she?"

"When she's fixed up."

I thought I would get Aunt Dolly's idea of her at any rate.

"If she was not a rich man's daughter, a pretty story they would make of your ride in the dark with her over Carnes' Bridge, the other night in the rain."

"Why, how did you know that, Aunt Dolly?"

"Why, she told me the whole story herself; what the girls said at the old house and all. When I was young, girls that thought much of themselves would not do such a thing as that with a man they had never spoken with before."

"Aunt Dolly, it was all an accident. If she told you the whole story she must have stayed some time."

"She did. I thought she never would go. She was waiting for you. Don't you go again; remember, you fell from the wagon, Jefferson."

"There, Aunt Dolly, don't say any more about that wagon. Every time anybody says anything about that to me, I think of Bean, and wish him far beyond the help of Providence."

I confess I did feel a little proud at this visit, though, of course, I never had any idea of marrying Miss Feathergilt, or at that time any other woman.

Aunt Dolly moved off slowly, returning with a small package: "Here is something she left for you, Jefferson." She placed the package on the table, brushing her fingers as it left them, as if there was something contaminating in the touch, and, with her features gathered up to an intense expression of scorn, she left the room, muttering, "Such forward imps I never saw as the girls are nowadays."

I opened the package, in which were two books, and a letter directed to Mr. Jefferson S. Batkins, in a very neat and pretty style of writing. I opened one book, with the title-page as follows: "Charlotte Temple: A Tale of Truth. By Mrs. Rawson."

There were some poetry and other matters printed on this

page. I kept the letter always in the book, and my friends can read it. There is a little mixture in the rhetoric. I think she was agitated, — I did not perceive it then, — but style is not important when the meaning is honest.

“ROSEWOOD VILLA, Thursday P. M.

“Miss Amanda Feathergilt's compliments to Mr. Batkins, with her expression of thanks for his kind treatment on the occasion of the, in some respects, unfortunate ride after the land sale, in her father's chaise. She hopes that under the excitement of the occasion, and the novel situation for two persons hitherto strangers to be placed in, that she said nothing to offend Mr. Batkins, or that would admit of any other construction than expressions of disinterested regard.

“Mr. Batkins will find the books spoken of during our ride, and which I had given him some idea of. They are love stories. He was pleased to observe that he should like to read them. It would give Miss Feathergilt great pleasure to read ‘Charlotte Temple’ to Mr. Batkins, or to have Mr. Batkins read ‘Robinson Crusoe’ to Miss Feathergilt, whose father has purchased it for her, with illustrations. I was much pleased with the appearance of ‘Man Friday,’ and amused with his adventures.

“We are to have a dinner-party, and I understood by Mr. Bean, that you are to be invited. I tell you this in confidence; but you will have a card from mother at the proper time.

“Excuse haste,

“AMANDA FEATHERGILT.”

When I read this, I wondered what Aunt Dolly would say. I put the books in my room, and read the letter over again. When I came to the last lines about the dinner, I almost wished that I had let Shrinker have the Angola lambs. I state this to portray the effects of the first letter I had then received from a lady, — books of love stories and a letter. I did feel a kind of a new sensation, when I contemplated the letter and the books, different from that in Miss Trivetts' case, and not a morsel like my recollections of the interview with Mrs. —, the sea-captain's wife.

These books, as I read them, opened my eyes to some parts of human nature, and I came to the conclusion that there was just about so much goodness and so much wickedness to be carried out in the world; and the difference, where it was done, was only in the way of doing it in different places and by dif-

ferent persons. Human nature itself has not changed much since the days of Adam and Eve, though the individual did change amazingly sometimes, according to Dr. Slawter's theory, which I had more faith in the older I grew.

According to these novels, I did not think it mattered much whether folks wore fig-leaves or broadcloths and satins. I was of the opinion then that it was not a good plan to let young folks read love books. I tried to read some of ‘Charlotte Temple’ aloud to Aunt Dolly; but she shut her ears, said she would not listen to such lies, as she believed all novels and romances to be. Aunt Dolly was of my opinion as to ‘Robinson Crusoe.’

I had heard Mr. Dovedrake talk considerably about Rome, and once in a sermon he recommended his hearers to study its history, and they would better understand how the greatest nations of the earth could fall if they were too proud.

Doctor Slawter had the ‘History of Rome,’ in eight volumes, with pictures of old Roman kings, and emperors, and warriors, on almost every page. I borrowed it of him; but there were so many hard names to spell in it, at this time I did not make much headway in reading it. Busied with one thing and another, matters were going on at the homestead with me, in a so-so sort of way; but I was driving in no particular direction to make myself very prominent in the history of Cranberry Centre.

About town there were marks of activity. The shoemakers were sprinkling themselves pretty thickly over one part of the new city; there the smell of leather was strong enough to satisfy any one who could enjoy this evidence of the increase of this department of domestic manufactures. Shoemakers had then a reputation of being great thinkers, and politicians, and tough fellows in argument. I never had heard a reason given, nor do I dispute it. I know, from observation, that there appeared to be a great increase in the juvenile population since

Cranberry Centre was getting to be more of a shoe town. I do not know that the thinking and political qualities of the shoemakers had anything to do with this evidence of successful industrial pursuits.

Engaged one day in reading the "History of Rome," Mr. Bodge made me a call, as he said, to get some information as to my views on town matters. He wanted to know if I would stand as a candidate for overseer of the poor. I shut up the volume of the "History of Rome," and asked Bodge to say that again. Bodge repeated the question. I was not mistaken, you understand, and replied, "Bodge, you know I am averse to going into politics."

Bodge said, "Mr. Batkins, the overseer of the poor is an honorable office, and every citizen should be willing to devote some of his time to the public good. There is nothing political about the overseer. Paupers do not vote; there is no pay; nothing to be made."

I never heard Bodge say so much at one time before. I asked Bodge who put this notion into his head.

Bodge said, "I was talking with Mr. Bean about who would be the best man. He said, 'Batkins.' I told him I did not think you would take it. Mr. Bean said, 'Yes, he will, for my sake.'"

"What do you suppose he wants me to be overseer of the poor for, Bodge?"

"Well, he thinks you are just the man. He says he can furnish the supplies for the poor farm cheaper than anybody in Cranberry Centre."

"Does the overseer of the poor trade for the groceries, Bodge?"

"No, the keeper of the poor farm does, and the overseer puts his name on the bills before they go to the selectmen. He says you would do anything to oblige him, as he would do anything to oblige you."

I thought to myself, what does Bean mean? but I said to Bodge, "What do you think about it?"

"Well, Mr. Batkins, I should advise you to do it. Mr. Bean says you can hire my brother and his wife next year to take care of the poor farm; then it will come right all round."

"Bodge, tell Mr. Bean I am much obliged to him for thinking of me; but I do not want any office. I do not want to get mixed up in politics."

"You had better think about it; that's the way Seth Spring began. He was overseer of the poor, and now look at him."

Bodge left me. When he had gone, I opened the "History of Rome." I was reading about Cæsar; and the idea rather took hold on me, and the more I thought of it, the more the idea gained the victory over my objections. I was tempted, that's the fact. Seth Spring had been overseer. And I was to hire Bodge's brother and his wife, and Bean would get the trade, — Bean that had cheated me! I might get back my money, too, by some kind of dicker, if Bean did not financier me again.

It is hardly worth while, at this time, to make extracts from my journal to prove what took place between Mr. Bean and myself, on this subject, before the town-meeting day. It is enough to state here, you understand, that I stood, and was elected; and the stepping-stone to my future career was the office of overseer of the poor of the town of Cranberry Centre.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## DOCTOR SLAWTER.

It will certainly not be expected of me to make the biographies in full of the distinguished inhabitants of Cranberry Centre, who may be at this time living or dead. I shall waive the rule I had made for my government, — as I filled the written pages of my life, — in favor of my old and tried friend, Dr. Adoniram Slawter.

There are a number of people of the town, with whom I have had business relations, and pleasant social pastimes, whose names will not appear in my life, because I have no lack of material to fill the allotted space destined to receive the record of those with whom my personal history is more or less connected, nor do I wish to make a commercial directory of my biography.

In the beginning I recorded my obligations to Dr. Slawter for services rendered, for which he received his fee; and it was not until a later period of my life that I was acquainted with the nature of his skilful exertions in my behalf. In those scenes of my childhood, in which he mingled his doses with my pap, or gruel, I dare say he did justice to me and to his art. I will not pretend to make any estimate as to his agency in my development. The first consultation I remember to have had with him was the day after the husking frolic, in consequence of some new phenomena, which at the time, in my ignorance, I did not attribute to the proper cause. I understand it better now, and I hope my friendly reader does also. My next need of the doctor was in consequence of my collision with Mr. Bean at the house of the sea-captain's wife. From

this time forward, our relations were more intimate, and in their proper place his further services will be noted.

Those who had ever seen the doctor would not mistake him for any other person. I shall not describe his dress. I will merely state that he was always neatly dressed, in a gentlemanly fashion; that he was never married, and that I shall not obtrude in my biography an account of his domestic relations.

I did not see him, to recognize him, at the time of my birth. He was then a young man, had just come into the town to fill the place made vacant by the death of the old Dr. Bloodcase, who had been the terror and delight of two generations in Cranberry Centre, according to the nature of the services required. Dr. Slawter's successful handling of the Batkins' affair, as has been related, gave him a good start; and for a long time he enjoyed a lucrative practice in the town, with occasional rides into the surrounding country in important cases.

During my confinement to my room, on Mr. Bean's account, while making inquiries as to my own case, I obtained many useful ideas, although it was only at a later day that I was enabled to bring them into a state of practical utility.

I have referred to his notion as to the changes going on in the human system. This was proved in my own case. Both my eyes were closed by the swelling from the concussion with Mr. Bean's fist; in short, to be plain, — if I have not been so before, — I had a pair of black eyes; and "if there were not this inherent power of change in the system," — these are the doctor's words, — my eyelids would have remained discolored until now.

Another notion he had about what's in the blood: he said men and women inherited diseases, evil desires, and crazy doings, as much as the shapes of their noses, or the color of their eyes and hair. That a thief naturally produced a thief,



as a peculiar potato-seed produced a peculiar potato, and so on, through the animal and vegetable kingdom. When he talked these things around, the orthodox people said the doctor was ahead of the times, and he did not make these notions go much. The minister preached about it; the old ladies said he was crazy, and the young folks said he did not know anything.

To keep his practice he kept silent. The minister gave out that he recanted his error, and he kept on his way, as usual, until a young doctor, fresh from Germany, arrived in the town, and set up his sign. Dr. Phobeamy, — that was his name. He dressed to suit the ladies, rode about in a yellow-bodied sulky, bowed politely to everybody he met, went to meeting, taught in the Sunday school, and otherwise employed his time in making himself popular.

Dr. Slawter told Mr. Spring that Dr. Phobeamy was an ignoramus, and that he hoped he should have an opportunity to show him up in some professional failure.

The opportunity came. The case was known as the hog case, in which Dr. Phobeamy placed himself at the head of the physicians of the State as a jurisprudent, and scientific demonstrator of osteologic truth.

It will be necessary, at the risk of being somewhat tedious, to give an idea of the case, which raised Dr. Phobeamy to the highest pinnacle of popularity.

Two men, of no very good reputation, dwellers in Gypsy Village, had a quarrel growing out of one of them stealing a hog butchered for the minister, the head of which had been found in the house of Gulpy, who had been convicted of hog-stealing and sentenced to the county jail. After his sentence had expired, upon his return to Cranberry Centre, Gulpy swore vengeance against Milks, who was the owner of the hog, saying he would kill him the first time he met him.

On a certain day after the threat, these two men were seen

fighting together, on a knoll at Skunk's Misery, by some boys, who ran to call the constable. When they returned with Mr. Bodge, both men had disappeared. A knife was found near one of the trees upon the knoll, and a piece of a shirt, known to have been worn by Mr. Gulpy, stained with blood.

The theory of the officers was that one or other of these men had been killed, and the other had escaped; as both were missing; but no clue could be found to this mystery. Rewards were offered, with no tidings from either. After a while it became an old story, and likely to be forgotten.

One day two reports were circulated, that created a great commotion in Cranberry Centre, — one that the bones of the murdered man had been found buried in the earth of Skunk's Misery; the other, that Gulpy had been arrested in the Gypsy Village.

Dr. Phobeamy, in the absence of Dr. Slawter, had examined the remains, and established the fact that the bones were part of a human body. Some were missing, probably decayed, or destroyed in some other way.

An inquest was held; a verdict of murder was found. Gulpy was charged with the deed, and sent to the county jail for trial. Seth Spring was engaged as counsel, and Mr. Andriess, "Mrs. Simms' man," volunteered to assist.

Circumstances were against Gulpy; but the great point seemed to be whether any man was killed, and if the bones were part of his body when he was alive. To demonstrate this, Dr. Phobeamy had arranged the bones upon a board, and substituted drawings of those that were missing, making the skeleton complete and exactly the height sworn to have been that of Milks, as certified to from the records of a prison, in which he had once been an inmate.

The day of trial came. Notwithstanding the eloquence of Seth Spring, and the sagacious handling of witnesses by Squire

Andriss, Gulpy was convicted of murder, and sentenced to be hung.

Dr. Slawter had been absent from Cranberry Centre, and was not consulted, nor did he attend the trial; but, after reading a report of it, and examining the famously constructed skeleton, which had so increased Dr. Phobeamy's reputation, he publicly proclaimed his opinion that there were but few human bones in the collection used at the trial.

Gulpy, by his counsel, had been advised to acknowledge his guilt, plead provocation and extenuating circumstances, in the hope of pardon from the governor. A petition had been prepared and presented for that purpose. When Dr. Slawter's opinion had been published, it caused much talk and many speculations. A committee had been appointed by court, or at the State House, — I cannot state which, as I have no documentary evidence on this point, — to inquire into the statement of Dr. Slawter, with power to send for persons and papers. A day was fixed for the investigation, and celebrated doctors, from the Boston College, were to attend, when an event occurred that startled the public mind of Cranberry Centre, and in fact of the whole Commonwealth.

While his certified bones were undergoing scientific investigation, Milks returned alive to Cranberry Centre. This fact settled the question of science between Doctors Phobeamy and Slawter; as also the question of guilt between the Commonwealth and Jacob Gulpy, who was released from confinement and returned to Skunk's Misery in triumph.

The affair, once so serious, became amusing. First, to explain the affair of the hog: Milks had sold his hog to the minister, who, although a very good man in his way, had an idea that he knew a great deal of human nature, as clergymen generally suppose they do, always making the best investments of

their spare capital, when they have any, which was not the case with our minister, Mr. Dovedrake. He paid Milks for the hog, which was to be carried to the minister's house next morning. Milks had a spite against Gulpy. He cut off the head of the hog, and, after securing for himself the legs and other parts, including all the fat, which he stripped off, he carried the carcass to the old knoll, and buried it, not very deep, in the loose soil; then removed the head to Gulpy's shanty, on the edge of Gypsy Village.

Milks' family did not enjoy the highest repute for strict morality, although he was not suspected of appropriating property in the way he had abstracted the minister's hog. During that night his wife had tried out the fat, and it was safely stored in the cellar. When the morning came the discovery was made that the minister's hog had been stolen, and the tidings sent to the minister. Milks put the officers on the scent, and, as has been related, Gulpy was arrested and punished as the thief.

A subscription was started, and with the money another porker was bought for the minister, faithfully slaughtered, and put in pickle for the minister's use. The hog story, being less than a nine days' wonder, soon ceased to be talked about, until the quarrel between Gulpy and Milks took place.

Both murderer and murdered disappeared for a time. Gulpy had occasionally showed himself at Gypsy Village, in the night time, but was concealed by his comrades until the reward was offered for the apprehension of the murderer. No person took any special pains to look up the case. This was before the modern detective practice had been introduced.

Constable Bodge and my father, both had an eye to the reward. They made a little stir, which only had the effect to cause Gulpy to still closer cover up his tracks, and soon again a temporary oblivion quieted the excitement. After a long lull,

some boys, digging on the hill for some purpose of amusement, discovered the bones.

This part of the hill had long been used as a burial-place for deceased quadrupeds. Gulpy had buried a colt and a calf there the year previous. The human skull was missing as a whole, but Dr. Phobeamy had arranged some fragments that appeared to be parts of one. The theory was, that the part of the missing head was buried elsewhere; the human bones were thought to be a part of some long since buried aboriginal Indian, or other victim of earlier discordant times.

This time Bodge worked more on his own account; and, by some manœuvre, discovered Gulpy's hiding-place, and arrested him. Milks had gone off on some business, in the transaction of which, in a neighboring State, he had contrived to get into prison, from which he was released with some difficulty, as it was said, by "Mrs. Simms' man." He had intended to go farther before his return, but, reading in a newspaper the state of things, and not being bad enough to have an innocent man hung, came at once to Cranberry Centre, and was the means of clearing up the mystery that surrounded this interesting case.

Dr. Slawter was cheerful when he saw his assuming rival suddenly leave the town. Next day a petition was circulated, to be presented to the next General Court, for the abolition of capital punishment. This was not accomplished; but some change was made, so as to give a criminal a chance, while he lived, of proving his innocence, even if he had himself, to avoid hanging, plead guilty.

Now, some people may deny this case, or say it did not occur in Cranberry Centre. All I have to say is, it did occur, though I may err in some particulars, where I have trusted to my memory alone; but as I have not stated exactly where Cranberry Centre was located at that time, and it may not be found in the list of towns in the register of to-day, no person

who has not been there, has any no right to doubt its history, of which this hog case is a part.

I have concluded to reserve further mention of the parts that make the whole of Dr. Slawter's character. He will be appreciated by my friends who read his record here, and who have never had the pleasure of his acquaintance; and those who have been in a situation to require his professional services will recognize him as he now stands before them in the portrait my pen has executed. Although generally grave in his manner, he was not without humor when stimulated thereto by any suggestive remark. I do not propose to reproduce his anecdotal reputation, but shall let his future actions and proclivities establish his claim to that not too frequent combination, — a genial, sensible gentleman, and wise and prudent physician.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## ARAM ANDRISS.

THE person whose name heads this chapter, as I have before stated, was known as "Mrs. Simms' man." We had a habit of thus speaking of people, instead of calling them by their proper names, as we say the doctor, the minister, and as in my own case afterwards — I will not anticipate, but confine my attention to Aram Andriess, Esq., as his doings and influence affected the people of Cranberry Centre.

Every town has its distinctive peculiarity, the more ancient in origin the more interesting the eccentricities of some of the so-called oldest inhabitants.

To thoroughly understand why Aram Andriess was called "Mrs. Simms' man," in my younger days, it will be necessary to unfold some of the secrets of family matters connected with the place known as Simms' Folly, my first visit to which I have described, — the reader will remember, for divers reasons, an important visit to me. I have purposely refrained from any allusion to the original occupant of Simms' Folly until this time of my life, when the true character of Aram Andriess was in part discovered. It was not until a later period, you understand, that all the truth became known of his evil ways.

In my description of Simms' Folly, I did not particularize the style of architecture, which Mr. Spring told me afterwards was Venetian, nor did I give any account of the history of the builder, — a foreign gentleman, who it was said made a great fortune at the time of the French Revolution. His name was

Simms. I have stated that he was a wealthy man, and it was then said his fortune came in some way "over the devil's back," either by privateering, piracy, or the slave-trade, — all lucrative in those days. The grandchildren of some of these old buccaneers are now enjoying the proceeds, as among the first people, socially, in the land. But I have learned since, that his financial success was due to a different style of traffic. It consisted in importing from France gold and silver plate, which had been stolen from the churches, and palaces of the noblemen who had run away, or whose heads had fallen "into the basket of the guillotine," to perpetuate liberty in France.

With a part of the proceeds he erected the house for a long time spoken of as Simms' Folly, upon land owned by a merchant, whose daughter he married. No one knew why he selected Cranberry Centre for his future residence. It was said the cellars were full of money. I do not know that any was ever found there.

After a grand time, on the occasion of his marriage, which I had often heard talked about in my boyish days, he went back to France, to complete his financiering, leaving his business to the care of a young lawyer just settled in Cranberry Centre. Nobody knew him; but a story soon circulated among the women-folks, that he was on easy terms with Mrs. Simms, who, as the gossips had it, was forced to marry by her father against her inclination. When Simms went back to France, he was betrayed by his confederates there, arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. His being an American saved him from the guillotine, and I may as well state, he remained in prison until he died.

Aram Andriess, it was given out, had married Mrs. Simms, who, after a while, put off her mourning, and assumed the duties of her new situation with apparent satisfaction, it having been stated that Simms was dead. Some people said they were not married. He was acknowledged as the master of the

house; but was spoken of, as I have related, usually in conversation, as "Mrs. Simms' man." Some people said Simms was alive, and Mrs. Simms knew it. The marriageable spinsters agreed that it was "a scandalous shame," particularly those who had endeavored, by assiduous attentions, to gain the young lawyer's regard.

Ugly stories were in circulation as to the doings in Simms' Folly. I did not so well understand their meaning then. I shall not repeat them, as the old maids' gossip of a past generation would lose its spice in comparison with the versions of similar transactions now so freely promulgated in the newspapers of our day.

I will also state that Mr. Andriss, though reserved and distant to most people, was always on good terms with my father up to the last day of his residence in Cranberry Centre. What the "indignation meeting" policy had to do with this, I am unable to decide. I have referred to an old saying about "money got over the devil's back." I will add that the proverb is continued by an allusion to the way in which such money is spent, and have also noted my opinion that there were exceptions. I suppose everybody has heard of the proverb, or saying; it was one Aunt Dolly used often to repeat. Aram Andriss' method, it appears, followed the rule.

In my first notice of this gentleman, I remarked upon the soft tones of his voice, and his winning ways; these he preserved. They were improved upon by his friend and disciple, Bean, who, whatever their business relations, were socially inseparables.

Mr. Andriss made frequent and protracted visits to Canada and to Maine, for facilitating, as was said, his operations in the lumber trade.

In his absence Mr. Bean conducted his business affairs. Andriss had so managed as to control the bank. Seth Spring

and Mr. Feathergilt had resigned their offices. Aram Andriss was made president.

The great political tornado made changes in Cranberry Centre. The hard-cider and log-cabin campaign, however, did not have the effect to deprive me of my reason, and I kept out of politics. Mr. Andriss was much engaged, and won great reputation as a stump speaker, being thought to have quite a resemblance in his style to the celebrated statesman of that time, Henry Clay.

Cranberry Centre had, since my remembrance of it, periodical outbreaks of unexpected events, sometimes retarding and sometimes advancing its growth and prosperity, or otherwise forcing into notoriety a portion of its inhabitants. I shall not recapitulate, but refer back, if my reader's memory is deficient, to such of these invasions into the quiet of rural life as occurred in my time.

During a supposed temporary, though somewhat prolonged, absence of Mr. Andriss, Mr. Reedy's appearance in Cranberry Centre was the subject of comment. It was not long before the object of his visit was disclosed.

An extensive combination of coiners and counterfeiters had been discovered, with agencies in all the States of New England. The chief of this organized band of financiers was Aram Andriss; their head-quarters the magnificent structure known as Simms' Folly, in the comparatively humble town of Cranberry Centre. Some persons, who before had been considered upright citizens, were more or less implicated. A few of the poorer sort, after a while, found their future welfare a matter of public consideration, and were sent to the State prison. Some absconded. Aram Andriss was of this class, and was never again seen in Cranberry Centre.

Mr. Bean was suspected of some connection with Andriss' swindling operations, but somehow, as he termed it, came out right, and was first among the rising men in the town.

Perhaps I need not add that Mr. Reedy was a detective of the old school, who caught his rogues, and generally brought them to grief.

Following this exposure of the resident of Simms' Folly, came the failure of the Producers', Farmers', Traders', Manufacturers', and Mechanics' Bank, which had been managed by Andriss, in accordance with the needs of his other financing operations. This failure was a severe blow to some of the stockholders. Many of the original subscribers had disposed of their stock to Andriss; among these, were Seth Spring, Mr. Feathergilt, and Mr. Bean. I never had any stock. My father traded off his for a fast-trotting horse. Aunt Dolly and Seth Spring's house-keeper followed the example of their employers, and were not harmed. Mr. Dovedrake, the minister, kept his shares. Andriss, somehow or other, had obtained so much influence over him that no advice of his friends could induce him to disturb what he called his permanent investment.

I should state here, in explanation, that Andriss had been liberal to the church, in the way of subscription for tracts and missionary enterprises; in fact, he was said to have run the church, for a time, on his improved financial principles. The minister bore his loss with the same equanimity he displayed at the first meeting at the Folly, to get up this bank; — where, the reader will remember, he suffered a fracture in his trousers. Mr. Dovedrake seemed to be of that kind of persons who, whenever they leave the business they have learned for any speculation, always tear their trousers, — to use a rhetorical figure.

Thus passed away this great financial luminary. I have no further comments to make at this time, upon the career of Aram Andriss, or "Mrs. Simms' man," whose name is no more heard in the financial circles of Cranberry Centre; but who, for a time, was a power. So passeth away all the glories of this world!

## CHAPTER XX.

### HOW THINGS WORKED.

I STATED that the great political uprising, which had been so successful for one party and so disastrous to another, did not deprive me of my reason; neither did it engulf me in the whirlpool that ruined so many. I kept out of politics, and there is not a man to this day who can tell how I voted. There have been surmises and guesses on both sides. Judging by my expressed opinions, my readers may have an idea which way I inclined, or leaned, as a matter of judgment. But sometimes a man's judgment is one thing, and the way he votes is another.

If I have never stated it before, I will state it now, — I have never been a strong party man. I was always independent in this regard, and if it should appear as if I had changed my opinions on men and measures, no one can accuse me of going from one party to another, for any purpose whatever. Now I did not join either side in the hard-cider campaign; I must leave my readers to discover the reason why I did not. I was overseer of the poor. I had under my care paupers of both parties, and on principle refrained from expressing my preferences. One or the other of the great parties was to be defeated. I had an idea which; it could just as well be defeated without my vote as with it.

I had no notion of speech-making; but my mind was occupied with the chances in my favor for being one of the selectmen. When I was made overseer of the poor, I had no thought of advancement; but being in that office gave me a sort of

hankering for another. I cannot account for it. I was not inspired by any desire to make money. I was bashful in my manner. I knew very little of the wickedness of public life, or the real vanities of the world. I never could tell why I was inoculated with the truly American idea that one man is just as good for an office as any other, if he can get the votes; and can learn the duties of the place after he gets it. When anything of the kind was hinted to me, I always said I was unfit; and I really believed I was. I refused, and kept quiet. My reader will understand where I got the idea from, to refuse properly the thing you want, when you know you can have it; if he does not, it will be explained hereafter. About this time I had made up my mind, whenever the chance came, to have the man ready.

I will simply state here that the country had been engaged in war since the log-cabin success, by an administration of another kind. Generals, colonels, and corporals rose from the ranks, and other obscurer and less reputable places; but the war was not popular in Cranberry Centre, and few of its inhabitants rose to any distinguished military positions. It was different in the State of New Hampshire; but I forbear. I am not writing the history of New Hampshire, or the United States.

The free-soil agitation was just now disturbing the old war-horses, as they were called, of both great parties. The prohibitory-law organizers were trying their tactics, and exciting discussions upon these so-called live questions were not uncommon. Things were getting just enough mixed to give men a chance to leave their party if they could do better in another without sacrificing their principles. Some did it.

I have made no attempt at fixing exact dates hitherto; in future I may be more precise, as I approach that period when I launched my bark upon the tempestuous seas of public life. I still adhere to the idea of concealing my actual years of ex-

istence; that is, I mean, their number. I will only state, I thought I had arrived at an age when, if ever, I might fulfil in part my public and private destiny.

I will state that I am now about to fix a date, but for which the life of Batkins might never have been written. It is the memorable year 1851. The previous changes were many in Cranberry Centre. I shall but refer to a few topics of public and private interest, and then pursue my task as chronicler of my public mission.

As time moved on, people were married, children were born, as usual some died; but on the whole the town increased the number of its inhabitants, and houses were nearer to each other in some localities than when I first described its boundaries and extent, and its later progress.

Simms' Folly was sold at vendue, with all its old French and Dutch furniture. Mr. Feathergilt bought the estate, and some of the pictures, handsome chairs, tables, and gorgeous furniture.

In looking over my almanacs, I find that the sun of my political life was rising, as it was setting with some of my neighbors of Cranberry Centre. I was getting to be pretty well known. As to my private affairs, during this time, I shall not enlarge. I still paid taxes on my lots in the new city; Aunt Dolly presided at the homestead; my father held his own. Among the ladies a frequent subject of discussion was, "When will Mr. Batkins marry, and who will be the lady of his choice?" I had some offers, I confess, but at present I shall name no parties.

I had made some slight acquaintance with ladies of cultivated tastes, as well as the wives and daughters of farmers, mechanics, and shoemakers; this partly on account of my position as overseer of the poor, and partly for other reasons, which it is not necessary to specify. I had not yet become familiar with the ways of the women-folks. I had an idea



that there was a stylish class of young men, just then being introduced, that could better comprehend their winning ways than I was able to do.

I had no music in me; the idea had begun further to develop that the American people were a musical people. Music teachers found their way to Cranberry Centre. I noticed that cumbersome invention, the piano-forte, was fast displacing the wash-tub, the churn, and the cheese-press, in the houses of Cranberry Centre. I noticed that people of limited means would do some things, to keep up appearances, that were neither in accordance with the ten commandments, or the laws of the Commonwealth; and — I will not particularize — though some of these foolish people are dead, their relatives still live, and pursue the same or similar mysterious ways.\*

\*I will state here, that if I had carried out my own views, I should have made further, and as I think, interesting extracts from my files of the "Farmers' Almanac," and other records, in relation to these matters of music and morals; but the person who is assisting me in my autobiography advises me to pass over this part of my history, and also not to anticipate the future too much. Reluctantly I follow his advice, and that must account for the brevity of this chapter. — J. S. E.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MY NAME.

IN the beginning I stated that I should not make any parade of my ancestry, and I did not even name my paternal grandfather. I have since learned that he had a sort of hereditary notion of politics, and my naming was influenced by it; indeed, my father admitted it. This giving to children the names of great men is not without some disadvantages. The little time I had to spare to the reading of the "History of Rome" gave me the information as to where some of these names came from. I had also observed that these classic names were given in equal proportions to dogs, horses, and negroes. Caesar, Pompey, Cassius, are familiar examples of this distribution of names.

A generation or so changes the style. In the days of my boyhood the favorite names were of our heroes and statesmen. George Washingtons, James Madisons, and Thomas Jeffersons, and, a while after, Andrew Jacksons, were plenty among the rising stock of American citizens. These names are not often given to dogs, though, at a later period, some horses were thus designated as well as ships, and locomotive engines. I have not yet heard of my name out of the family. I dare say in the future it will be thus honored.

My grandfather's name was Jethro Smith Atkins; Smith after the minister who had married his progenitor to the damsel of his choice. Smith had been an unsuccessful suitor to the lady, whose name in the maiden state I am unable to give. Family tradition has it, the question was decided by the lady's

having more affection for mammon and lucre, than for piety and poverty, — the property of the young clergyman, who exemplified the teachings of the golden rule, by exacting from the bride to be, the promise to love, honor, and obey Jethro Batkins, instead of Smith himself.

When my father appeared, it was decided to drop the name of Smith, as that, too, had become a somewhat overused expression as a distinctive mark or feature of departed greatness or living reputation. There had never been any intimation that anything derogative to the Smith family had occurred, either from the neighborly visits of the minister to the homestead of the Batkins family, or in any other form. Plain Jethro Batkins was the style of my father's address.

When I came, my father decided that one Jethro Batkins in a family was enough. In a patriotic moment he decided that I should bear the name of his favorite American politician and ex-president, Jefferson; so, but for the interference of my mother, as I understood from Aunt Dolly, my name would have been Thomas Jefferson Batkins. She said my grandfather ought to be represented by name in the third generation, and insisted upon Smith being added to the Tom Jefferson, which then would have been Thomas Jefferson Smith Batkins. I do not know if the Smiths and Withaspoons were connected either by blood or marriage, but the dispute over the name of the first and only pledge of mutual love, or some other domestic virtue, was settled by a compromise, — my father consenting to omit the Thomas and insert the Smith.

I will correct here the wrong impression of the interpolation of my intermediate name. Though I always wrote my name J. S. Batkins, I did not fancy the Smith. I do not know that I was ever asked any explanation as to the meaning of the letter S., but when I begun to get into politics, I was called familiarly by some people Jeff Batkins, as they used to say Tom

Jefferson, and Bob Winthrop, — one of my contemporaries, and at present, I believe, alive and well; at least, I hope so.

My grandfather was often put up in a caucus for something, but had not any desire to hold any office of responsibility, and I do not think the majority of his fellow-townsmen had any disposition to interfere with his comfort by forcing him to serve the town or State against his will; still he rather liked to have himself talked about as a candidate, and there were a few — his hired men and other discontented partisans — who would vote for him. In the returns, after election, a vote or two would be counted for J. S. Batkins, and recorded as "scattering;" until, by general consent, he was called "Old Scattering," which he received as a pleasantry, and at last Scattering was established, and Smith forgotten.

On one election, before I had any knowledge of the matter, I also received one vote for some inconsiderable office, and was marked as "scattering." Then was revived the story of my grandfather's case, by some old joker of the place, and then and there was transferred to me the euphonious name of Scattering, which, until this time, I never disputed, but deem it to be my duty to do so now. I do not fancy the name of Smith; still it is mine, and may be preferable to Scattering, which is not mine, only in a political sense. Names will stick. Jefferson S. Batkins is mine, — and I always answer to it when it is called out so I can hear it.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE CAMPAIGN. — MY ELECTION.

It will be remembered that I have recorded a resolution that I made when I escaped from the trap set for me in the grocery store, by my confidential clerk and partner, Mr. Bean, to the effect that I hoped I should never get into politics. I thought, also, and partly resolved, that I would not marry until after I had counted more than forty years of life. I now confess I had the desire to do both, namely: to hold an office of honor and emolument, and marry a woman proper for my habits and condition. In fact, I was haunted by day by the ghosts of politics and politicians; by night I was rendered sleepless by the phantom of marriage.

The time was coming for me as to the office. The people were in an unsettled state; the "political caldron was seething," as was printed in the "County Gazette;" the politician element of the Batkins' blood was developing, proving again Dr. Slawter's molecular theory. As to the marriage, I was but imperfectly impressed with that idea, — a negative quality, it will be remembered in my father's line. An office was a natural necessity in my case; for matrimonial operations I could afford to wait. Briefly stated, this was about the condition of my mind when the campaign of 1851 had commenced in Cranberry Centre.

It was said, a political whirlwind was about to sweep the land, and Cranberry Centre could not be neutral in the crisis. Its citizens were alive to the threatenings. Great powers were arraying to attack two great evils, slavery and intem-

perance. Agitation had produced wonderful effects. I had opinions, but I did not promulgate them. Parties made divisions on these questions. I remained at home on my farm, reading the newspapers, my favorite "Robinson Crusoe," "Pilgrim's Progress," and the "Life of Franklin." I was like the Roman general, who was a warrior in war, and a farmer in peace, only with this difference, — I had no experience in war. I was attached to this old warrior by some poetry verses, that run thus: —

"Great Cincinnatus at his plough,  
With greater lustre shone,  
Than guilty Cæsar e'er could show,  
Though seated on his throne."

When I first read this poetry I had never heard of Cincinnatus, but I had heard of Cæsar. We had a dog named Cæsar, and there was an old negro in the town, who came from Virginia, when I was a youngster; I knew him well.

Two of my neighbors were rivals for a seat in the State House that I had the honor to occupy, under the following circumstances. Each of them, with their friends, had struggled for the nomination. To succeed it was necessary for one or the other to have the support of a part of the neutral party. Neither of these gentlemen would pledge themselves to such action, if elected, as would satisfy this neutral party; but to retain their own party votes, their party pledge must be stiffened beyond peradventure. Upon being waited upon, to know to which party I should give my influence, instinctively I avoided either of the two great contending powers. It was given out that a man was wanted, who did not seek office; that to obtain the right man, the office should seek him. I happening to agree to this doctrine, not having been embarrassed by any attempts of this kind, while the other gentlemen had notoriously been working for some office all their lives,

when it was asked around, "Where is such a man? Who is he?" the response was, "Batkins." The time had come; the man was ready; and, "like Cincinnatus at his plough," I was waited upon by a committee, and, though it was with reluctance at first, I declined; for I confess, when the honor stared me in the face, I did not believe that I was qualified; but upon being urged, after the Cæsar fashion, — I don't mean the dog, nor the negro, but the emperor, — I accepted the nomination.

Now, my honest reader, whether politician or not, I appeal to you thus far if I had any hand in this nomination. I fearlessly await your answer, in any form, and proceed to give an account of my election.

I said that old parties, at least in Cranberry Centre, were at this time undergoing the process of breaking up. I was the candidate of the Honest Men's and Independent Party, of which Mr. Bean was a moving power. I held one office in the "gift of the people," — overseer of the poor. I did think that Mr. Bean was rather a tricky, plotting citizen, and I had suffered from his manœuvres; but I had no right to prevent him from assisting the party that nominated me, or to refuse his voting for me, on private grounds, when the public good was at hazard. I have this to state in his favor, at this time. After, in my capacity of overseer of the poor, I obtained for him the supplying the poor-farm with groceries and dry goods, the inmates never complained of bad tea or coffee, molasses or flannel; but, on the contrary, some of our paupers, who had been used to good things in better days, agreed that their victuals and raiment were equal to their remembrances of happier times.

It appeared he never took any advantage of the poor. The selectmen sometimes found fault with Bean's bills. His reply was generally to this effect: "No man can be one of the selectmen longer than one year unless he is liberal to the poor with the town's money."

I did not then understand how well men who had been in office liked to keep it. I have had my experience since, as my reader will discover.

Bean's threat usually silenced opposition to his bills of groceries and dry goods. Human nature does get mixed up in strange compounds. Bean was a pattern not easy to match.

As to my election, I did not think my giving the master of the poor farm's office to Bodge's wife's brother, and the matron's to his wife, at Bean's suggestion, injured my prospects among the friends of these well-provided-for individuals. I rather think, on reflection, my seven years' change of molecules, as Dr. Slawter named the atoms, had removed some of my vealy ideas. One of our girls had, not long before, said, "For a critter as old as I was, there was a considerable quantity of calf in me yet; and she guessed it was not on my mother's side." I did not own up at that time; but when I call to mind the nature of her previous conversation, I am not sure that the female, from her stand-point, was not about half right.

I began to see that it would not do to follow a too rigid mode of intercourse with your fellow-citizens. I have arrived at the conclusion that to go through a crowd easy, you must not let your elbows stick out too much. I was nominated, and after the nomination I walked more than usual down among the shoemakers. I said nothing that should make it appear as if I had any interest in the election. If anybody questioned me I expressed great doubts as to my success. My father said he thought I should win. Aunt Dolly was afraid I should.

One trouble gained upon me, — I should have to make a speech. I tried to do so when the committee waited upon me. I sat up all night to write one. I could not find the right almanac in which I had put down Mr. Spring's speech at the bank-meeting. I could not get beyond "Mr. Chairman, I am not accustomed;" so when the committee came, I said, "I

can make no speech, Mr. Chairman, but I accept the nomination. I hope, as I am nominated, I shall be elected; if I am elected, I shall go to Boston, and the interests of Cranberry Centre shall not suffer at my hands."

The committee said that was a good speech; that it would require a little money to grease the wheels. I understood that, and agreed to pay, after the election, what they thought should be my share. I do not know how other candidates feel before the election any more than I do how some people feel in the prospect of being married. I know I could not sleep nights. I watched the "County Gazette," with the expectation of having some question asked of me that I could not answer. I was dreaming all the time of counting votes. Though I pretended to be unconcerned, I was constantly in a twitter.

The great day of election came at last, and I went with my fellow-citizens to cast that great weapon of freedom, the ballot. Bean was at the meeting-house, distributing votes. He approached me with great politeness, took off his hat, as he handed me what he called the Independent Ticket, saying to the crowd hanging about, "Three cheers for Batkins, the future representative of Cranberry Centre!" I took off my hat, bowing, as I moved along to the ballot-box. I deposited the freeman's weapon. I do not know whose name headed the ticket for governor. It was Bean's ticket, and whether I voted for my then aspiring friend, Mr. Boutwell, or the candidate of the Whigs, I am to this day ignorant. I suppose I must have voted for myself, as it was Mr. Bean's interest to have me elected, and it is not supposable that he would give me a ticket upon which my name had not been printed. As I was elected by a majority of one vote, I never asked the question, but at this late day, after my acquaintance with political management, I am not ashamed to publish the truth, let it cut where it may.

That evening the returns were brought to the homestead,

and the interesting part, to me, I subjoin, as part of the documentary evidence belonging to my political life: —

"FOR REPRESENTATIVE.

Seth Spring	29
Peter Drystone	50
Jefferson S. Batkins	81
	<hr/> 160"

I was elected representative for Cranberry Centre, by a majority of one vote. If I did vote for myself, I was only enjoying my right as a freeman. It is a question unsettled to this day whose vote elected me, J. S. Batkins.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE SCHOOL-MASTER.

IN due time I received from the town-clerk the certificate of my election as representative. I had been anxious until that event. When I was congratulated upon my success, it appeared to me as a doubtful thing. I was fearful that my seat would be contested.

Mr. David Drystone, a painter, one of my defeated competitors, asserted that a man was taken to the polls from the poor-farm, to vote on the name of his brother, who, it afterwards appeared, was in Boston jail on the day of the election.

As I was overseer of the poor, this trick was charged upon me. Bean advised me to be silent, to appear to be indignant, and scorn to reply. I told him that was just how I did feel about it, and asked Bean if he supposed I would do such a thing.

Bean said he did not know; that politics "made us acquainted with strange bedfellows;" that Drystone was a hard customer, but he thought he could manage him. I told him he might do it, if he thought best. The voting list showed no mark against the name of Solomon Pinkeside, the party in question. Bean thought there had been, and that a knife or india rubber had been used.

Drystone, when appealed to by Bean, said, "Nobody could fool him; the ballot-box had been tampered with, and the check-list manipulated," — these are his words, you understand, not mine. Bean listened to him, making no reply. Drystone continued, in a self-assured way: —

"It is between the overseer of the poor, the master of the poor-farm, and somebody else that I need not travel a great distance to put my hand upon."

Bean ran his fingers through his hair, evidently suppressing his indignation. Looking the painter in the face, he said: —

"Drystone; if you mean to insinuate that Mr. Batkins, representative elect, had anything to do with the matter, you wrong him; he is incapable of such a thing. If you mean me, as the person represented in your assertion as 'somebody else,' say it, and I will prosecute you," — this was spoken in an elevated tone of voice, — "according to law."

Walking up to him quietly, he said, "Drystone, if you say this thing again, I will give you such a cowhiding as no horse in Cranberry Centre ever had, and then complain of myself for assault, and pay the fine."

This threat frightened Drystone more than the threat of the prosecution. Bean also added: "The poor-farm house, the meeting-house, and Mr. Batkins' barn, are all to be painted in the spring, and after attempting to contest Mr. Batkins' seat in the Legislature, what chance would you have for either of these jobs?"

This time I thought Bean hit the mark, for Drystone replied, a little nervously, I thought, "Well, Mr. Bean, if you say it is all right, I suppose it is. I have nothing against Mr. Batkins, only I don't want to see anything done to destroy the purity of elections."

Bean said he agreed with him. No more was said about contesting the seat of the successful candidate of the "Honest Men's and Independent Party" ticket. Drystone's scruples had vanished, and we all walked from the office of the town clerk together, our conversation taking a business turn until we separated, and each went on his way home.

I began more and more to feel the responsibility of the new situation. I was to succeed that old and tried parliamentarian

and faithful public servant of the town, as he was called on the stump, Hon. Seth Spring, who had represented the district in the Senate, and who, for the good of the State in general, and Cranberry Centre in particular, was willing to go again to the "House."

I submit to my readers an extract from an article in the "County Gazette," published previous to the election:—

"Mr. Spring is a strong man, who, although he has represented a senatorial district with honor to himself, at a time when men of large experience are wanted in the councils of the State, he is not unwilling to go back to the popular branch of the Legislature, where years ago he won his spurs in that grand debate in which many of Boston's ablest men participated, but in which the victory was with the defender of the rural districts.

"Who are his opponents? David Drystone, a political hack, on what is called the Democratic ticket, and upon the 'piebald,' so-called 'Honest Men's and Independent ticket,' Jefferson S. Batkins,—a man no doubt of good intentions, who, whatever he may prove himself to be hereafter, has not that political experience and parliamentary grasp that will enable him to meet the old war-horses of Boston, always opposed to the rural districts, and who look down with contempt upon constituencies like ours of Cranberry Centre."

I read this extract often. I could not understand how the Hon. Seth Spring could win his spurs in a debate, not knowing that that was the phrase for winning a race of words in the State House. I understood somewhat how medals and purses of money were won at ploughing-matches and horse-races, and winning spurs might come in there; but from what I had heard my father say, things were not always square at cattle-shows, and other trials of speed. He used to say it was not always sure that the best teams would get the prizes.

I had had some talk with Mr. Birch, the school-master, about

such matters, and I asked him about this "winning spurs." Mr. Birch said it was a figure of speech, a rhetorical decoration, as was the phrase "war-horses of Boston," applied to gentlemen veterans in politics.

I told the school-master then, you understand, that I supposed I was right in saying Seth Spring would wear these spurs, if he ever got another chance to ride these war-horses of Boston. Mr. Birch smiled. He said I had used a rhetorical figure, too; and if my metaphor was as happy in debate, the mantle of my predecessor might fall on me, and he had no doubt I should wear it gracefully.

I asked him if Seth Spring wore a mantle in the State House. Mr. Birch said no; that was a figure of rhetoric also.

This explanation did not relieve me of my qualms, as, without assistance, I could not tell the difference between the rhetorical decorations and the pith of the speeches. I asked his advice; what I had better do in the way of preparations, as it would certainly be expected of me that I should make at least one speech that would be a credit to the town, as well as to myself. He said, in his judgment, a man that had nothing to say had better hold his tongue. I told him there was less than sixty days before the General Court met, and I must learn as much as I could in that time; but as I could not learn everything in sixty days, I wished he would give me an idea what I had better take hold of first, and I would pay him well for his trouble out of my pay for services at the State House. He said a legislator ought to know something of ancient history, as well as modern, and have some idea of contemporaneous legislation of other countries; he ought to understand the general principles of national, State, and municipal law; the different theories of finance, as well as the practice of the ablest European financiers; he ought to be well read in the geography and history of the world,—with these appliances, acquired tact, and a full share of common sense, a



man would be qualified to make statutes, to govern his fellow-citizens and protect their rights; but if he aspired to a leading position, he should besides understand logic, rhetoric, the languages, living and dead, civil and criminal codes, be conversant with current literature and the dramatic art, and with these, aided by a cultivated elocution, he might impress those less gifted with his fascinating eloquence and effective massing of facts.

I was astounded. I asked him how many members had all these gifts of nature. The school-master replied that they were "not all gifts of nature; some of these requisites are the result of study in sciences and arts. I should say in answer, Mr. Batkins, if I were to judge by their actions in the General Court, hardly a majority would come up to the proper standard."

I ventured to ask if the Hon. Seth Spring had these. He said he had many of them. He was a fine scholar, and a very good speaker in debate.

"Well," said I, "I cannot learn all these in sixty days, Sundays and all; what do you recommend me to do?"

He asked me how extensive a library I had. I told him "Robinson Crusoe," all the Farmers' Almanacs from 1809, "Charlotte Temple," "Eliza Wharton," "The Columbian Reader," a book of National Songs, "Mother Goose's Melodies," "New England Primer," the Bible, and "Jefferson's Manual," that I borrowed of the town clerk; the "History of Rome" in eight volumes, with all my accounts while I kept store, and a "Daboll's Arithmetic" I used at school.

I thought the school-master was laughing at the list; but he appeared to be serious. He said they were very good works, all of them; but he thought the Constitution of the United States and of the State might be added with advantage. The "History of Rome" would do; but "a little idea of English Grammar and a little reading of parliamentary debates might prepare the way for such other useful studies as your time, Mr. Batkins, will permit."

"It is a hard job I've got, Mr. Birch."

The school-master thought I had better not attempt too much at once, and commit to time the rest.

I asked Mr. Birch if he could write a speech for me, so that I could learn it and read it, if I could not do any better. Mr. Birch said that might be done; upon what subject would I choose to speak?

I told him I supposed I should be expected to speak on the temperance question; country members, I was told, made that their hobby; but I wanted a speech so fixed that I could put any subject in the middle of it, and have both ends do to hitch on to anything else.

Birch thought that was a grand idea, and said if I would select the style of the "exordium and peroration," he would revolve the matter over in his mind. "Perhaps, Mr. Batkins, the better way would be for you to write a speech in your way, and let me make such emendations as might be found necessary, and still preserve the peculiarity of manner you might desire to establish."

I told Birch I would try it; but, you understand, it was not to be so altered that folks would say I did not compose it, and so I told Birch afterwards. I thought I would ask Birch about some of the great orators that I had heard spoken of; so I began on that one that I read about in the "History of Rome," that pitched into Cat-a-li-ne-so. I asked him if his name was Cicero. I was always afraid to speak these names, and it appeared on this occasion I was wrong. Mr. Birch said the great conspirator's name was Catiline, composed of three syllables; and in Cicero, the consonant C was spoken soft, as if S. I was dismayed. I remembered the C in carrots was not soft, so I supposed it must be the same with Cicero. Mr. Birch said no. There were rules that governed the sounds of consonants, and he would instruct me in their application. I said "All right," and asked Mr. Birch if Cicero was the greatest orator in the world in those days.

"Among the Romans he was held to be, as was Demosthenes among the Greeks; both are highly esteemed by modern nations, as models in their different styles. Cicero was born an orator."

"Oh, he was!" I said. "He could not help it, then. I suppose the Greek gentleman was a self-made orator, Mr. Birch?"

"He was self-taught, Mr. Batkins; he had great difficulties to overcome. He had an impediment in his speech, yet he lived, in the popular language of the day, to make Philip tremble on his throne, by his fierce eloquence and patriotic, but terrible, invective power."

"Made Phillips tremble?" I said. "Who was Phillips?"

"Philip was king of Macedonia."

"And the Greek gentleman, with the impediment in his speech, was on the stump against him?"

"Not precisely so. You must read the speeches of Demosthenes."

As it appeared to me that I was more like Demosthenes than Cicero, I said I would. I was somewhat interested about the impediment in his speech. I asked Mr. Birch if he stuttered.

Mr. Birch said, "No, he did not stutter, exactly as we understand it; but by great perseverance, in constant and unremitting exercise and exertion, he overcame his physical difficulties, and became famous as an orator."

I told Birch I thought his case was encouraging to new members. I did not know as I ever should make Phillips tremble; but I should like to know how he did it.

"It is said he went to the sea-shore, and, filling his mouth with pebbles, declaimed to the sea."

"I think, Mr. Birch, you understand, I am more likely to be like Demosthenes than Cicero. I can put stones in my mouth and go down to the river, at night, and try my hand at the 'fierce eloquence.'"

"Well, Mr. Batkins, I shall be glad to assist you; begin your speech first, and I will think of what is best to do next."

I promised him I would do so. I asked him if he would not like to take part of his pay in potatoes, a barrel of cider, or something of that sort, and after I got my wages from the State House I would pay him the balance for his lessons in cash. He said he should be happy to accommodate me, and wished me good-evening.

When he had gone I looked at myself in the glass, and I wished I had what was in his head. I would have given a large part of my body for some of his brains. Now, you understand, reader, that then I had to ask him how to spell some of the words I have written down, and what they meant.

But I do not desire to fill up this page with too many repetitions of my ignorance. It was I that was chosen to the General Court, not he; and that shows the beautiful harmony of republican institutions and governments in which it is not the learned and competent only that can aspire and be nominated to office, but, thanks to the purity of the ballot-box, that armory of the weapons of freemen, the most ignorant are as eligible as the most learned, with a good deal better chance of being elected.

I took out my certificate of election from the envelope in which it was kept since I received it from the town-clerk, that made me sure that I was duly elected by the majority of intelligent voters, and I immediately set about preparing myself for my duties.

I commenced writing a speech. I began it, "Mr. President," "Mr. Moderator," "Mr. Chairman." I was not sure which was right; but, looking over the book of the last session, I found the head man in the House was to be addressed as "Mr. Speaker." So I scratched out all the rest, and wrote in large hand, "Mister Speaker, — sir, — gentlemen: — I — I rise to speak, and when I speak I expect — I hope — I mean to —"

say something." I turned to the "History of Rome," to Cicero; but as I could not find anything he said that would suit the temperance question, I gave it up. I turned to my old friend, "Robinson Crusoe;" there was no help there. I opened "Charlotte Temple" and "Eliza Wharton," the primer, the arithmetic, and the Bible; in the Bible I found some good things about temptation, and about the use of good wine, and to be careful not to put new wine into old bottles; but neither of these would do to begin with. I looked over the Almanacs, — nothing there; The National Songs, — nothing that would do to begin with. "Mother Goose" was consulted, all in vain. At last I hit upon the "Columbian Reader." There I found a beginning of a Cicero speech. It began, "Conscript Fathers," and I soon discovered that that speech was delivered in the Senate, and would not do in the House, where I was to begin "Mr. Speaker." I was in despair as to writing, and got up from the table, and tried to imagine myself in the State House, and that somebody had said something that I did not believe. I started again, with some of the school-master's rhetoric. Says I, "Mr. Speaker: If the gentleman has won his spurs in this debate, and with these spurs intends to ride over us war-horses from the country, sir, — the rural districts, — without saddle or bridle, Mr. Speaker, then I say to him that we of the rural districts have seen the spurs taken from many a rooster, who goes pillaging round the barn-yard, without in any way contributing to the prosperity of the farmer or to the public good." I wrote this down as quickly as I could, and I here preserve it, in the original handwriting or a similarity of it, just as I wrote it then.

Aunt Dolly was vexed when she heard of my election. Said she, "Jefferson, you was a good boy, and in the absence of your father's wife," — that's what she always called my mother, you understand, — "I have done my best for you; and to think you should get into politics, and have to go to

that dreadful Boston to live for three months, among all the wickedness and temptations of that abominable place."

I tried to persuade Aunt Dolly that I did not believe there was any more wickedness in Boston than in Cranberry Centre. Says I, "You understand, Aunt Dolly, where there are more people there is more wickedness. Dr. Slawter says, these talks about cities are not to be taken except 'cum grano salis.' You understand that's Latin, Aunt Dolly, and it means with the salt, as Dr. Slawter explained it to me; and you, Aunt Dolly, are one of the salts of the earth."

"I am afraid you will get sick, Jefferson; and then who will fix the balm tea for you, and make your gruel?"

"Nonsense!" says I, interrupting, "I shall not be sick. The doctor says there is no more danger there than here. I shall not catch any of the city diseases, and as to dying, Aunt Dolly, there can't be no more people die than are born, though I read in the paper that the deaths were ten and a half per cent. more than the births, in one place; but where they found the half death I don't understand." Says I to Aunt Dolly, "Let us come to matters more important, Aunt Dolly. I want all the holes in my footings darned, the buttons put on my shirts, and my best trousers I wore to the party all fixed up, Aunt Dolly; because I understand the members of the House go to meeting regularly in Boston. I must have my best clothes in good order."

Aunt Dolly was in dreadful low spirits about my going to Boston; to tell the truth, I did feel a little down at the heel too; but I rose up again, as I was spoken to by my fellow-townsmen, who almost all of them wanted me to do something for them when I went to the General Court. Mr. Spring called upon me one day, when I was in the midst of my studies. He said anything he could do to assist me he would do; he offered to lend me some of his speeches. I thought if I knew which one he "won his spurs" with, I should like to study on that;

but, you understand, I thanked him, and told him if I had time to read them, I should be sure to call upon him.

I worked sharp, but, as my father remarked, it was hard work "to teach old dogs new tricks," and for a man of my age to begin to go to school again was rather tough. I had the school-master every day, and I spoke a piece to him and answered questions. He was a good school-master; he used to keep me up to the mark pretty well by telling me of some old fellows, who got to be famous for one thing and another, who did not begin to read until after they were fifty years old; some of them their wives taught their alphabet. He kind of hinted that if I had a wife it would help matters. He said as "eternal vigilance was the price of liberty," so was eternal work necessary to a man in public office.

I thought, on the whole, speaking the speech would be the easiest, if I could once get it written out, and put into my head. The object with me at this time was not so much to know, as to have my constituents and the Boston members think I knew, all about things; therefore, you understand, my reader, that I paid the most attention to the Demosthenic part of my education. I took every opportunity of studying the speech and practising the attitudes. Whenever I went to the barn I would begin with, "Mr. Speaker." I used to speak to the cattle, and I began to think they had an idea of a change in my manner of addressing them. The dogs used to follow me about; our yellow and white bull-dog, I thought, looked at the terrier sometimes as if they were estimating upon what this new language of mine meant. Then I had been down to the river with the walnuts in my mouth instead of stones, two or three times; but, as the river was frozen over, I suppose I did not improve as much as if it had been summer time. I did not see any difference between that and the barn exercise. I could not remember the piece any longer, at any rate. I asked the school-master what Demosthenes' idea prob-

ably was in putting the stones into his mouth and going to the sea-shore. He said that, as to the stones, I had better ask Dr. Slawter, but as to the sea it was supposed that as he desired to speak in the open air to great crowds, he would practise until his voice could be heard above the roar of the water rolling on the beach. I then saw, if that was so, why I did not do any better at the river when it was frozen.

I inferred by this, that Demosthenes was a stump speaker; so it seemed that in Rome and Greece they did things pretty much as they do in America.

Mr. Birch said I must not make such a mistake as that. It was Cicero that spoke in Rome, and Demosthenes to the Greeks. I asked him if he was the man that said: —

"When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war."

He said he thought not. There was no such saying then. But I had really the speech disorder. I had speech on the brain.

I worked along this way, until two days before the time I was to take my departure. I tried on my best suit, had my overcoat and my umbrella mended, my high-crowned hat ironed smooth, my shoes half-soled and heeled; for I did not intend to spend any more out of my two dollars and half "per diem" in Boston than I could help. I had my father's old travelling-bag new strapped, and got Drystone to paint on it, "J. S. Atkins, Cranberry Centre," in large, white letters.

I made some calls among the neighbors, including a visit to Feathergilt's villa, where the principal people of Cranberry Centre had congregated. In compliance with the then prevailing idea liquors and wines were not introduced. We had cake and tea, the feast being intellectual. Whether or not it was the absence of the inspiring beverage, or whether it was that my mind was so much occupied with public matters, you understand, I thought it was about as stupid a party as I ever attended.

Miss Feathergilt, now grown a little older, to my vision looked less like a rat than at our first meeting. She had grown much stouter. She hoped I should have a pleasant time, and should be happy to hear from me. She had friends in Boston, and should probably make a visit to that city during the winter, and hoped to have the pleasure of hearing my speech, which I had informed her, you understand, that I had been some time preparing.

I think I used to feel more at home talking with Miss Feathergilt than any other lady of my acquaintance, with the exception of Aunt Dolly, and some of the old ladies at the poor-farm, I had had more conversations with her than any other woman. I rather got to liking to talk with her, you understand, since she read "Charlotte Temple," and "Eliza Wharton" to me, and listened to my ideas of "Robinson Crusoe." Just at this time, if I had been obliged to be married, I am not sure that I would not have been satisfied to perform my share of the nuptial ceremony with Miss Feathergilt. I don't think I was in love with her as young folks talk these things, because both of us were too old for such kind of nonsense; but I confess I did not feel sorry when she used to come to the homestead, though Aunt Dolly insisted, you understand, that she had a design upon me, or, in other words she was courting me; and that reminds me of one objection made to me by one of Drystone's stump speakers, who said I was a bachelor, and he did not think it was for the moral good of the community, that any man should hold a public office, who had not agreed lawfully to provide for at least one woman.

I am not afraid to say it now, but if my election had depended upon my getting married, I think I should have done it, and Miss Feathergilt being willing, you understand, as I think she would have been, we should now perhaps be just starting, so as to pass our honeymoon in the great city. It did not happen, however, and I was just bidding her good-by in

her single condition, after which I walked to the homestead to continue my preparations.

I had an old friend in Boston who was pretty well-to-do, and when he was on a visit to Cranberry Centre, he invited me, if I ever came to Boston, to come to his house. To be sure, he did not think at that time, you perceive, that I should ever be a member of the General Court. I thought it would be cheaper and better than going to a Boston tavern; so I wrote to him, and looking at the Almanac, I find it was in December, 1851. I do not put this letter into my life, as there has been some dispute about a letter in which it is averred I made some unguarded allusion to a lady of my acquaintance, you understand, in early life. If I change my mind in this respect, I will put the letter in the appendix at the end of the book. I am equally guarded, you understand, in respect of some letters which have been sent to me, and if necessary they will be referred to the same committee. — Bless me! how the old idea comes to me! — I mean the same appendix to my book.

The next morning I put the letter in the post-office. Mrs. Bacon met me, and she said, "Mr. Batkins, when are you going to Boston?"

I said, "Next Monday."

"Well," said she, "Abby's going to Boston to see her aunt; and if she is ready, will you see her safely there? She has never been to Boston, and perhaps while you are there you will give her good advice."

I told Mrs. Bacon that I would do anything in my power for Abby, and if she was at the depot for the first train I would see that she was comfortable on the road; and if she did not get ready, to write me what train she would come on, and I would meet her at the Boston depot and go to her aunt's with her.

She said she supposed I should go to the Tremont Tavern, and if Abby missed me, she could find me there.

I told her I should not go to the Tremont Tavern. I gave her the address of my friend in Boston where I should board, and told her to send Abby there for me, or to the State House, and inquire for me, — that is, for Mr. Batkins, you understand.

Mrs. Bacon thanked me, and said she hoped I would have a pleasant time.

Without any explanation some people, in view of all the circumstances, might think that I was demeaning myself, — a member of the General Court, — to be interested in Mrs. Bacon's daughter. I have to say it was simply a friendly act of good-natured willingness to do good on my part. Abby Bacon was a nice, pretty girl; and this simple act of good-nature, as it will be seen hereafter, cost me something in money, you understand, and came near to ruining my reputation.

Mr. Bean gave me a few hints as to some matters in which he was interested in Boston. I did not know what to think of him. I could never see through his schemes. I only knew he had none of the sneak tricks in trade. When he was in my store he was opposed to a great many of the customs of shop-keepers, who desired to be considered honest men and fair dealers. He would never sell sand for sugar, — it was said Deacon Smoothe did, — nor meal for ginger, nor mix flour with mustard. With him coffee was coffee, pepper was pepper. His great genius was in finance. Bean was a master at screwing up of figures on paper, and other of the fine twistings of the art of money-making, and competent to be the president of a financial college. The singular success that attended his operations was the result of circumstances, not comprehended at this time, but were developed by years of further practices, of which my reader, in due time, shall be informed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### MY DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL IN BOSTON.

WHEN I left the homestead, with my travelling equipage, I experienced, I dare say, somewhat similar sensations to those of the early friend of my youth, "Robinson Crusoe," when he left home to seek his fortune. Our errands were as unlike as our ages; he a youth, I in a forward state of maturity, if not in my prime. Years are artificial divisions of time. Man's life has been divided into seven ages by a writer of authority, whenever nature, in its many forms, is to be discussed. This writer gives, according to scriptural limit of the life of man, ten years in each age, making the understood right of life threescore years and ten. Many live beyond this term; a greater number never reach it; the doctors give their reasons.

It is not then the years a man has existed that should be the criterion of his condition mentally or physically. It is the question of original condition and after-development.

I was leaving my native town, for the first time, to go to live in a new country, that country, Boston, — Boston, that I had heard of all my life; Boston that I had read of in the newspapers; Boston, the home of the wealthy, the learned, the "commercial emporium" of New England; Boston, famous in the days of the Revolution, remembered in the annals of the past, filled with churches and schools, and yet said to be the wickedest city of the East; and to this combination of quicksands and whirlpools I, Jefferson S. Batkins, was about to commit myself, to be a sojourner, a dweller, a traveller in its streets.

Such were my thoughts, as I stood upon the platform of the depot and cast my eyes about me; and this, I said, inwardly, is Cranberry Centre. The loud ringing of the bell of the engine started those people from their seats around the stove in the station-house who were bound east on this train. Abby Bacon had not come; the representative from Leadenville was going to Boston, and others of my acquaintance were bound to different places on the line of this famous railroad, the advent of which had made such a ferment in the town as to cause that "indignation meeting," now almost forgotten, and probably rescued from oblivion and preserved only in this record of my life, in a tangible form for reference.

The train stopped; we entered a car; again the bell rung, and away we flew, the rattling wheels over the iron rail testifying to a rate of speed greater than ever I had moved before. Amid the confusion my mind was in, as trees, houses, bridges, and other objects were passed, Mr. Speaker occasionally obtruded, and Cicero and Demosthenes were mixed up with the modern names of those I was to be associated with in the capitol, which I was told was near the Common, — a part of the city familiar to everybody in the town.

My imagination, never of a kind that had lifted me much above my station in life, was a little more active than usual. I could not help contrasting, however, my father's description of a journey to Boston, in his day, as he termed it, with the conveyance now furnished by those much-abused corporations that build railroads for public accommodation, with no expectation of profit to themselves. Then, the journey in summer was made by long-winded stages for passengers, and slow wagons with produce for the city supply, and return load of dry goods and groceries for the country. In the winter this work was performed by old-fashion pung teams, driven by cider-drinking farmers, their sons, or hired men, with occasionally a female traveller returning from a wedding, thanksgiving ball, or other rural merrymaking.

I was as pleased as a boy with many things I saw on the road. Mental activity had sharpened up my appetite, which had not been too good since I had been in preparation for the State House. Aunt Dolly had provided for my comfort on the road, and had put in the top of my carpet-bag some pie and cheese, half-a-dozen of her best doughnuts, and some tea in a small bottle, which I verily believe, when I drank from it, my fellow-passengers thought was ardent spirits, prepared with molasses for the occasion, and known in those days as blackstrap, by those who imbibed this celebrated New England beverage. I partook of these refreshments with a display of satisfaction which caused a smile, I observed, at my independence, from some of our well-dressed companions of the car.

I frequently heard my name whispered around, as people came into the cars. The member from Leadenville spoke it when he came in. He was seated by the side of a lady, to whom he was very attentive; and at every stopping-place he seemed to have acquaintance with the passengers taken in. "Batkins," "Cranberry Centre," were repeated by her as often as her new friends joined in the conversation. The oftener I heard my name, the more I kept silent, pulling up my shirt-collar, and adjusting my bandanna neckerchief, as the increase of blood rushing to my head, in consequence of a more exalted opinion of myself, rendered this action necessary.

When we started it was a cold winter day, and the weather-wise people in the cars discussed the probability of a snow-storm; and, sure enough, it was soon upon us. We were now within a few miles of Boston. People were picking up their shawls and overcoats, pulling out their portmanteaus and travelling-bags, and we should soon be scattered at the Boston terminus, each to go his way. Looking out of a window of the car, rising above what appeared to be a wood of leafless trees, I saw the tops of houses, and one high above them all, — the majestic



State House, with its top looking like a large pumpkin with one end cut off, and standing on something that looked like the front of the meeting-house in Cranberry Centre. I knew the building by a picture I had seen, but, to be sure, I asked a man if that was the State House, where the General Court met. He said it was, and added, "It will soon be filled by all the noodles of the country, who come here once a year determined to destroy the interests of Boston." I thought to myself he little suspects that I am one of the noodles.

He asked me if I came from the country. I told him I did.

"What town?"

"Cranberry Centre," I replied.

"Cranberry Centre," said he; "I never heard of the place. Some one-horse-power town, I suppose. So they send a representative this year?"

I said, "They do."

"Who is it?"

"Mr. Batkins," said I. "J. S. Batkins."

"Batkins? I never heard of him. What kind of a fellow is he, Whig or Democrat?"

"Neither," said I. "He was elected on the Honest Men's and Independent ticket."

"Cranberry Centre," said he. "Is not that the town Seth Spring came from?"

I told him it was.

"Well," said he, "I knew Spring. He was an able man. Is this Batkins rich?"

"No, he is a farmer, pretty well-to-do."

"Married man!"

"No; a bachelor."

"Do you know him?"

"Well, yes, I am somewhat acquainted with him."

"What is his given name?"

"Jefferson."

"Well, that is a pretty good Democratic name."

I was lifting up my travelling-bag, when he saw the letters of my name. Says he, "Are you Mr. Batkins?" I told him I was. He said, "I am very glad to make your acquaintance; here is my card. Come and see me. I am a member of the House, and I dare say we shall become very good friends."

We were now going into the depot. He bade me good-evening, after asking me where I was going to put up, and said he would call and see me in the morning. I followed the rest out into the street, and there were carriages and wagons, and a great crowd of people. I was looking for the State House, but I could not see it; it was snowing; so, before I started, I thought I would ask one of the hack-drivers. I asked one, who wanted to know if I did not want to ride, if he knew where the State House was. He said he "didn't know anything else."

I was cautioned against being put upon by strangers, so I would not tell him exactly where I was going, you understand, and I said, "I want to go to the State House; from there I think I can find the way. I am going myself to Mr. Tremont's Tavern; that's near the State House, I think."

He said it was, and he was going right up that way.

"Well," I said, "if you are going up that way and invite me to ride, I will accept your invitation."

He took my travelling-bag, and showed me the way to his cab, as he called it, — a thing on two wheels with a door behind. Says I, "Do you know where Mr. Reuben Wilson lives, up that way?"

"Yes, he is expecting you."

"Oh, you know me then?"

"Yes, of course I do. I have been waiting for you."

He bundled me in, jumped on and drove off, bumping me over the stones, turning round corners every minute, swearing at the rest of the drivers, till at last he stopped at a nice-looking house near the meeting-house, saying, "Here's the

place, sir." I walked up the steps, and by the lantern that was before the door I read, on a large brass sign, the name of my friend. Says I, "Yes, this is the place; give me my bag."

"Fifty cents," said he, — "fare."

"Fifty cents," said I; "no such thing. I didn't agree to give you any fare. You invited me to ride; said you came on purpose for me. Give me my bag. I am a member of the General Court."

He said he did not care what court I was member of whether it was a general or corporal. He should keep the bag till I paid him his fare. I pulled at the bell-handle. A girl came to the door. I asked if Mr. Wilson was in. She said he was. Says I, "Tell him Mr. Batkins has come to see him." "Walk in," says she. So I took hold of the bag, and the cab driver followed me in, saying he wanted his fare. Mr. Wilson came and took me by the hand, and asked what was the matter. I told him. He laughed, paid the driver half a dollar, who went off, saying that I was the greenest old cuss he ever drove from a railroad.

I took off my great-coat and hat, wiped the snow off my boots, and was invited into the sitting-room, where a nice fire was blazing in the grate. He introduced me to his daughter, whom I had not seen since she was a little child. She had grown to be a handsome young woman. She was as polite to me as a judge's wife. Then he introduced me to another lady, that I had seen at Cranberry Centre. At that time she was a good-looking young woman. She used to remind me of a handsome goose, the way she used to swing her head round on a long white neck.

I still adhere to my notion of people's looking like animals and birds and fishes. I think that bird, the goose, has a handsome way of stepping as well as swinging her head. This lady had that way of stepping, too, in consequence, I suppose, of not having very long legs. I think this lady was a little more goosey in her stepping out than when I first saw her, for

the reason, I suppose, of her growing more fat. This makes some women ineligible for a number of pastimes, — such as dancing, horseback-riding, and going upstairs.

She was good-looking, notwithstanding her increased age and size. She received me with a great deal of politeness, which I returned with bows and a smiling countenance. My friend asked me if I would not have some refreshment. I thanked him, and consented to a proposition for some tea. The two ladies — the daughter, and the other, I believe, the aunt — left the room, and we sat over the fire, and entered into conversation as to matters and things, and old recollections of Cranberry Centre.

Mr. Wilson married his wife in our town, but had made Boston his home for many years, and was considered a very worthy citizen.

My friend inquired for Seth Spring. I told him Seth was well, that we were on good terms; but he was a little touched up because he was not sent to the General Court. "At one time it was thought he might run from Leadenville. He had property there. But some of the lawyers in the back part of the State said it would not do to take a man from another district, as he was not supposed to represent saw-mills, but his fellow-citizens. So, Wilson, Seth stays at home, and I am the member from Cranberry Centre. Say you, now, you never expected to see me here in Boston in that capacity, did you?"

"Well, Batkins, no. I cannot say that I did. I thought you was rather opposed to political action. By the way, you are not married yet?"

"No, I am not married."

"If I recollect rightly," said he, "matrimony was not one of your favorite schemes."

"No, it was not, no more than politics; but I tell you, Wilson, there is something awful catching in politics. I kept out of the way of it, some time, but when I got among office-

holders, I had such an itching to be one too, that all the scratching of friendly admonition, both from Aunt Dolly and other Christian well-wishers, could not overcome it."

"Do you come with instructions from your constituents, or are you left to follow your own ideas of what is for the general good?"

"Well, upon some points, I suppose I am instructed, and on others, I am left, as you say, to act 'pro bono publico,' — that sounds good, don't it? You did not expect to hear me talk Greek and Latin."

"Well, we often hear that phrase; it is about as common as 'E pluribus unum.' I never could understand why that national motto or the legends upon State shields should be in dead languages; however, we have much to learn before we are thoroughly nationalized. Upon what ticket were you elected?"

"The Honest Men's and Independent ticket."

"A third party?"

"Yes, a third party; in this case it was first, number one. Well, my instructions from some of our folks are to go against anything that is to increase the power of Leadenville and Beet Borough, and I got a letter from a man, I will not tell you his name, who has given me his views, and a letter to a lawyer here who will keep me posted all the way along."

"A responsible position, Mr. Batkins, you assume."

"Yes, I am aware of the responsibility, and Mr. Birch and I together have been working up matters, so that I feel better than I did upon the responsibility."

"By the way, Wilson, there's one thing I want to ask you about before I forget it. We are old friends, and anything I say to you, of course will not get out. I am to use my discretion on the liquor law; but until things are fixed, I am always to vote against anything the Boston members favor; then our folks say I am sure to be right." I took out of my pocket the letter which I had not time to ask Birch about,

and showed it to Wilson. Says I, "There is a word, I can't tell how to speak it, and, to tell the truth, Wilson, I don't exactly know what it means, though I heard it used by Seth Spring in our town-meetings, and in the bank days. There it is: 'There is a C-L-I-Q-U-E at work always.' How does that go, when you want to talk it in a speech? Kleenk, aint it?"

"No, Batkins, clique."

"Yes, kleenk, that always vote together; now I am to attack that Boston kleenk, on all occasions."

"Yes, Batkins, that clique, as your friend calls it, is no common organization. You will find some of our ablest men associated together to resist unwise legislation. It would not always be safe for you, Batkins, until you have more experience in such matters to attack them."

"I suppose not; some real gritty fellows," said I; "take the hair right off your head to hear some of them, I suppose. It would be a little safe at first to be on their side."

"What! on the side of the clique, Batkins, that you are sent here to oppose?"

"That's a fact, Wilson, and I begin to think already that this politics is a kind of trade, and to make much out of it a fellow has to serve his time at it."

"Well, my friend," said Wilson, laughing, "you are not the first man who has come from the country with pretty well-established opinions, that has gone home very much changed in his views as to the Boston members."

"I have a speech, — between ourselves, — all written out, and I have spoken it a great many times."

"That may be good practice to get you in the way of addressing audiences, but I cannot well understand how you can write a speech before you have decided the question upon which side you are to speak."

"Well, the idea is that I go against kleenks; but gener-

ally I am liberal in my sentiments. Then I want the people to think that I am acquainted with history, and such like; so I touch on America, industry, Russia, Bonaparte, the Revolution, the Constitution, the rights of the majority, freedom, Great Britain and Ireland; a little slanting touch on rum and temperance, and other prevailing topics."

"Well," said Wilson, "I should like to hear it; it appears to be a good mixture, but, like some of the doctors' mixtures, until taken you can't always tell the way they work. When you speak, Batkins, I must try and go up to the House, and hear you."

"Of course. You know, Wilson, I don't pretend I wrote it all myself. Some of it is from Demosthenes, some from Cicero, some from the 'Farmers' Almanac;' here and there a bit from Daniel Webster's speeches, a little altered and improved; some from the newspapers, — whenever I saw anything that appeared to be of my way of thinking, I put it in."

"Batkins, you are naturally of an eclectic turn, and you are not alone. Many legislators have the same cultivated faculty, and upon its exercise secure a good reputation. I shall be curious to hear your Mosaic speech."

Mosaic and eclectic, says I to myself. I wonder what they mean; but at this time I thought I would not ask Wilson; so says I, "Wilson, wouldn't you like now just to hear a little of my speech?"

I took out the speech; it was tied up in a piece of brown paper, and my name written on the outside, in case I should drop it anywhere. Wilson said while the women-folks were getting my supper he would be pleased to hear it; so I unrolled it. Says I, I-begin in this way: "Mr. Speaker, when I arose to answer a question, I did not intend to make a speech."

"Well, but Batkins, if you rise with the manuscript in your hands, how can you say that?"

"I don't intend to show the written speech. I intend to

have it between two newspapers. O Wilson, I know enough for that! I have seen the minister put his sermon between the Bible leaves on the same account."

If my reader has a good memory, he will see where the beginning of my speech came from: "Mr. Speaker, we are upon the eve of great events. Sometimes when the serenity of the cerulean arch above our heads is undisturbed by a cloud, suddenly a speck appears no larger than my hand, and in that speck there lurk the whirlwind and the hurricane, the tornado and the devastating tempest." I stopped to hear what Wilson would say. He said nothing, you understand. I told him it went on this way some time, until I began to answer the objections of the other side to my side.

Wilson said then, "I suppose you are replying to one of the clique."

"Yes, just as likely as not it will be one of those smart ones, and here's what I say." I now rose from my chair. Says I; "Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman who has won his spurs in this debate, and with these spurs intends to ride over the old war-horses from the country, sir, the law-abiding Christian representatives of the rural districts, without saddle or bridle, Mr. Speaker, then I say to him that we of the rural districts have seen the spurs taken from many a presumptuous rooster, whose business was to go about the farm pillaging, — pillaging, Mr. Speaker, without in any way contributing to the increase of chickens, or in any way using his faculties for the public good. If the gentleman uses his spurs here, I suggest to him that there are those who will unstrap them, batter their points, and Cranberry Centre will sustain the act, if it should be done by a member who represents a different constituency."

I stopped again. Wilson was listening; he arose to poke the fire a little, to put up a burned stick or something, although, I confess, you understand, that I thought he was

laughing a little at what the school-master thought was a good joke about the spurs. As he did not speak, I thought I would say something; so I said, "Wilson, now tell the truth. Is there anything very bad in the speech?"

"Well, Batkins, I do not know. What your speech is driving at, I cannot tell. I have heard much of the same sort, and they print it in the newspapers. Still, I think I must reserve my opinion until I hear you at the State House."

The young lady came in to say that supper was ready; so I put up my speech, you understand, and with Wilson adjourned to the supper room. There, at the head of a neatly set table, was sitting the other lady, who, now that she was seated, did not appear to be so portly. She was one of those kind that stand low and sit high; that you think are short when standing, and tall when sitting, — as I have mentioned in another case.

We had a very pleasant time at the table. At this late day it would be no advantage to anybody to recite the articles upon the table, or the manner of the cooking. I was satisfied in my mind that this department of house-keeping was well managed, and after the experience I had had of Aunt Dolly's skill in the culinary art, you understand, I think my judgment was worth something. After supper we talked a little of the news of the day. As it was a stormy night, I remained in the house. My friend Wilson said he should be pleased to show me a little of Boston by gas-light, but would take some other opportunity.

I retired to the chamber appointed for me, after receiving a hearty invitation to make myself at home while I remained, and wrote up my journal to that date, and begun a letter to my father. Feeling a little fatigued, I blew out the gas-light and retired to my bed; — when I soon discovered the mistake I had made, by the smell in the room, and rose up precipitately, and after a little while occupied in the dark in finding the stopcock, shut off the offensive gas, and prepared to pre-

cipitate myself again into the bed. I wish it to be understood here that I was not entirely ignorant of gas-light machinery. The candlestick, or whatever it was, was on a table, not fastened to the wall, or I should not have made this mistake; others have done the same thing, no doubt; but being in a strange house, eating a hearty supper, thinking over my speech and the prospects of the morrow, confused me, and I pursued my old habit at home of blowing out instead of shutting off. It was not a serious blunder, nor the only one I made during my sojourn in Boston city.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## MY FIRST VISIT TO THE STATE HOUSE.

I WAS up early in the morning. The snow-storm had not been a very extensive effort of nature. It was sufficient to whiten the ground, and to give a wintry look to the houses in the neighborhood. I saw some fine-looking buildings. Inquiring the way, I soon found myself in State Street, and the signs reminded me of an old riddle or conundrum that I read in the almanac: "Why is State Street like a river? Because there are banks on both sides of it." And now I had seen this river through which I supposed there was always running a stream of money. I noticed the old State House. I remembered that, from its being in the middle of the street, — as I saw it in a picture of the Boston massacre. Then I saw a building they told me was City Hall. I walked up a street by the Tremont Tavern, and then I was in front of the new State House. The emotion I had at my first glance of the whole of this edifice I will not undertake to describe. I took a good survey of the premises, thinking with delight that I should, before the sun set, stand in the hall where so many of my illustrious predecessors had been before me. I was satisfied with what I had seen of Boston, and returned to my friend Wilson's, where I enjoyed a hearty breakfast. I was to go and draw for my seat, — that was to be my first official act, as I was informed. The postman brought me a letter. I opened it. It was from Abby's mother, about Abby, and read as follows: —

"January, 1852.

"Squire Batkins, representative of cranberry centre to ginral cort — Stait Hus —

"MISTER BATKINS, DEER SUR:—I tak me pen in hand to inform yu, that Abby is sik and she cudn't cum as agreed upon wich wen this cums yu will no. she will cum in larst trane to-morrow, or nex da, or nex week. If yu will meet her and go with her tu her aunt's, wich she will tell you were she lives, yu wil much oblige  
your humbil servint,

"PATSEBA BACON.

"P. S. hur aunt kepes a boardin'-Hus, and iseturs and such refreshings at the north end. she wil cum a cros to Mano' rail rode depot."

After reading this letter from the good old lady, I went to my room, and begun, as was my custom, to read over my speech. Being in a strange house, I did not want to speak it out loud, though I should have liked to have done so. I laid it down upon the table, and went through the motions, not forgetting to work out what Mr. Birch called the emphatic words. I asked Mr. Wilson, after I went down, if he would go up to the State House with me. He said he would, whenever I was ready. We sat down a little longer, when all at once I remembered that I had not finished my letter to my father. I spoke to Wilson about it. He said I could write it at the State House; there was plenty of pens and ink, and paper, and if I was particular about the seat I was going to draw, I had better be in good time. He would go up to the State House with me, leave me to arrange matters, "and then, Batkins," says he, "you can come home when you please. Our dinner hour is two o'clock."

I took a look into the glass over the chimney-mantel, to see if my hair was all fixed right. I don't think that I have mentioned the way I had of smoothing my hair a little over my forehead. I was a little bald; so I found some difficulty in keeping my thin locks from falling over my ears. As I was starting I followed my usual habit and straightened it in the right way.

Another thing I have omitted to state, — the color of my hair and eyes. Well, it was always considered that I took

them from my father. Aunt Dolly said I was all Batkins, but my hands and feet, and them was all Withaspoon, — the name my mother was born with before it was changed, as has been related, to Batkins. People who have thus far read my life ought to be able to judge as to the color of my eyes and hair by my temperament and actions, as they have seen them under different circumstances. Dr. Slawter said I had no very marked temperament, but that I was a little of all combined. That's what a phrenologist told me once about my bumps. He said if I had strong ones on one side, they were offset by strong ones on the other, so that I had a pretty well-balanced head; and that's the case with my temperament. However, the question of Batkins and Withaspoon blood settled as may be hereafter, the size of my boots and gloves determined by actual measurement as they may be, my bumps and temperaments scientifically arranged as they may be, — I was now ready to go with my friend to the State House, to be perhaps introduced to some of Boston's ablest sons, and to make that first move that should write the name of Batkins on the archives of the Commonwealth. As we passed along we noticed several individuals, who, Wilson said, were country members. They were travelling the same way we were; he said, bound for the State House. I asked him how he could tell the country members from any others.

"Batkins, there is a different style of appearance as well as manner. They have the characteristics of persons not at home. There is more uncertainty in their step upon the bare stones of the street and the sidewalks; some of them have an anxious expression, as if the importance of their situation was fully comprehended, and in some cases there is a development of suspicious caution in their movements, and quick glance, as if they were in constant expectation of being cheated in some way. They appear to be always buttoning up their coats instinctively, as if they were surrounded by pickpockets."

I stopped him. "Wilson, you are joking. Do I appear so? If you did not know me, now, would you take me for a country member?"

Wilson gave me a look from head to foot. "Well, yes, Batkins, I think I should if I met you in the neighborhood of the State House."

That's just where we were at that time. I was looking up at the great dome, and thinking it would not be long before I should be under it. I inspected some of the country members a little more closely as they were going in, and I think, on the whole, Wilson was right about it. There was a difference between them and the slicked-up Boston legislators, who appeared to be always at home everywhere; and the longer I was among them the more convinced I was of the correctness of this opinion, you understand. We walked up a narrow passage-way, from one corner of the building, and did not go up the high steps on the front that was facing the Common.

There was a good deal of bustle and stir going on. Wilson introduced me to a gentleman who I thought, by his looks, and the way he gave his orders about there, was the governor. He had shining buttons on his coat, and a cockade in his hat. He did not, to be sure, look like Mr. Boutwell's picture that I saw once. I don't think Mr. Boutwell ever had much of the grand look of a governor, according to the pictures of his predecessors which are hanging up in Mr. Kimball's Museum, — a place which had much to do with my happiness, as I shall explain hereafter. As he was a store-keeper, and as that once was my calling, I was rather pleased with his election, you understand, on that account. We are apt to be glad if any of our fellow-craft are exalted by public opinion into executive position or any other high station.

I see I am following my old fashion, when I get an idea of one thing to mix it with another. The gentleman who seemed engaged in his officious, or rather official duty, was not



the governor, but the sergeant-at-arms; and, as I afterwards learned, in some matters he knew more of the whirl of the wheels than the governor himself, and had more power to make things pleasant for the members. He and Wilson were old friends. I believe Wilson had been a representative himself. When I was introduced to him he offered me his hand, which was as soft and white as a lady's. He addressed me thus: "Mr. Atkins, I welcome you to Boston, and to the State House. Anything I can do to make your visit agreeable will give me great pleasure." — "I thank you kindly for your expression of good intentions; and if you ever go out of town, and come to Cranberry Centre, I shall be happy to return all your compliments:" this was my reply.

He said he was quite busy; hoped I would excuse him; but if I would look at the hall, and select such seat as I would prefer, in case that I did not draw one to my mind, he might arrange to exchange it for me with some representative who would not be particular.

"This is your first visit, Mr. Atkins, and those in their first year do not generally prefer a seat near the speaker; the old stagers do."

I thanked him. Wilson said, as I was in good hands, he would leave me. He did so, after exchanging a word or two with the sergeant-at-arms. They both laughed simultaneously, looking at me. I have no doubt, although I never inquired, that the joke was at my expense personally, or at all country members collectively. The sergeant-at-arms called to him a man whose name I did not very distinctly hear. It sounded like Brinkeyfield, or something like that. After saying, "Brinkeyfield, you will see that Mr. Atkins, of Cranberry Centre, is properly attended to," he left me to bestow the light of his smiling countenance and touch of his soft fingers, in the welcoming of others to the scenes of their former labors and triumphs.

I think my introduction by Wilson to the sergeant-at-arms was rather in my favor. Looking back upon those halcyon days, I think I should not have fared so well but for this friend at court. He used to try to post me up in the way of the thing. I was naturally of a confiding disposition, and in my first days I used frequently to inform him of my grievances, and how some members tried to be rough on me. I am satisfied he never betrayed my confidence in him, and his advice, I have no doubt, saved me from many unpleasant predicaments, some of which I may refer to, as I proceed in my legislative career.

My dear reader, you will oblige me if you will constantly bear in mind that I do not propose to discuss politics in the interest of any partisan feelings. It is not known to this day whose vote it was that elected me. Chosen as I was, by the Honest Men's and Independent party, I considered it a duty to my constituents, or a majority of them, not to act with either of the other great factions, then striving for the mastery in the State. I must sometimes name these factions. I may speak of Whigs and Democrats; but, you understand, I am not to be classed with either. Great events followed the action of the Legislature of which I was a member, and, as I was saying, to which I was about to draw my seat. They call the days of which I am writing now, the days of the coalition, and I suppose I must admit, so far as Cranberry Centre was concerned, I was elected by a coalition, although, you understand, I did not make it. I was selected as a candidate and elected, with a reservation always to occupy a neutral ground, and I put it in here, it is of no consequence whether, previous to that time, I was a Whig or a Democrat.

It is evident things had changed. Hon. Seth Spring, my predecessor, was a Whig; Drystone was a Democrat. Atkins could not have been either in public estimation. Now, I still preserve this balance of power within myself, which perhaps, had as much to do as anything else in making the

name of *Batkins* famous; and the policy I adopted on all occasions, where voting was to be done, was significant of the party whose principles I represented at that time.

I have been delighted in my retirement to have found myself referred to as a model legislator. I will not, however, anticipate the future, in that respect; let my reputation depend upon my action in accord with that neutral, conciliating, non-partisan policy, of which it was claimed I was the founder. The drawing of my seat was to be one of my first official acts. I had understood it was done on the principle that you draw a lottery, whether for pins, marbles, gingerbread, or rose cakes; those first lessons in gambling, practised by boys and girls in school-days, that when arrived at man's estate are forbidden by law. I have not much to say on this subject, only that it corroborates what is said in some poetry before referred to,

"'Tis education forms the common mind."

Some thought we legislators were breaking the law against gambling in having a lottery with seats for prizes.\*

One circumstance I have omitted, but as I agreed to put in all matters that would be instructive as to my character, I have concluded to close this chapter with an incident which tends to show my confiding nature. I was gazing round the State House, and I read a sign "To the cupola." Now, I am not ashamed to say I did not know what it meant. The reason was from a difference in spelling words and pronouncing them. A young man was standing by, and I asked him. He said it was the first thing a member from the country ought to see. It would give him a better idea of Boston than he could get in any other form. I asked him, in a kind of bantering way, if he was not mistaken in the person he was talking to. The young man said no, as it was part of his duty to show the members from the country this cupola,

\* The form of selection of seats since my day has been changed.

which the people who thought they owned the State House were not allowed to see, at this time. It would soon be closed, and I might lose my chance. One member, who lost his opportunity last year, said he would rather have given ten dollars than to have missed it.

This rather excited my curiosity. I pulled out my watch, to see how the time was going, and asked him how long it would take to see the cupola. He said I looked like a spry sort of gentleman, and he thought about ten minutes. He said if I went up now it would only cost half a dollar; next week the price was to be raised. He said the money went to the lunatic hospital, and I could give as much more as I pleased.

"Half a dollar," I thought to myself. "Well, if all the country members go to see it, I might as well;" so I told the young man I would follow his advice, and asked him when he took the money. He said, "In advance." I was feeling after my purse, and he took out a kind of a memorandum-book and asked me my name. I said, "*Batkins*." He said, "Your whole name, sir, if you please." I then gave him a half a dollar, and at the same time my name, which he wrote on his book, repeating it slowly, "*Jefferson S. Atkins, Cranberry Centre*." He put the book in one pocket, the half-dollar in the other, saying, "This way, sir, if you please." I followed him, and after going up, I thought, a thousand steps, we reached the top of the State House, and the young man said, "There, sir, you can see Boston, the islands, and the adjacent country."

I told him I could see a considerable surface of country; but I did not know as I could make any use of the sight. He said I ought to have heard one of the Boston members describe the scene, in a speech he made last year against the influence of the country injuring Boston. When he spoke of this panorama as superior to the Bay of Naples, it produced a sensation.

I did not know where the Bay of Naples was situated, but I asked, "Which is the panorama?" I am not now ashamed to say I did not know the meaning of the word. I thought it would sound well in a speech. He pointed with his finger, saying, "The whole expanse. What a picture!" I said yes, not sure then that I understood him, and then asked him where the cupola was. He looked at me. "Why, this is it! Batkins, — Cranberry Centre, I wish you good-day; you can go down when you please. I am going now." He left me, saying something that sounded to me like "hookey."

Now, if he had said cupelo, I should have had an idea of what he meant. I was not so well off in money by half a dollar as I was before; but I had the idea of panorama, used by the Boston member, and I had discovered the difference between a cupelo, as I understood it, and a cupola. When I told this to Wilson, he laughed, and said, "Just like them!" \*

\* My coadjutor recommended me to omit that part of the chapter relating to my expedition to the top of the State House. I declined to do so, and upon asking for a good reason, he stated as follows: "In the first place, Mr. Batkins, the incident is trivial; in the next place it, or some such imposition, has been practised upon many country persons visiting a city, who are thus led to suppose they are to pay for every object of interest they may desire to see, when it is free to all, and without charge. Again, this old deception has been printed over and over again in newspapers, in joke-books, — to be sure, with some variations. If you add it to your composition, it will be said that if all your sayings and doings are not more original than this one, a doubt may be raised of the authenticity of any of the others."

I stated to him that this incident, as he called it, did occur to me, — to be sure, it was many years prior to this time, — and there were many reasons why I should put it in the book. I am not ashamed to have people see what my state of general ignorance was of city customs, and how I improved. Of course, no such trick could be played on me now; and then, as to printing it in the papers, as I hinted before, in Sally Trivetts' case, about the railroad fare, odd things that I have spoken of in my way have found their way into newspapers and joke-books. Is that any reason I should leave them out of my authentic life, because somebody stole them and used them before I had the opportunity?

My friend smiled and yielded; so with this explanation the cupola incident goes in. — J. S. B.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## DRAWING A SEAT.

It was quite a pleasing ceremony this State House lottery. I was told by Mr. Brinkeyfield that it was a good time now to go for my seat, and he pointed the way to the sergeant-at-arms, who was then engaged with some Boston members, who, Brinkeyfield said, had great luck in getting good seats. I walked up to the sergeant, and said: —

"Sir, I should like to have a seat in the House. I suppose you remember me."

He looked at me. "Certainly, you are Mr. —"

He hesitated. I put in "Batkins."

"Of course; who else but my old friend, Batkins, from —"

He hesitated again. "From Cranberry Centre," I said.

"Of course, from no other place. How is your wife and family?"

I said, "I have no wife."

"No," he said; "then, of course, you have no family. I was thinking of another gentleman, who has a family, but no wife. Well, Mr. Batkins, how did you like your seat last year?"

Somewhat surprised at the question, I answered, "This is my first year to the General Court."

"Who represented Cranberry Centre last year?"

"The Hon. Seth Spring."

"Spring, so it was. Well, you resemble him very much,

Mr. Batkins. I hope you will be as fortunate in the drawing of your seat as Mr. Spring was."

I was rather pleased at the comparison, and asked him what I should do next. He said he would look at my credentials if I had them about me.

"Credentials," I said. As I did not exactly understand the purport of that word, I thought I would run for luck, as I did on my name; so I said, "You mean my" — then I hesitated, and he said, "Yes, the certificate of your election."

My natural cuteness helped me that time. I handed the document to him. He examined it, said "All right," and turned to a young lad with a pair of bright eyes, who stood at his side with a box with a hole in the top.

"Now, Mr. Batkins," said the sergeant, this is Master Joseph, a page, who in this case represents fortune. He will put his hand into that box, and as I report the name of J. S. Batkins, from Cranberry Centre, he will draw a number; that number will entitle you to the seat in the House upon which a corresponding number will be found. Now, Joseph, a good shake for Mr. Batkins, and if you know where the good numbers are, pick out the right one for him. Mr. J. S. Batkins, from Cranberry Centre, Joseph."

Joseph said he would draw just the one Mr. Batkins wanted. He put his hand in the box, took out a number, saying: —

"Number thirty. That is the number of your seat, Mr. Batkins. Are you satisfied with it?"

As I did not know the difference, I said I was.

"Well," said the sergeant-at-arms, "it is usual when a member is fortunate in getting the seat he desires to remember the page."

The page — Joe, as they called him — came down from the desk, and said he "should be happy to be remembered by Mr. Batkins about five dollars' worth." I thought Joseph was joking. I told him he began early. He replied he did, but he went to bed late. I promised him, however, that I

would remember him and see him again. The page amused me, but I did not see the joke then. It appeared I was lucky. I had drawn a seat in front of the speaker's place, who came in just at this time, and spoke to the sergeant-at-arms. He did not draw for a seat, but from what happened afterwards I think he knew what seat was picked out for him beforehand.

I was introduced to him. It was Mr. Banks himself. He took me by the hand, held it tight, looked at me, right in the eye, as if he was measuring me for something, and said: —

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Batkins; happy to make your acquaintance. How is your family? How is your wife? How are your children?"

I looked at him with astonishment, and said, "Mr. Banks, I am not married; therefore to ask after my wife and children is unnecessary."

Banks said, "Batkins, you ought to be;" and said he should have the pleasure of seeing me hereafter often.

While he was looking at me, I was looking at him. According to my plan of describing people by what they look like, — as in the case of Miss Feathergilt, you understand, and the lady with the goosey way of swinging her head on her neck, — I thought he had a look of three animals mixed, something like the picture of a lion and a wolf, — as I had seen them painted, — and a gray fox; I had seen these creatures often. Now, I can't say there was any mixture of lamb in his composition; yet there was a pleasant compound of expressions; he could make a smile as handsome as a rose looks, so that you would not suspect how lion-like, wolf-like, or foxy he could be, if his mind was bent in either direction.

Pretty soon after the drawing was over, and I had begun to feel more at home, I went and looked at the place I was to occupy during the great debates of this most important and celebrated session. I talked with different individuals about matters and things, without any introduction, and soon found out to my satisfaction that some of the members naturally did

not know any more than I did, and had not the benefit of the instruction I received from our old school-master, Mr. Birch.

As it is not my desire to place myself at this time any higher than I deserve to be in my reader's estimation, I shall say nothing of my experience in horse-trades or cattle bargains. I know that in store-keeping I did not succeed very well; but my reader will not forget that it was that unfortunate affair with the sea-captain's wife that compelled me to submit to what I knew to be unbusiness-like and wrong. I think I was growing a little wiser, and therefore I discovered Cranberry Centre was not the highest on the list for sending men who had not learned the trade of politics. Upon talking about Cæsar, Cicero, and Demosthenes, I found the member from Leadenville did not know any more about them than I did before I took lessons of Mr. Birch.

I had looked at my seat, the shelf, and the desk, and tried the effect of the cushion upon which I was to seat myself during the trying times to come, which then I had no knowledge of. I surveyed the scene, and wondered what the codfish was there for. I asked no questions, but passed up the passage-way and went into a handsome room, though not so large as our hall, that I was told was the Senate Chamber. Things looked a little more comfortable. There was a large table set all round the room, with nice arm-chairs. I thought, on the whole, I should prefer a seat at that table; there would not be so many to look at me when I made my speech, which was always uppermost in my mind. I sat down in one of the chairs, and really felt much more at home than I did in the other hall.

As it was called a chamber I looked for a bedstead and such things. I saw none. I was much pleased to see some drums and a musket on the wall. Upon inquiry I was told that they were captured from some Russians, — I so understood the man who gave me the information, — in the Revolutionary War or the Mexican War, I have forgotten which. Subsequently I

discovered the mistake I made, when I repeated the history of the matter to some little boys, who were one day looking at the cannon, which were in the hall below. They said it was Hessians, not Russians.

While I was sitting in this chair, the young man that was told by the polite sergeant-at-arms to look after me, came into the Senate room, and said he was looking after me. He wanted to know if I was satisfied with the seat I had drawn. I told him I was. He said if I was not, he thought he could find a member who would be willing to exchange with me. I asked him if the seat I had drawn was not considered a pretty good seat. He said it was. I asked him if the other gentleman's was equally good. He said it was, for some people. Now, you understand, I was not posted in this way of changing seats. I did not see that I had any property in it. But this young man looked a little like a weasel, and a little like an owl, — that's a pretty cute mixture in a man's face or a woman's; so I just said to him: —

"I am a farmer, and I sometimes swap horses; but if I trade off a good beast for a bad one, I generally want as much boot as both horses are worth."

I watched the effect of this speech on him. His owl's eyes twinkled, his weasel's mouth twitched.

"Yes," says he, "I s'pose so. If you will change your seat, Mr. Atkins, with a Boston member, who wants to be next to his colleague, who has drawn a seat next to you, I will give you twenty dollars out of my own pocket to accommodate him."

"Twenty dollars," says I. "Well, not for the money, but to oblige the Boston member, I will make the trade."

The truth was, I did not want to sit near one of the Boston clique. He gave me twenty dollars, and the seats were exchanged. I went with him to the Boston member's seat, and was introduced to him. He said he was very much obliged to

me for my courtesy, and if he could do me any favor during the session, it would give him pleasure to do so.

Now, I am not mercenary, — I never was; I did feel some squeasy about selling my seat. I was always in doubt whether the Boston member paid for it, or the messenger. I did not like to ask him; but I was told such things were done, and sometimes the messenger made more by the trade than the member who sold the seat.

I am telling this story, you understand, just as it was. At the time I am writing I am better informed how things are done in the houses where they make laws, and in court houses where they enforce them. There are other matters bought and sold besides seats.

Being satisfied with my morning's work, I went to Mr. Wilson's, and talked with the ladies until dinner-time. After dinner, I related my experience to Wilson, including the trade I made on the seat. He said he thought I commenced well, and guessed I could be trusted at the State House as well as any of them. He wished to know how I intended to pass the evening. I told him I did not know. I understood there was to be a caucus at the State House in the evening, to fix up the officers. I had some talk with different members, and they tried to discover who I favored; but up to this time I had kept pretty close. One member said that it was all fixed; that N. P. Banks was to be speaker, and Henry Wilson president of the Senate. I asked him how he knew that.

He said, "Batkins, I don't think they have let you into the ring. If you don't show your hand somewhere, you will not have any influence. Sometimes one vote is worth a pile, as in your case; whether it was the man's that was in jail or your own, it sent you from Cranberry Centre."

"Yes," I observed, "I have no objections to vote for Mr. Banks. I think he is a very pleasant man."

"Yes, Batkins, and if you have a wish to speak often, or

to get on a committee of your choice, you must be on good terms with the speaker, or he may always see somebody else before he sees you, and on exciting questions many will rise at once. I suppose it will be no ordinary question that will bring forth your speech. I think Mr. Banks will treat you fairly; but he has it in his power to do more, and it is in politics as it is everywhere else, — friends before enemies."

I listened; I thought Wilson was about right, and so I told him, and under my then conviction, I thought the representative of the Honest Men's and Independent ticket would go for Banks. We dropped politics, and talked on general subjects. I told him I should write some letters, and go to the depot for Abby Bacon, and get that affair off my mind, and then perhaps I would go out in the evening, and see the Boston sights, or do anything else he pleased to propose.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE "SAINTS' REST."

AFTER my conversation with Wilson I retired to my room, and continued my letter to my father; then practised the reading of my speech. I made it a rule to do this, or to find the meaning of words I did not know, every afternoon, unless prevented by something unavoidable. From some cause, not well understood, I fell asleep. When I awoke it was quite dark, and I ought to have been at the depot to meet Miss Bacon, who was to arrive in the last train. I hurried as fast as possible. I inquired the nearest way to the railroad station. It was a kind of pokerish-looking neighborhood, and I didn't feel exactly safe. I heard a fiddle, and saw a great number of carriages and stages. I did not know but there was a ball somewhere. I kept on a little further, and got kind of bewildered with the gas-lights. I could not see the top of the State House; it was my way, wherever I was, if I could see that cupola to go in the direction until I found it, and then I could make my way from there in almost any direction. If I could not see it, then I always inquired the way to it.

I met Seth Spring, coming along in a hurry; so I knew the train had come. I asked him if Abby Bacon came along in the cars. He said he thought she had, and he saw somebody that looked like her get out of the cars, she was talking with a hack-driver about her trunk.

I walked as fast as I could to the station. I looked all round in the ladies' room. I could not see anybody that looked like Abby Bacon, and I thought if Seth Spring had

seen her talking to a hack-driver, perhaps she was gone to Mr. Wilson's. I thought then I would inquire the way to the State House, and get back as fast as I could. For this purpose I came out of the depot building.

A hack-driver stopped me, saying, "Can't you find her?"

Says I, "Find who?"

"The young woman you expected."

I asked him how he knew I was looking for a young woman, and if he knew me. He said he did. I asked him what was my name. He said, "Batkins, representative to the General Court, from Cranberry Centre." He did know me, and he knew I was looking for a young woman. Abby told him, I suppose; so I said, without much thinking, "I was looking for Miss Bacon, and I wanted her to go to her aunt's."

The hack-driver said, "I have just carried the young woman to her aunt's. She waited for you some time. If you would like to see her I will carry you to her aunt's."

I wanted to be sure that Miss Bacon was safe; so I thought I would go to her aunt's; and remembering my experience on my arrival, I asked him how much he would charge me for the ride.

He said that depended upon how long I stayed at Miss Bacon's aunt's, and if I wanted him to carry me home. He said if I did not stay, he would do both jobs for half a dollar, if I had no baggage.

I agreed to this. I felt a little liberal, as I had made twenty dollars on my seat. I told him if he was sure it was Miss Bacon that was asking for me, and he was sure he carried her to her aunt's, I would go with him. So he took me to his carriage. I got in, and he commenced driving me, I knew not whither.

At this day, as I am writing this page, I cannot help thinking of that ride and the sequel, you understand, as it will ap-



pear. I had been cautioned against pickpockets, and I kept pretty good lookout for them; but for the scrape I did get into, I had no warning against anything of the kind. When I came to this part of my journal I had some hesitation in copying it into my life; but, on the whole, I thought it was so long ago, and the knowledge of it could not injure me now, either privately or publicly, and it might serve as a warning to some other representative from the country, so that he might avoid the traps and pitfalls of Boston. I have taken the advice of the person whom I have engaged to assist me in preparing my work for the press, and he will permit it to be printed, as that person pronounces it one of the most dramatic scenes of my life, and he regretted that he had not known of it before. This remark will be better understood, you understand, as the narrative proceeds.

I take the liberty of saying here my face has often burned with shame, my heart beat with indignation, when I have heard public speakers declare that Boston was the most virtuous city of the world. I wanted to tell this story, and so I would, but I did not care then to have my experience known. If my reader, by this time, has been able to judge of my character he can estimate my sufferings during the time I was in such jeopardy from wicked people, and the stupidity of those who were to administer the law. I almost shudder as I recall the doings of that evening, and, dear reader, if you think there is anything improper in what I am about to relate you can pass it over, you understand, and go to the next chapter, continuing in ignorance of my visit to the "Saints' Rest."

After jolting me around for some time, he stopped his carriage and opened the door. I got out, and looked about me. It was a more suspicious-looking street than the one at the railroad depot where we started from. I said to the driver, "What part of Boston is this?"

He said, "The North End."

That was what Mrs. Bacon's letter said, — North End.

"How far is it from here to the State House?"

He said it was about half a mile.

"Are you sure this is the place?"

"Oh, yes," said he, "I will go in with you, and if it is not all right, I'll make it so. This is the place where I brought the young woman."

He rung a bell and we went into a kind of porch; then he rung another bell, and a girl came to a door.

He spoke first: "Here's a gentleman who wants to see the young woman's aunt, that I brought here."

"Walk in," said the girl, looking very smiling, and I thought she had her face a little painted red.

The hack-driver said, "When you get in, you ask for the young woman, and she will show you to her aunt. When you want to go home you ask 'em to send for Bilky, — that's me; 11,982 is my number on my carriage."

It all seemed fair enough. As I had not paid him his half dollar, I felt sure that he would carry me home. Bilky went off. The young lady asked me to walk into the parlor, and she would send to me the lady of the house. I looked about the room. I thought it was pretty well fixed up, only it smelled strong of rum and tobacco. While I was looking at the pictures, which were handsome, a young woman came in; she was gayly dressed; she had her face painted too. I thought she was hardly covered up about the neck and shoulders as much as would be decent, and I thought her dress might have been longer without damage to her modesty, though I must say she had a pretty pair of legs.

She said, "Good-evening, sir. What can I do for you?"

I said, "Good-evening," and asked her if she lived here.

She said she "didn't do anything else."

"Well, miss, I want to see Abby Bacon, — Miss Bacon."

"You want to see Miss Bacon."

"If it is not giving you too much trouble, I should like to see her aunt. Where is her aunt?" I asked.

The young lady replied, "I suppose her aunt is with her uncle."

I had not heard of any uncle. I thought Abby's aunt was a widow; but I might be mistaken. She asked me what Miss Bacon's aunt's name was, and as I did not know, I could not tell her; but suggested if I could see Abby Bacon it would be all right.

She said, "I do not know the names of all the girls that come here; but as you seem to be a very respectable old gentleman, I'll try to find what you want."

I thanked her, and told her she had some pretty gay pictures for an oyster-house. She did not seem to understand that, but said if I would come into her room she would show me a handsome picture of "Pilgrim's Progress." I told her I should prefer to see Miss Bacon or her aunt first.

Just then I heard a fiddle somewhere in the house, and I asked her what they called the place. She said it was called the "Saints' Rest." I thought that was a curious name for a tavern, — that's what I supposed Miss Bacon's aunt kept; on a moderate scale, of course. I asked the young woman if that was not a fiddle I heard.

She said it was; there was a kind of fair, they called it, she believed. They were going to have a social dance or ball, and a supper. The money that was made was going to a society for doing something for the heathen in the Holy Land, or some such place.

I thought it was strange that people should fiddle and dance for the benefit of the heathen in the Holy Land. I told her I thought there must be some mistake; that I rather guessed Miss Bacon was not here, and I thought I would go.

She said I had better go upstairs and see the dance, and if

I liked to dance she would get me a partner. If Miss Bacon did not come, she would dance with me herself one dance.

I told her my dancing days were over. I confess I had a little curiosity, as I was so far, to see the fair, and thought, on the whole, I would go up and see the next dance. Just then I heard the fiddle again. I don't know what there is about a fiddle, when it is played. It always did give me a kind of dancing feeling. So says I, "Guess I will just look in a minute or so."

"That's right. I knew you would do something for the heathen."

"This way, sir, if you please, Mr. — What is your name?"

"Batkins," I said.

"This way, Mr. Batkins."

I followed her along a kind of crooked sort of passage, until we came to some steps, and then I heard considerable laughing. A door opened, and a man asked me for a ticket. I told him I had no ticket; that I came by the invitation of this lady.

She said it was "all right." I went in to the "Saints' Rest." They were just finishing a dance. Somebody said, "All promenade to the left!" The whole party danced off into another room, except the musicians, who were up in a kind of gallery. There was a sign up, printed in red letters on a white board, reading as follows: "Pay the fiddler and treat your partner."

I was not acquainted at that time, you understand, with Boston fashions; but yet I had misgivings about where I was. I asked the lady what her name was. She said, "Bird, — Lotty Bird." I asked her where all those dancers had gone to, and she said they were gone to get refreshments. I inquired where the fair was; and she said, in another room. She asked me if I would go there. I said, I thought not. I

guessed the back-driver, Bilky, would get tired of waiting for me, and I would go.

Said she, "Mr. Batkins, you won't go without seeing the elephant?"

"Elephant? you have not got an elephant upstairs, have you?"

"Oh," said Miss Bird, "the genuine."

As I had never seen this animal, I concluded I would. By this time all the people came back, and one of the musicians blew a trumpet. They got ready for a dance; the leader of the music said "Hull's Victory," and at it they went. I sat down to see the dance. There were some that did not join in the dance; there was quite a crowd around me. All at once I felt somebody around my pocket. My twenty dollars were in my pocket-book, and my speech, that I always carried about with me.

As you may suppose, I valued the speech, and my mind for a moment was somewhat diverted from my pocket, in which I kept my money. There was a considerable struggle. I said, "Am I among thieves?" In my efforts to escape somebody fell on the floor. I caught the hand of the Bird girl in my pocket, and I do not think I wholly let it go from me.

I have heard it said that when persons are drowning, in the moment preceding their unconscious state, you understand, all the events of their lives rush before them. Just so in this case. I felt a swimming in the head, a dizziness, a blindness, a coldness and a warmth following rapidly, a dying-away sound of the music, with the laughing of what seemed a thousand female voices. My last thought, next to my speech and my money, was my interview with Bean at the house of the sea-captain's wife, and the prospect of getting my eyes in the same black, blue, and green condition they were in after my collision on that occasion. That, the story of the wagon, and the doctor's bill, all passed as a vision before me, with the

after-thought, you understand, of my going to the State House on the morrow, that is, the next day.

I had an indistinct recollection of a tall man, that appeared to be a watchman or a constable, asking who I was. He had searched my pocket, and discovered the packet in which was my speech.

I have heard strange stories of the instincts of mothers for their offspring, and that sometimes, when they are crazy, — the mothers, you understand, — "holy nature" asserts its power, and upon seeing their children there is a temporary return of reason, during which time the mother will recognize the child, if it is put before her. So I think, when my speech was being taken from me, nature roused up, and I recognized a real man, with my speech in his hand, instead of the spectre of one, that my confused imagination had raised.

My return to consciousness was assisted somewhat by two or three violent shakes given to me by this guardian of the night, — as I have heard the watchman called since.

"What are you doing here?" was the first well-understood question I was requested to answer; and my reply, though not in a very loud voice, was, "I came to see if Abby Bacon was safe at her aunt's." I noticing for the first time in his hand my to-be-celebrated speech, I requested him to return it to me. He did so, inviting me to go with him, and, taking the Bird girl by the arm, requested her to accompany him.

I simply asked if my face was bruised, and went with a somewhat staggering gait to a looking-glass, where the reflection of my face rather disturbed me. I was not cut up, as in the case of Mr. Bean's demonstration; but there was a sort of uncertainty of expression, that left it doubtful in my mind if all was right.

"I'll take care of you," was his reply, as he, in not the most gentle manner, removed me from the glass. Miss Bird seemed perfectly at ease, and remarked something like the

not elegant expression, "Come along, old fellow; it will be all right!"

I endeavored to arrange my shirt-collar and cravat, and smooth down my hair, as was my habit. These efforts were partially frustrated by the pertinacity of the watchman, who said he would see me home.

Although I did not think Miss Bird was much pleased with the invitation given to her by the watchman, still she accompanied us to the street, where Mr. Bilky, with his carriage, was waiting. Having asked him if he remembered me, he said he did, and opened the door of his carriage. I entered, and was somewhat taken by surprise, you understand, when I was followed in by Miss Bird, who was assisted in an effort to ascend the steps by a motion of the watchman, which gave her more than the necessary momentum, occasioning her landing upon the seat in a position somewhat dubious. The watchman entered last, the door was closed, and, as I supposed, Mr. Bilky was driving me home; but exactly where Miss Bird was going, I did not understand.

I was feeling in my pocket, and discovered that my pocket-book was gone, and suggested the idea of going back to look for it. This was objected to by the watchman, who said he knew what he was about. To my questions I received no answer, and, as subsequent events proved, this guardian of the rights of citizens was under the delusion that I was intoxicated, and to his mistaken apprehensions of my condition I was indebted for my further experiences of that night.

After a ride of some minutes, he stopped at a not very inviting place, which I supposed to be the watch-house; and being invited in, I was subjected to considerable examination by a kind of head watchman, who informed me that I was arrested under very suspicious circumstances, and asked my name. It just occurred to me that if I was in suspicious circumstances, I would not tell my name. I gave my account

of the affair up to the time of the attempt to rob me, and informed the officer he must inquire of somebody better able to inform him than I was as to the rest. The officer said he did not know as he could compel me to give my name. He thought I had better, if I wanted my pocket-book, and asked me if my name was in it. I told him there might be papers in it with my name on them. He asked me how much money I had in it. I told him about twenty dollars. He said I might do as I pleased about the pocket-book; but as a charge was made against me of being present where gambling was going on, I should have to go in the morning before the court; and there I could give any name I pleased, if I did not want the affair known. I told him I did not want the affair known, and asked him when I was to be allowed to go to my home. He said not until after I had been to court, and paid the fine. I began to feel a little alarmed as well as uneasy, and asked him where I was going to stop during the night. He said he should lock me up in a cell, and previous to that time it would be necessary for him to search me.

"Search me? for what? I am an honest man. Do you think I have been gambling, or anything else?"

"You were found in a disreputable place."

"What, the 'Saints' Rest!'"

He laughed. 'Saints' Rest!' Devil's Paradise, — one of the worst dens in North Street."

I was astonished, you understand, and I asked what he had done with Miss Bird, as, in looking around, I perceived she was gone.

"She's locked up."

"I want you to search her."

"It has been done."

"Did you find my pocket-book?"

"I don't know. Come, let us see what you have about you."

"Must I, Mr. Watchman," said I.

"Yes, it is the rule. We shall not be rough on you," he said.

I turned my pocket inside out with a good deal of internal commotion. I felt that I had got my hand into the lion's mouth, and I would not pull very hard to get it out. When it came to the speech, there was written on it, "Jefferson S. Batkins, Cranberry Centre, member of the General Court." The watchman read it. Says he, "Are you Mr. Batkins?" Says I, "I am." He spoke to another watchman, and asked him if he had written any charge against me yet on the book. The man answered no. The man that carried off Miss Bird returned, and the three had a conversation together while I was looking at the brown-paper covering of my speech. After a while the head watchman said that Miss Bird had stolen my pocket-book, and wanted to know if I wanted her prosecuted in the court. I told him if I got my pocket-book and the money back I did not care what became of Miss Bird.

"You would not like to have this whole thing get into the papers, would you, Mr. Batkins?"

"Not for the world," was my reply.

"If you go to court you will have to employ a lawyer, and that and the fine and costs would be about twenty dollars. If you will leave that with us, and ask no questions about it, we will say nothing, and the thing will never get out at all." In thinking the matter over I thought I would make the compromise. He gave me the pocket-book and papers, and kept the money, and one of the men, at my request, agreed to show me to the State House, which he did. I bade him good-night, and found my way to Mr. Wilson's house, and from that day to this I never heard of that Bird of mischief again, and of course never visited the "Saints' Rest" again, and until now have never lisped a word of my night's adventure.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### ORGANIZATION.

THERE had been notice given that a caucus would be held of the different parties, for the purpose of nominating the officers of the two branches, as they were called, of the General Court. Of course this is rhetorical, and I suppose the governor and the other officials were the grand trunk of the political tree, also in a rhetorical sense.

As I saw no notice for any caucus of the Honest Men's and Independent party, upon inquiry I understood the members of the other parties would be expected to attend their caucus and no other. I did not appear to have any business with either, and, being modest, did not care to obtrude. I had heard some talk about the third house, which I afterwards heard called the lobby. Their caucus, I understood, was in some place out of the State House, where good dinners and suppers could be had at short notice.

I did not attend any caucus. Occasionally inquiries would be made of me which caucus I was going to attend. My usual answer was, I thought not either. As I understood, things were pretty much agreed upon about the organization. I had this from many members, and I thought there was no great risk in my repeating it. The member from Leadenville, I thought, rather tried to push me to the wall on that point; but I swung clear of him, with the safe saying that I should think about it.

When I was alone I felt all the importance of my position, but when I was about the State House, mingling with the

war-horses, — as they called them, — the leaders, the wire-pullers, it rather lessened my estimate of myself.

There was a good share of twisting and turning all round about this time, of which I do not propose to reveal the motives, presuming that all were acting for the public good, and in no sense from selfish motives.

There had been a great snow-storm, which prevented many members from participating in the preliminaries of organization. Among the great men I was introduced to was the greatest man, in one sense, I had seen, — Senator Lawrence, of Hampden, — who called the Senate to order, and to whom at a subsequent date was given a hat and cane, whether in acknowledgment of his being the greatest senator, or the greatest man, or in continuance of some ancient custom, I either never knew or I have forgotten.

It is a little curious that the House was called to order by the oldest member, whose name was Small, and of whose stature I have no recollection; but I believe he was from a town on Cape Cod.

It is not parliamentary in debate for the members of one branch to speak of the other collectively, or individually, in any offensive way; but outside opinions may be expressed of each freely upon individual responsibility.

The clerk of the Senate was not re-elected, to the surprise of some who were not in the "ring," as they called it. The reason given, as I heard, and as was given in a newspaper, was as follows: He was doomed to pay one hundred dollars for party purposes (out of patriotic inspiration, I suppose. This supposition is mine, and not taken from the papers); but he said he would not pay it. It was said he offered to pay ten dollars. This set me a-thinking on the exposures attendant upon getting a political office.

I do not propose to make my impressions and recollections of the session of 1852, as far as public matters are con-

cerned, an authentic record, particularly as to dates and the order of legislation, because a file of newspapers, or the record of the State House, will be found more reliable; but many of my personal experiences connected with these events have never found their place in any journal but my own, upon which I rely, and which I consider, beyond all dispute, a truthful, impartial, and neutral record.

I will state briefly that I was qualified in proper form with my fellow-members of the Legislature of 1852. That the officers were chosen, and that there was a considerable degree of amusement blended with the instruction to me in the method of organization. There were humorous remarks during the voting, and speeches by Mr. Banks and Mr. Wilson when it was over.

I listened to the speeches, and could not help comparing them (with mine, because Mr. Banks and Mr. Wilson were said to be self-made men, as well as the governor, whose name was mentioned often at this time; but I am not sure that I ought to do more now than simply to make this statement, as the people having failed to elect, this legislature was in proper time to reflect their will, and perform the duty they should have done.

Of myself, personally, I will remark, I often felt that it was a question, — as I was naturally honest, — whether or not I did just right in transferring, or, — yes, — selling, — I might as well come right out, — selling my seat to the Boston member, and I felt quite uneasy when in my other seat. I took my oath of office; but, on the other hand, I think the account was balanced on the same day, by my getting into the hands of the Philistines, to be free from which, my ill-gotten gains, if they can be so called, were taken from me. I hope none of my associates of 1852 have any greater peccadillo or self-appropriation to answer for.

There was a great deal of talk about inviting a Hungarian

rebel, Mr. Kossuth, who was at Washington, to Boston. I did not then understand the shape of things; but the argument was, that as we became a nation, in consequence of being rebels, we should always welcome rebels from every other country, to show our appreciation of their acts, and give our support to all rebels who sought to put down regular government, that being supposed, from our stand-point, always to be corrupt and subversive of the true principles of liberty.

One Boston member said, "The chickens might come home to roost" some day, considering that we were rebels and gloried in it. We might have a little rebellion among ourselves, and he thought we had better not go too far in welcoming distinguished rebels, even if Mr. Webster, and other Massachusetts politicians favored it. Some said it was a bid for foreign votes. Being then inexperienced in the dark ways of political action, I took further time to consider its effect on me, that is, on my constituency of Cranberry Centre.

After the organization, both branches adjourned until next day, when, after some other business, a resolution was offered to empower the governor to invite Mr. Kossuth to Boston. There was some skirmishing over it, but, at last, in some form, it was sent to the Senate, and we tried to choose a chaplain. We did not succeed in doing this job at this time, proving the saying that "many shall be called, but few chosen." Then there was a stick about electing some senators. I concluded to keep a private journal of all the doings, and I did for a while, then slacked up a little.

I am sure of this date, January 8, 1852, and it was a great day for me, that is, in my feelings. When the House adjourned, the sergeant-at-arms requested the members to repair to the Doric Hall, where he soon put us into position to go to the Old South Church, to hear the sermon proper to the occasion. When we were ready to start, the Boston Artillery began to fire their cannon, and, as I passed down the steps, I

saw the flash of the fire, and the smoke through the trees. It was a cold day; but with stout boots on my feet, and woollen mittens on my hands, my feeling of devotion to public duty kept the rest of my body warm on the march. The soldiers went ahead of us, with the band ahead of them, playing a tune that almost spoke as plainly as words:—

"Somebody is coming this time."

We were escorted, as they called it, the governor and all of us, by the Independent Cadets,—the governor's body-guard. I do not propose to write the history of that so-called aristocratic Boston Militia Company. Without doubt, as I was told, you understand, it was composed of the best of Boston men, in regard of wealth and social position at that day, and I do not know but it is so now. It has always kept its character, if not for the highest degree of discipline, of having in its ranks more learned men than any other military organization in the State. This company escorted us to the church, and were on hand to guard us back again. Whether they listened to the sermon by the minister I do not know.

I believe they were the first company to do away with spirituous drink, on all festive occasions, which at the time had much to do with the induction of the Prohibitory Law, yet in embryo.

This company was the first I had ever noticed in which spectacles were used by any of its members on duty. I noticed two or three of the members and one officer with gold-bowed spectacles, as they were wheeling round a corner of one of the streets. I do not know that any harm could come of it. It only went to show, you understand, the patriotic spirit and military ardor of these young men, who would not take advantage of their supposed physical disability to be exempt under the law.



I hope I have made no misstatement in relation to this company's performing their evolutions in strict accordance with total-abstinence principles. I am here told by the person who assisted me in this work, that I am in error; that though the members of this military organization made no pretensions to teetotalism, they were generally very temperate men in all things, and on their festive occasions the use of wine of the best brands was not interdicted; but, on the contrary, was liberally dispensed to themselves, their friends, and guests, always within the bounds of gentlemanly regard for good taste and decorum. He says he knows this, having partaken of their hospitality on more than one occasion. Of course, this is authority and documentary evidence, and settles the point in my mind.

While upon the military part of the procession I will say, it was not so with the militia company in Cranberry Centre. Whenever they went to training, it was noticed they marched out very well; but after being on duty all day, hid in the woods, or on the muster-field, not more than half came home with the captain and the music, and they could hardly keep close enough together to make it look like a company. The officers were strictly temperate men. Some said it was fatigue that demoralized the company before they were dismissed; others said it was too much cider, or something stronger. These things made more impression on me in those days, in consequence of the liquor law, which it was to be our privilege to enact.

I have only to record that, marching through the streets of Boston to the martial music of the Brigade Band, I could not help thinking of Cranberry Centre, and what the people there would say, if they had seen me walking with one of the Boston members, with whom I had some pleasing talk as we marched along. I saw Seth Spring standing on the corner of a street; at sight of him I walked more erect, and wondered what was

going on in his mind at the sight of his successor. I rose in my own estimation from that day. The sight of a watchman on the sidewalk, keeping the crowd in order, reminded me of the "Saints' Rest," and for a moment I sunk down in my boots, with the thought if Seth Spring knew of that blunder, my political days would be ended in that home of respectability, Cranberry Centre.

The day passed without any exciting incident. I grew in self-importance; but while I felt so well within, I had determined to preserve my usual serenity and modest demeanor as to others, not by any outward sign giving anybody the right to question my views as to the proposition of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal. I have to say then, with my limited experience of men, I did not believe the proposition as a fact, with the exception of Dr. Slawter's constant observation, that if it meant that there was only one way in which men were born into the world, it was true, and that was the same with regard to animals; so, on that ground there was no difference between two-legged and four-legged; the fact of creation was the same, — "all from the egg;" but if it meant anything else, there was no sense in it. I don't think I have suffered much change since, in that respect, and I think, without admitting the truth of the phrase, as a rhetorical figure, as Mr. Birch would call it, it would be better if those persons who talk so much of equality would practise a little more, and show some acquaintance with the common dictates of humanity, both to men and their not very distant blood-relations, quadrupeds and other animals.

I have no doubt some men looked erroneously upon me, and thought I was feeling above them, and might have applied to me some poetry that I did not exactly understand, and ask me rhetorically, "Upon what meat our Cæsar feeds, that he has grown so great?" and I can tell you it does make a deal of difference, whether born equal or not, what kind of feed they have

for their bodies as well as what kind of books they study in life; and when I say men, I always include women, unless from some connecting circumstances it would be impossible to do so.

The next question of importance was the election of the governor. The caucusing went on as usual, and I managed to steer clear of that rock ahead, showing my hand. I occasionally heard remarks as to myself; the most frequent was, "How is he on the governor?" I heard others say to similar questions from all parties, "I shall vote right;" so I adopted that method of escape, and when asked I said, "I shall vote right." They pumped the member from Leadenville, as I was informed, as to my ideas. He said, I was cunning as a fox, a close old jockey. I had beat Seth Spring in the canvas, and the man that could do that must have something in him. I was pleased at their estimate of me.

At length the day of election came. The State House was lively that day. When I was called I answered. I hear that name now, as the clerk called it out, — "Jefferson S. Batkins," — in a sonorous voice, and I replied, I think rather faintly, "Here," and walked up and deposited my ballot for — no one knows who to this day but myself. I have only to say my vote for the lieutenant-governor is involved in the same uncertainty to everybody but myself.

After the usual ceremonies the governor and lieutenant-governor were qualified, and we all listened to the address. I read the "Boston Post" next day, and so, when I was asked what I thought of it, I replied, that I thought it was "a lucid and patriotic address," as the "Post" said it was. I do not know what other papers said at the time.

It was some days before the Legislature was in what they call working order. I found out very soon that there were wheels within wheels in the State House, as well as anywhere

else, and that the best way for me to do was to get the hang of things before I undertook to do anything myself.

I was introduced to the governor in his room. He was very pleasant, but it appeared to me then that he was about as uneasy in his position as I was in mine. It was almost as new a thing to be a governor to him, as it was to be a representative to me, only, to tell the truth, I think he knew more of politics than I did then, and I rather think he kept ahead of me all the time.

Mr. Banks appeared to get along better than the most of them. He asked me one day what committee I thought would be best suited to my tastes, and best satisfy my constituents at Cranberry Centre, remarking, at the same time, "Mr. Batkins, your predecessor, Mr. Spring, was on some of the most important committees of the House."

"Now, Mr. Batkins," said Mr. Banks, in his usual serious way, "you know how hard it is to please everybody; but you are about the only member who has not suggested to me the committee on which he would like to be placed."

I need scarcely tell my reader that he could not have asked me any question more difficult to answer. As to the duties of these committees I had very little idea. I told him I would think about it, and, in the mean time, he could do with me as he pleased, only I thought he had better not put me in the same place that Mr. Spring had occupied, as I had understood there were some hard horses among the Boston members, and I could not be expected to race with them without I had Mr. Spring's spurs. I thought it was a good chance to put in a few of Mr. Birch's rhetorical figures.

Mr. Banks looked grave. He said he knew Mr. Spring was a hard driver in debate, but did not exactly understand my joke of the spurs.

"Well," said I, "Mr. Speaker, I do not suppose the mantle of my predecessor has fallen on me."

He looked grave again, but his eye twinkled a little, and I saw a smile rolling round on his lips. He looked at me, from the longest hair I had on my head down to the toe of my boots. Says he, "Mr. Spring's mantle would hardly cover you, Mr. Batkins, as Mr. Spring is hardly up to your stature."

"May be so; but if I had that to start with I might piece it out a little with somebody else's, if it should happen to be of the same color."

The speaker laughed, said I was a dry joker, and he would put me on a special Committee upon Fisheries and Flats. When he left me he was surrounded by the representatives who had more to say than I had.

I do not think it worth while to describe the State House, as almost everybody has seen it. I went up to the top, as I have related, and had a good look at Boston and the surrounding towns. Somebody there pointed out the State Prison, and other objects of interest, and when I returned home I had a long talk with Wilson as to how I should employ my time.

I have only to add that I soon became acquainted with many of the Boston clique. I suppose the speaker had said something about my being a joker. Now, if I was, I was not aware of it. I spoke to Wilson about it, and he said I did get off some good things; but it was some time before I understood the thing, as will be seen hereafter.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### VARIOUS TOPICS.

Two measures were introduced into the General Court, in both of which I was interested. Upon the first I did not intend to publicly express my views, — that was an order to limit the session to one hundred days; and to increase the pay to three dollars per diem for the members. I rather favored this raising the pay; but I began to think if I could do a little trading in horses or produce to make a dollar or so, I should not be so strenuous about limiting the session to the hundred days. Matters at home would go on well enough without me until haying-time. I did always like to be about then. Of course I had not made up my mind how I should vote when the time came; but as we were an economical Legislature, I felt that, though I should be willing to take the money, it would sound better at home to have my vote recorded against it, as that would be opposing the Boston members, — being on the side of retrenchment and reform, — and I should get my "per diem" just the same.

But upon the other subject I felt bound to make my mark. This measure was introduced, in the form of a petition, with great pomp and ceremony. It was signed, as it was said, by one hundred and thirty-six thousand three hundred and fifty-six men, women, and children; it was a roll said to be in diameter two feet six inches, fixed on a reel, and placed on a stand in front of the speaker's chair, by the Sons of Temperance.

A distinguished senator said, when he heard the drums of

the procession, that "the subject of the demonstration was a great one; that it involved, in its direct and consequent action, the utter extinction of the great enemy of the human race, the destroyer of our intelligence, and the waster of the human body."

He said he "bowed to the majority of the people, and especially when they came, as they did now, with the loud hurra, the sonorous drum, the piercing fife, and the thrilling bugle." I did not hear him say this, but it was so reported, and I thought I must try, when my turn came, to say something as good for Cranberry Centre. Thus, you understand, was the Maine Liquor Law introduced. It was destined to immortalize this Legislature, and was one of the grand topics of discussion of the session, and called forth bursts of eloquence from day to day.

Another subject had been assigned, in which I felt a personal interest, — the election of the sergeant-at-arms. I found there was to be a tussle for this office, and during this exciting contest between the friends of the gentleman who was the incumbent of the office and another gentleman, or other gentlemen, said to have equal or superior qualifications, there were frequent and animated discussions, as the learned men called it, pro and con. On sound principles, I am not afraid to state at this time that I was a pro-major man. The sergeant-at-arms was called the major; he wore a cockade in his hat, and I think I have seen him either with a white rod or a sword in his hand, as an emblem of his authority in the State House. I do not know whether he was a civil major or a military major. I only know when both houses were to be mustered together, — to use a military phrase, as we are a great military nation; or are to be, — he used to be principal commander.

I had not forgotten his pleasant manner to me on my first introduction to him, and on every occasion prior to this elec-

tion struggle, while I thought — mind you, it might only be my thought, you understand — that some Boston members, — of the terrible clique, perhaps, — and I almost blush at this date to add, some of the members of the rural districts rather looked down upon me; from jealousy likely, for my lack of gentility, or some other reason; it could not have been my politics, for nobody, by any act or speech of mine, could know what they were. The major always met me with a bland smile, a cordial shake of the hand, and a courteous bow, addressing me thus: "Mr. Batkins, good-day. I hope you are well. All's well at the farm, I hope."

I thought after the Senate had come to so close a vote on the election, — the major having but a majority of one vote, — he was a little anxious. He said, "Mr. Batkins, if I am not wanted, I do not desire to serve. It is a little closer in the Senate than I thought it would be."

I asked him if he had any objection to serving another year. He said no, it would give him great pleasure to be re-elected.

He did not ask me to vote for him, but, as we parted, he gave me a peculiar shake of the hand, saying, "This is the day 'big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.'"

When he said this, I did not quite understand the allusion to Cato and to Rome. I smiled, however, and said, "Yes."

This is often a good way to conceal your ignorance, and at the same time to seem to agree with your friend who thus uses rhetorical figures.

When he had left me, I did not forget that I was elected by one vote (perhaps my own), and when the hour for the election had come I deposited my vote for the major. He was elected; and after the election he did not change his manner to those who voted against him. He made no difference. I do not know as he knew who voted against him. His smiles were distributed on the principle that governs the rain, falling

on "the unjust as well as the just," — if there were any "unjust" in the Legislature of eighteen hundred and fifty-two.

As to smiles, I remember reading somewhere, — I do not know whether in the Bible or in Shakespeare's book, for I have found the same ideas in both, — this line: —

"I can smile, and murder while I smile."

Now, I think I have seen smiling politicians, who do as I did, — cover up a good deal of ignorance with a smile, and a large share of villany also.

I remember once an old friend of mine, who was a doctor, a Boston doctor, who wanted to go on a vacation, and upon being advised to leave his business in the care of a professional friend who had cultivated this smiling art, replied, "No; if I should, he would smile away from me all my patients." This might have been a joke; but I maintain, as the saying is, you understand, there is "more truth than poetry" in the principle. I am still of opinion, nevertheless, that, as in case of the flies, "it is easier to catch them with molasses than with vinegar."

The business of the session went slowly along. I heard some good speeches, and many I thought no better than that I, with the assistance of Mr. Birch, had made, upon which I was always at work. The debates on the Maine Liquor Law were instructive to the crowds of temperance people, ministers, distillers, glass-blowers, bottle-makers, tavern-keepers, barrel-makers, doctors, undertakers, and everybody interested in the "utter extinction of the great enemy of the human race," which this Legislature, with the Maine Liquor Law, was to accomplish.

It was curious to watch the movements of the people, who from day to day came to see "which way the cat jumped." Looking back upon what was said by many members on both sides of the question, "it is astonishing to see how easy it is

to be mistaken. I do not propose to reason upon the subject; let that be determined by my action and the speech it was my intention to make upon it. I only say here, the "war-horses" reared and pitched and kicked on both sides, and the colts in some degree imitated their progenitors, sufficiently to show their breed to an observer versed in the transmission theories.

One bystander, that I conversed with, said, "If the Legislature was discussing the indefinite postponement of the day of judgment, there could be no more diversity of opinion, nor a greater variety of reasons given for and against it;" and he thought the result would have just as much effect on rum-drinking as the passage of the Maine Liquor Law.

I thought that was a good idea to put into a speech for a man who was opposed to the law, and would speak his mind. I was of this man's opinion, but politically it would not do for me to say so.

I had the newspapers. These I read every day, and, with the books furnished to me, I sent to the homestead to my father and Aunt Dolly, and once a week I had a letter from my father, who let me know how things were going on, and what the folks in Cranberry Centre said about me. I met a number of ladies at Mr. Wilson's house, and began to like the society of the women, and sometimes almost wished I was not a bachelor, as some of the members had their wives with them, and that kept them from being "lonesome, as sometimes I confess I was. I was afraid to go walking with the ladies, though Mr. Wilson's daughter and I would sometimes go to a lecture or a concert in the evening. One afternoon I went into the Museum to see the mermaid and the waxwork, and there I saw the pictures of all the governors, from Governor Winthrop down to Governor Briggs. I used to hear my name often spoken in the streets, — "There goes Batkins. I wonder if he has got off his speech yet." Well, I was not aware that

anybody in Boston but Wilson knew that I had a speech written, and I had not yet tried to get it off.

So things passed on. A letter from my father, in answer to one I had written, was as follows:—

“CRANBERRY CENTRE, Feb. 27, 1852.

“DEAR SON:—Your enemies are working against you. They say you don't do anything, nor say anything. You had better come home and see about it.

“I remain your father,

“JETHRO BATKINS.

“P. S. Aunt Dolly says, if you have anything that wants mending, bring it with you.”

I showed this to Wilson, who said he thought I had better attend to it, as he said, notwithstanding what I had done, I must look to my laurels; for it was a truism that republics were ungrateful. So might be towns, and Cranberry Centre might prove no exception. He asked me if I suspected anybody. I said I did not know; it might be Bean, it might be Seth Spring, or it might be Drystone. He inquired how it was about Mr. Feathergilt. I had given him an account of my acquaintance with him and his family. I told him I did not see how they could work to injure me, unless Mr. Horace wanted to come as a representative next year. He advised me, on the whole, to go.

I had been put on the committee on leave of absence, I suppose, in consequence of a remark made, that I thought members should not go home to stay any time, but should remain and attend to the public business, except in case of sickness in their families, or to attend to funerals or weddings; and now, if I went, I was to be the first to ask for leave of absence, and if I let myself go, it would seem out of character. I was conscientious, if I did sell my seat for twenty dollars, and I had scruples how to act.

Wilson said, politics did not require a man to be too scrupulous, and if there was any important question coming to a

vote, I could pair off with some member, who might wish to go home at the same time, and who, if he voted, would vote in opposition to me. He said dodgers often did that. I thought that was fair, and made up my mind to that effect. I fixed in my mind I would apply at the end of the week, and write to my father accordingly. The question was, after I arrived at home, what excuse I could give for not making my speech, for, you understand, all my object in making any speech was to hold up my end of the stick, as we used to say, for Cranberry Centre. I had no spurs to win.

I asked a little friendly advice of Mr. Banks, who I reckoned was a good judge of such things. I was a little careful in putting the question. I did not say that I was going to make any speech, but I asked him if a young member was going to make a speech, when was the best time. I think he guessed it was about myself, after all, “for” said he, “when a member has anything to say upon a question, and feels sure he is right, and knows what he wants to say, one time is as good as another, Mr. Batkins.” Some of the ablest men, he said, had failed in their first speeches, and he named the present Mr. Bonaparte, who, he said, made a very bad job of his maiden speech, in the French General Court, but afterwards could say what he had to say, as well as any of them.

I felt a little flattered with these remarks; it gave me courage, you understand, and since then I have kept this Mr. Bonaparte in my mind, and with the light of history before me, I am astounded at what the Frenchman has done from such small beginnings. To be sure, he had some of the family blood of the Corsican race in him.

Now, if my father had been like Mr. Bonaparte's uncle, perhaps the name of Batkins might yet grace the roll of Presidents of the United States. It cannot be any of my nephews, you understand, so if it comes at all it must come in the direct line. I really confess, as I feel now, I should like to live

to see a Batkins in that high office. But this must seem like speculating on futurity, as my reader knows at this time I was unmarried, and had no woman in my eye "to fill the vacancy," — now and then these phrases come into my mind, though I do all I can to keep them out. I may as well state here that Abby Bacon did not come to Boston, and that I never had the pleasure of meeting her aunt. I cannot tell to this day what the serpent Bilky meant by taking me to the "Saints' Rest."

If you want anything of committees, it is not a bad idea to be on a committee yourself, on the principle, a little varied, that charity begins at home. I find it does so begin, and so ends, with some people in office, who "strain at a gnat" and "swallow a camel" when it is necessary to provide for their own relations out of the public funds, a great many more times used as charity funds than the people who put up the money think of.

I had resigned my place on the committee, but at a proper time I applied for leave of absence, and I was joked considerably by the committee. Some advised me to bring my wife here. Some said perhaps her condition would not admit of it. I told them I had no wife. "Perhaps you want to go home, Batkins, and do a little courting." To all this bantering, however, I only laughed, as my statements were both true and honest, whenever these topics were introduced. Notwithstanding, I did not think it proper to give the real reason of my going to Cranberry Centre any further than that I had important business to attend to. I obtained the leave of absence for six days.

My reader will not care to know any more than that the next morning I started for Cranberry Centre, and in due course of time arrived at the homestead.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

I WAS received at the homestead with great joy by Aunt Dolly, and I thought my father's eye was a little brighter when he took me by the hand, and said, "Jeff, I am glad to see you again." Everything about the house and barn appeared to be glad; the dogs jumped round and almost spoke to me, and after I had driven them away from my best clothes, which the animals in their joy seemed to take no notice of, they went round and round, wagging their tails with delight, as dogs will when anything pleases them. This is a curious manifestation, or way of showing gladness. If it evolves in the dog's brain, whence comes the dog's notion of wagging his tail? I suppose it must be put with the rest of the incomprehensible things. I dare say the dogs know, but cannot explain. The horses and cattle all seemed glad to see me too, and the smell of the hay in the barn was as exhilarating to me as a mug of cider was to my father; and yet in this short absence from home, I had changed some. I must not omit to mention the hired girl, who appeared as pleased to see me as the dogs or the cattle, but expressed her joy, of course, in a totally different way.

After a little talk with my father, I found the opposition to me was principally from the shoemaking interests. They had a man among them that used to make speeches evenings, and the idea was that he should first get my place as overseer of the poor, as he said it was not consistent with a republican government to have one man hold two offices. He had been



up to the poor-house, talking to the inmates. I told my father I did not see how much could come of that. But he said, in his usual slow way, "Jeff, you cannot always tell. This man Shiverings is a cunning fellow, and he is beginning underground, some way off, to get into your place."

I knew my father, on some things, could "see as far into a grindstone" as anybody else. He had lived some time on this earth, and the longer I live, I believe the more that there is a great deal in that saying, "The more you live, the more you see; the more you see, the more you know." There is always a sort of people that do the same thing over, from generation to generation. Now my father knew more of these folks at the poor-farm than I did. He used to say, in this land of freedom you could not always tell from the start what the end would be, and that some folks set out in great shape, and ended their days in the almshouse; while some had their milk and clothing from the same source, and at last got to be governors and ruling powers. But, as he used to say, folks will soon forget whose milk it was that raised them, whether from the poor-farm, or charitable neighbors' cows. "Now," said he, "Jeff, there's a great difference between rich folks poor, and poor folks poor; and, I am sorry to say, on the poor-farm of Cranberry Centre, there are some of these rich folks poor. They have an influence, and if Shiverings gets hold of them, he will bring his plans to bear a little; besides turning out Bodge's wife's brother, and his wife would follow, as soon as he puts himself in as overseer. As a matter of course, Jeff, if you are in for anything, you must work to keep it."

I acknowledged my father's reasoning was good; but still I did not see how I could prevent Shiverings from making speeches to the shoemakers, or prevent him from visiting the poor-farm, according to the regulations; and then as I put Bodge's wife's brother and his wife into the house, they ought

to look out for their own interest when they were looking out for mine.

That was all very well, my father said; but one of the first Christian duties, as things are now regulated, was for people to look out for their own interests first. Shiverings would begin probably by getting Bodge to looking at things his way. "However, Jeff, you can see them; you must go among the shoemakers and make speeches too. The shoemaking interest will always be an increasing one so long as people have feet, and speaking speeches seems to be the best way of telling people that you think as they do, whether you do or not. Now you must make a stiff speech in the State House, as soon as you can, and always have an eye to your own town; for there's where your political bread and butter is to come from; and, if the shoemakers are to become a power, you must talk leather; and when you are to speak to the cattle-dealers and butchers you must talk hides and tallow; and when to the manufacturers, you must talk wool."

I had never before heard my father talk so much to the point. His advice made an impression accordingly, and I promised to see to things before I went back to Boston. Said he, "There's another matter people seem to be interested in as far as you are concerned, and I suppose, you might as well know it now as any other time. The women-folks say you ought to be married, Jeff, and I suppose, if you are to remain in public life, some attention must be paid to what the women-folks say. I have never much encouraged the idea, still, as I told you before you went to Boston, you are the last Batkins, and it may be well enough before you get to be much older to put the matter to rest by taking some young woman, not too young, nor too old, for a wife."

I acknowledged also the justice of this remark of my father, for reasons heretofore given, which every day seemed more strong.

The next day after my arrival I devoted the time in visiting my constituents. I went over to the new city, and examined the vacant lots, which, when the new buildings were erected upon them, was to be called Batkins' Row. I visited the shoemakers' shops, and talked with them about the improvements I intended to make on my lots.

As Shiverings had a great deal to say on the education question, I spoke to these people on the propriety of teaching the higher branches of education in the schools. I said more than I knew anything about as to the effect of instructing the masses, and one of these operatives proved more than a match for me. He said Shiverings was a humbug. He wanted to get into office, and that was all there was to him; said he had not the pleasure of my acquaintance, and did not know but his views were different from mine, and he did not care if they were; he always spoke what he thought; he never begun a conversation with anybody on politics or religion but he calculated to hold his own, if anybody begun on him.

I informed him who I was. He stopped pounding his leather, looking up at me with one hand resting on the lapstone, the other holding the hammer. "Are you Mr. Batkins?"

"I am," was my reply, "Mr. —"

"Brightson, sir, is my name. I have moved over here from Leadenville; and you are Mr. Batkins, the representative that beat Spring and Drystone by one vote?"

He appeared to be waiting for a reply. I nodded my head in assent, but said nothing.

"Well, one vote sometimes counts." He commenced pounding again.

I having assented to his last proposition as to one vote's counting, he smiled.

"Mr. Batkins, of course I did not vote for you, as I was a resident in Leadenville, but if you had known beforehand

how close it was to be, you would not have minded if a vote or two had come from Leadenville?"

I said that would not be fair play.

"Fair play in politics is another humbug." He kept pounding.

"Now, Mr. Batkins, how many men have claimed that they voted in your favor?"

I replied, "Not any that I have heard of."

He sharpened his knife on the stone, preparing to cut the leather into the required shape. "Mr. Batkins, you won't be offended if I ask you a question?"

I said, "Certainly not."

Without stopping his work or looking at me, he said, "Who did you vote for?"

I paused, and then said, "Mr. Brightson, I don't know."

He looked up. "You voted for somebody?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Bean handed me a ticket, and I supposed it to be the right ticket, and I did not suppose he would give me a ticket against myself. Whatever ticket that was, I put it into the box."

He went to work again, waxing an end and preparing the bristle. "Then you elected yourself, Mr. Batkins."

I said, "Possibly; that is something I could never know without asking Mr. Bean, and that I have omitted to do."

I asked Mr. Brightson if there was anything criminal in voting for myself.

He said, "Certainly not; if you would not vote for yourself, how could you expect your friends to vote for you?" He said he thought I would do for a politician; but, at the same time to his mind politics was a scurvy trade, and spoiled a man for anything else; but he added, "Mr. Batkins, this idea of educating the masses is the biggest humbug of the whole. When you educate what you call the masses, there are no masses left. Do you suppose I could make any better

shoes than I do now if I had studied Greek and Latin, mathematics, physics, geometry, grammar, music, painting, poetry, and chemistry?"

I said I did not suppose it would prevent his being a good shoemaker, because he was acquainted with all these things.

"Perhaps not; but do you suppose I would be patient, and sit here pounding leather for nine dollars a week?"

"Perhaps not," I said, "because there would be something better for you to do."

"Yet somebody must make shoes. Somebody must do all the drudgery of the world. It is the masses. Now, you educate them, as you call it, and the masses will see you into Satan's kingdom before they will do it. Well if you only half educate them, it is just as bad. I don't mean anything personal, Mr. Batkins, but for the most moral, intellectual, intelligent and educated people, we are the easiest cheated of any people in the world. We only want to be tickled on some of our weak spots, and open go our mouths to swallow any dose of quackery in religion, politics, or physic, any shrewd knave is ready to give to us. Just keep on in the way you are going, keep riding this bird of freedom and make-all-men-equal hobby, and you will find that your men of real education will go to the bottom, and spread-eagle ignorance will take their place!"

I thought I had had enough of Mr. Brightson's views; I felt as if he was almost personal. I certainly did not belong to the educated class, and as certainly one of my opponents, Seth Spring, did. I told Mr. Brightson I was glad of the opportunity of being acquainted with him and his views, and when I returned I should call again and see him. He said I was welcome to his views. Somebody had said there was a little cloud gathering, and one of these days it would burst, and whoever lived to see it would see a storm that the country would be a long time getting over. I bade him good-day, and left his little shop, thinking how strange it was that the auctioneer should

have said the same thing when he was selling the land at the new city. That storm came pretty soon, as Miss Feathergilt and myself and the reader will remember.

I said nothing to him about giving some of my land for a college, if anybody else would put up the building. I thought I could count on his being my friend, so far as matters went at the present time.

I saw Mr. Bean, who was agent for the new mill. I could not tell him any news about Boston. He seemed better posted as to what was going on at the State House than I was. He did not say anything about the "Saints' Rest;" that made me feel sure that he did not know anything about that affair. I wanted to know about the sea-captain's wife; but I did not dare to ask him anything about her. I called on Mrs. Bacon, and some other of our old neighbors, that they might not suppose I felt above them in consequence of my elevation. By the time my leave of absence had expired, I had obtained considerable useful information, and had a pretty good lay of the land. I had made inquiries around how they felt on the Maine liquor question, and of course there was much difference of opinion. I had a notion that I ought to stay until the town-meeting day; but before that time my leave of absence would expire. I was gratified, in reading in the paper, that the Legislature would adjourn over until after the spring election. In that case, I need not return on my appointed day.

Mr. Bean said I had better stay to vote at town-meeting and be seen by my friends; they were dissatisfied with my silence; said there was something in the wind about making Cranberry Centre a city, and when I went back to Boston I had better get introduced to the mayor, and see how the aldermen did their business, as I might some day want to be a mayor or an alderman myself.

I was pleased with Bean's idea, and concluded I would take his advice. I occupied myself for the benefit of my constituents.

There was nothing of especial interest to those outside of Cranberry Centre at the town-meeting, party politics were not introduced. I voted; felt a little different from what I had at other town-meetings. I suppose because I was a representative, I was treated with great respect.

I had quite an interview with Dr. Slawter; but my final conversation with Aunt Dolly convinced me that lady's interest in my affairs was founded upon no mercenary motives, and with no hope of reward. Upon my informing her, on the Sunday evening previous to the day of departure, that I was well satisfied with matters in Boston, she asked me what kind of house-keeping there was at Mr. Wilson's, and who did the work. I told her that I had made no especial inquiries in that respect, but there was a girl they called Biddy, who seemed to do the heaviest kinds of work; then there was a lady who was the aunt, I thought, of Mr. Wilson's daughter, — a nice, pretty girl, the same that was up here visiting, only now she was about fit to be married if she wanted to be. I noticed there were a great many young men came in occasionally, and the three women did the work between them, as I should judge.

"Jefferson, I want you to answer me one question: have you seen any woman in Boston that you thought you should like to marry?"

"Well, Aunt Dolly, to speak the truth, there are some pretty handsome women in Boston, I can tell you; and if I was condemned to be married or to be hung, I think I should choose the first, if I had my pick out of some that I saw in Boston. They do walk off on their toes so nice, Aunt Dolly, and go with such a swing!"

"You have not spoken your mind to any of these fine ladies?"

"Bless your soul, Aunt Dolly, no. You know I have not thought of marrying."

"Jefferson, if you are going to Boston, I think you had better marry. You have arrived at a time of life now, when you ought to find some steady, honest woman, to look after matters at the homestead."

I told Aunt Dolly that I had not set my mind on anybody, and I wished that she would tell me who there was in Cranberry Centre that would come up to her idea.

Aunt Dolly did not know that she was acquainted with anybody that was just the thing, and she did not believe in match-making. She thought the way that marriages were generally made by the young folks did not turn out well. First place, she said, "This nonsensical stuff they call love haint got any last to it. They say it must always come to folks; but it is bad to let it lead you off in a hurry. It's natural for girls to want to get married; some for a living, some to get rid of work, and some for one thing, and some for another. And I suppose the young men, when they see a girl all dressed up fine, do think that's the way she always is; but, Jefferson, it aint so; when a girl is going to a sleigh-ride or a ball, or to meeting, it's a different thing to when she is going to a wash-tub or dairy-work."

I told Aunt Dolly I agreed with her, and as to love, my experience in that direction was only with Sarah Trivetts, and then I was young and soon got over it.

"Ah, Jefferson, only think what you escaped. That artful baggage! How many men's lives have been spoiled just in that way! — gentlemen's sons, too, Jeff. It's dreadful! If a man has such a wife, and rises in the world, as you will, Jeff, what can he do with her? and such imps of mischief, they never die. Now, Jefferson, you always was an honest, square-acting boy. You have your faults; but they are on the good side, after all. I am sorry that you ever went into politics; but, as you have, I hope you will do well; and though I did all I could to keep you from getting married in your younger

days, I think the time has come when you ought to have a wife, — a good woman who knows how to work, and knows how to be a lady at the proper time. But, Jeff, don't you marry any of these poor ladies, these people whose fathers were once rich and proud. When the money's gone, and there's only the pride left, I pity the man who has to live with them. And, Jefferson, don't you marry into a large family, for the sake of one of them. When you bring your wife home to the farm, there will be no mother-in-law to domineer over her. A man's wife should be mistress of her own house, Jefferson; and when yours comes home, I am ready to give up the keys to her. I shall not live much longer, and while I do I shall try to make things comfortable; and if your new wife will let me, Jeff, I should like to keep the little back chamber, where I have slept so many years, until I am ready to be carried to the graveyard, to sleep with the friends of my young days who have gone home before me."

Says I, "Aunt Dolly, don't talk so; you are good to live as long as any of us; and as to the little bed chamber, you shall keep it as long as I own a foot of land on the farm. And as to my wife, Aunt Dolly, if there is any such person now living, I will make her promise to love you, Aunt Dolly, before I agree to go with her to the minister to make us one. I should not like a woman that did not like you, Aunt Dolly."

"Well, well, Jefferson, we shall see. Are you telling me the truth now? It is not that woman that came here with the books, that set you to reading after she went to ride with you that you are thinking on?"

"Miss Amanda? — oh, no, Aunt Dolly."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Jefferson. The idea, too, of her reading 'Robinson Crusoe' because you did!"

"I don't see any harm in that."

"All art, Jefferson, all art. If you marry her, you will find no such book as that in her hand, but you will find yourself

as bad off in house-keeping as Robinson Crusoe was on his island."

Aunt Dolly did not like Miss Feathergilt, that was certain; and at mention of her name there was that rigidity of lips, that dilatation of nostril and expression of the eye, that indicated the positiveness of her character beyond any doubt. I thought I would pacify her a little by a new assurance that there was no love between us, and also, you understand, my admiration for "Robinson Crusoe." I said, "Aunt Dolly, I am not so much engaged now in reading 'Robinson Crusoe' as I was." I told her I thought there were books better calculated for my advanced years. Since I read the "History of Rome" and had Mr. Birch's lessons, of course I put aside my old friend, "Robinson"; but, said I, "Aunt Dolly, you know one of your earliest lessons to me was, never to desert old friends for new ones; so that I shall not hear anybody blamed solely on account of a liking for one of my old friends."

"I do not blame you for that, Jefferson, but I tell you again, you are like your father in your disposition. It is easy for friends to deceive you. Now, your father's wife, your mother, Jefferson, she was — Well, she is dead; no matter, she was your mother, and I won't disturb things of long ago."

"Am I like her, Aunt Dolly?"

"No, Jefferson, not a morsel." She spoke quickly and with emphasis. "She ought to have been a man, — that's all there is about it. She was married out of spite. Your father, Jefferson, liked another girl, and I think he would have married her, but Abby Withaspoon said it should not be; and she married him out of spite, and the neighbors said she died out of spite."

"Aunt Dolly, I have always wondered why you did not get married. If I could find just such a girl as you were, at the right age for me, I would not look any further."

"I suppose nobody wanted me, Jefferson. At any rate, I was left over, as my father said."

Aunt Dolly appeared satisfied with my statement; said she should see that I had a good breakfast ready. As I had this time no travelling-bag, she would put me up a luncheon in a nice little box, and would also do up a pair or two of new footings she had knit for me during my absence, and a couple of clean shirts. I thanked her, bade her good-night, and she left me to ponder as I might upon the future whenever I was alone.

Bean was uppermost in my thoughts. It seemed to me, in the new light of things, that I could never forgive him for the assault made upon me at the house of the sea-captain's wife, and the cheat of the store affairs. I often had the disposition to serve him in the same way, for I was no coward, if attacked by a man or a wild bull; in a physical sense I could have rolled Bean's bones out of his skin with great ease. My reader knows at first how he restrained me, in consequence of my moral weakness, and his present position and influence in Cranberry Centre were as unaccountable as any other part of his history. The next morning, after a good breakfast, in accordance with Aunt Dolly's promise, in which she and my father participated, I left the homestead just in time to secure a passage in the express train, which in due time arrived in Boston. Nothing occurred on the way worthy of notice. I did not require the services of a hackman, but walked boldly out of the depot with my umbrella, my bundle of shirts and footings, and the remains of my lunch, which I bestowed on a ragged little fellow who asked me for some pennies to buy bread. I was not long in finding my way to my friend Wilson's, and, strange as it may appear, my feelings were as if I had arrived at home, though but a few hours since I left the place in which I was born and had lived for a space of time occupying between thirty and forty years, more or less.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### BACK AGAIN.

I WAS welcomed back by Mr. Wilson and the members of his family. Wilson asked me what the farmers thought of the cider clause in the liquor bill.

I told him what my father said; that he considered it the most healthy beverage ever made, and that as long as apples grew he should make cider, and drink it, and sell it, or give it away, just as he pleased, law or no law. Aunt Dolly said if the men could not do any better than to go to Boston and make laws as to what people should not eat and drink, she thought the women had better go to the State House; and the sooner the better.

She said Old King George did undertake to make folks pay a tax on tea, and they resolved they would not drink it; and to make sure of it, and not to be led into temptation, they threw the tea overboard; and if the General Court tried to stop people drinking cider, they would not throw it overboard, but they would drink more than ever, if they had to go to England to get the apples to make it of.

I told Wilson I thought it would not do to pass the liquor law, and the general idea was that it could not go through the Legislature, and if it did the governor would veto it.

When I went up to the State House there was a general shaking of hands, and exchanging views, and talk about the town-meetings. I was joked a little on being an old head for getting leave of absence just before the usual time of adjournment. As usual I smiled, said yes, and was pleased to hear

them repeat, "Batkins is an old head." My reader knows very well whether in this case I deserved the appellation. I really felt like taking a new start after my return to Boston.

One of the Boston members, after I had had some conversation with him on the subject, said it would give him great pleasure to introduce me to the mayor of Boston. We went to the City Hall together, and I was introduced to the mayor, who was called His Honor, it appeared. He seemed to be of about the same importance in the City Hall that the governor is in the State House, who is called His Excellency. I thought of what Bean said about my being mayor of Cranberry Centre. My neck stiffened a little at the idea. I was introduced to some of the aldermen, who had just been holding a special session. This board appeared to be in the city government like the Senate up at the State House. I was invited to visit the city institutions. I accepted this courtesy in behalf of Cranberry Centre, with a promise to avail myself of the first opportunity public business would permit.

On a subsequent evening I visited what they called the lower branch, in session; but the council room, as they called it, was in the upper story of the City Hall.

This City Council was like the House of Representatives, spoken of as the popular branch, of which I was a member, generally composed, as I was informed, of the most wealthy and influential citizens, who held the purse-strings of the treasury. I was naturally interested in their debates. I was politely shown to a seat near the president of the City Council, who was afterwards chosen governor of the Commonwealth.

I noticed one gentleman of the City Council, who was a member of the House. I had not been introduced to him; but as my case was something like his, that is, holding two offices in the gift of the people at the same time, I thought I should like to have his views, if anybody should call my case in question. I retired before the council adjourned with my

friend, who introduced me to the city messenger, a gentleman who appeared to perform similar duties to those of the courteous major, of the State House. He said if we would go with him a short distance there were some friends, engaged at a committee meeting, he had no doubt would be glad to see us.

We left the City Hall, and travelled, as he said, a short distance. I never knew exactly where the place was, as the night was dark and we went, as near as I could judge, through a very narrow street, or a moderately wide lane for Boston.

We found the committee in session. Being only an invited guest, I did not feel authorized to inquire what subject had been referred to them for "consideration and report." All I have to say is, there was a fine supper on the table, and after my introduction I was invited to participate, and I say here that I accepted the invitation, and enjoyed the supper and the company very much, without damage to the contents of my pocket-book. This, on my way home, led me to think I had made a mistake in not getting on to some committees at the State House; but upon a subsequent inquiry I learned the committee business of the State House was a very different thing from that at the City Hall.

On the whole, I thought I had an insight into some things that might be useful to me if Cranberry Centre ever was made a city in my day, and I should be a member of its city government.

As I did not indulge in the use of wines or other exciting beverages, nor use tobacco in any form, I had not added much to the expenses of the city committee, from whose action my ideas flowed on municipal matters, to use a rhetorical figure.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## MY FIRST VISIT TO SEE A PLAY AT THE MUSEUM PLAYHOUSE.

AMONG the amusements designed to fill the leisure time of the people of Boston and the neighboring towns, plays at the theatres, of which there were several in the city, appeared to be the most popular. I have heretofore referred to Cranberry Centre as in some respects a model town. The puritanical idea of the Pilgrim fathers, as to amusements, had been preserved in the families of their descendants, with quite as much expressed veneration as for the dinner-pots, frying-pans, teakettles, teacups, teapots, chairs, bedquilts, and other veritable utensils of domestic use, still to be found in the private museums of many citizens, endorsed from generation to generation as part of the freight of the Mayflower. In Cranberry Centre up to the time of my representing it in the General Court, no circus, or play-acting show, had been allowed; all attempts at spreading their allurements were made abortive by the steady opposition of the selectmen. They had a circus show sometimes, on the other side of the river at Leadenville. In my boyish days I had heard mention of it. I remember, after the circus show had been there, seeing some boys of low degree standing upon their heads and hands with their feet against the walls of the houses. I was told these were in part the antics performed by the circus-riders, that had inspired these urchins in the development of the atoms of their gymnastic predilections. I had also heard of some funniments spoken of as part of the clown's performance, — a personage of importance in a circus show, with whom since I have had some

acquaintance, and acknowledge that I have had instruction blended with amusement and moral reflections, during the time employed in listening to his comical discourses.

I had attended but one place of amusement, strictly speaking, in Boston, though I had been much amused while attending other places, you understand, not set down as such. My visit to the Museum, to see the mermaid, and the wax-work, and like exhibitions of natural history, required no concession to some scrupulousness I had as to the morality of a legislator visiting them, particularly a member from Cranberry Centre. I was fond of a good joke, though laughing, except for diplomatic purposes, was not an accomplishment on my list of social interchanges. I, nevertheless, saw the fun of a thing, and was gratified without too much outward expression.

The talk at the tea-table, one evening, was about a new play at the Museum, and as I had no engagement it was suggested that I should go with Miss Wilson and see the play. At the time I had no more idea of what a play was, you understand, than a child unweaned.

At the proper time I started with Miss Wilson, and as it was not far to go to the Museum, we soon arrived at the door. A great crowd of people were struggling to get in, while others were pushing their way to a sort of open window to get tickets, with which Miss Wilson was already provided. We passed in with the crowd. Many persons had arrived inside the playhouse part of the building. A boy handed us a piece of printed paper, as we went in, which Miss Wilson said was the play-bill. I asked her what it was for. She said it contained, besides the titles of the plays, the performers' names, and sometimes a description of the scenes as they were shown in the course of the play. I put my bill in my pocket. As I did not care what the name of the play was, nor what the play-actors' names were, I did not see how it could be of any use to

me. We found two seats close together, unoccupied. She said they were very good seats. My own idea was that it would be a pretty close squeezing if all the people we left behind us were coming in. I watched the countenances of the people as they came in, and all seemed ready to laugh, they were so pleased.

I had been to meeting evenings and on thanksgiving day, when everybody was thinking of roast turkey and plum-pudding, besides the governor's proclamation to give thanks for good times past; but I never saw so many people with real thanksgiving faces as were now filling this playhouse part of the Museum. I don't know how it was, but the atmosphere was different from any I ever experienced. I felt full of expectation of something, I did not know what. I had heard of performances with laughing gas, and Dr. Slawter explained it a little to me, but it was not clear in my mind. I wondered if this playhouse had a supply of the gas, or whether the jokes were so good that the atmosphere was impregnated with them, and so kept from one day to another. I began to feel as much excited as any of them, though not knowing what was to come. I have since seen plays in a number of theatres. From some of the newspapers I found out that the men and women I saw were great performers. And yet I have not got that idea out of me yet, you understand, that there is a different smell to a theatre from any other place of amusement or religious enterprise. I cannot explain it; I only think it is so, and the Museum is no exception to the rule, whether it is the plays or the people that make this aromatical theatre odour.

The Museum theatre was a handsome kind of a room with a gallery round on the second story, something like some meeting-houses, only there was no pulpit. There was a place in front, just before you come to a platform, with a railing round it, and some music-stands, with music on them. I sup-

posed these were the singing-seats, and was rather glad to think I had got a place so near the singers. There was a great picture crossing the room. I asked Miss Wilson what it was. She said it was the curtain, and behind it was the stage. They let the lights up a little, and it was a handsome sight to see so many pretty women all around me, their mouths laughing, and their eyes shining, the ribbons flying, and the young fellows mixing in and enjoying all their delights. Now and then there would be seen one or two serious-looking people, who were wiping their spectacles, and waiting to see the play, without wasting any of their exuberance among other subjects.

A bell rang, and the musicians came into the pen that was parted off by the fence, and began to play some music, which pleased me very much; but the rest of the people paid but little attention to it. It was not long before another bell rang, the curtain was rolled up, and a room appeared all furnished with a fireplace, a fire, and everything just as I had seen it, and not much unlike Wilson's where I put up. A middle-aged woman came in, that reminded me of Aunt Dolly some years before,—a kind of house-keeper, I thought. She was putting up tea and sugar in a basket, to give to some poor woman, I judged, as she was talking it to herself. I took to this house-keeper directly, she was dressed up so nicely, and appeared to be such a benevolent lady. She put on her spectacles and began to read a newspaper; then a man came in; they had some talk together. She did not like him. He appeared to be looking round among the papers in a sly way. I took him to be a lawyer, and I was not mistaken. The house-keeper put down the paper, and went to knitting. I rather took to this house-keeper more and more, and before she got through I thought she was about the pattern for a wife for me, on some accounts.

A middle-aged gentleman came in, covered with snow. I said, "Miss Wilson, it is snowing."—"No," she whispered,

"that's in the play." — "Why, yes," I whispered, "he has just come from out-doors." He took off his overcoat and hat, pulled a letter out of his pocket, and went to the fireplace to warm himself. He saw the lawyer, and they began to talk, and the house-keeper went out of the room. I was sorry for that. After considerable talk about some wills, and such matters, the lawyer brought in a ragged-looking fellow, and said he was somebody's heir. They talked a little more, and according to the drift of the conversation, as I understood it, the lawyer did not do exactly as he intended when he came in. The house-keeper came back; the man called her Aunt Hannah, and they talked something about his daughter, and somebody being "born with a silver spoon," according to the old saying. That was the name of the play, though I did not see how much of a play could come out of a silver spoon. Then his daughter came in. Her name was Sarah. She was a picture to look at, and changed my mind a little. I thought I would rather have her for a wife than the house-keeper. She appeared to keep her father's books, and was busy at the desk, overhauling papers. Her father gave a letter to the house-keeper. Says he, "Aunt Hannah, here's a letter from an old friend of the family, from Cranberry Centre." She took the letter, and when I heard that name, I began to prick up my ears to see who this family knew at Cranberry Centre. Aunt Hannah said she had no spectacles, and asked the young lady, Sarah, if she would not read the letter. Aunt Hannah gave Sarah the letter, and sat down to her knitting. Sarah sat alongside of her, before the fire, which was sparkling up, and the two ladies looked so cosy I almost wanted to get up on the platform, as they called the stage, and join them, though I had never seen either of them before. Sarah was reading the letter to herself, and, I thought, laughing a little at something there was in it, and the people in the theatre began to laugh too. I suppose some of them had heard it read before, for, as I understood it, "The

Silver Spoon" had been acted out in Mr. Kimball's Museum, a number of times. I confess, I had a kind of extra notion to hear it, but then there was a good reason, — it came from Cranberry Centre. I did not suppose there was another person in the playhouse that came from our town.

I looked round, but I did not see any one that I knew. Aunt Hannah, as they called her, pretended that she was in no hurry to hear the letter, but still she asked Sarah to read it aloud, and kept on knitting as usual, only I thought that she was a little more jerky with her fingers, you understand, as she moved the needles; then Sarah said, "Aunt, this is from an admirer of yours. I've heard father speak of him."

Miss Sarah read the letter. I would not undertake to put it in here, but I remember about how some of it went on. It appeared to be a mixture of business, courting, and politics, and when she came to the end of it, it was signed as follows: "I remain your humble servant, Jefferson S. Batkins." The people in the playhouse all laughed. When I heard my name, I rose up in my seat, and was just about to say, "Mr. Speaker," when Miss Wilson whispered, "Be seated, Mr. Batkins." I did not know what to make of this letter, but as Miss Sarah, on the stage, was beginning to read a postscript, I sat down, though a little nervous, and thought I would listen further. The young woman then read on about like this: "You need not show this letter to Hannah Partridge, if she stays in your house now, nor say anything about my coming to her, until we meet and I can see which end of the stick is up." Then the people all laughed and clapped their hands, and Aunt Hannah appeared to blush as the young woman was twitting her about her old beau.

I asked Miss Wilson what all this meant. She said, if I would wait until the play was over, I should see it all as it was. I told her there was no other Mr. Batkins in Cranberry Centre but myself and my father. She said, perhaps this

Mr. Batkins was from another town of the same name. I said, that might be, for I never wrote no such letter as that to anybody.

More people came on the stage, — a young man, that I thought was Miss Sarah's beau, then Sarah's father came in while they were talking. There was a noise outside the door. Everybody was looking at the play-bills, and appeared to be getting ready for something. Now and then I heard somebody say, "Batkins is coming." I took my play-bill out of my pocket, and read it over.

Both of the doors in the house on the stage were open. I could see into the street; it was snowing. I told Miss Wilson I had not brought my umbrella. The people in the playhouse were moving about. One young urchin behind us, who was in great glee, said, "Batkins is the fellow for me; he is so funny!" I turned round to speak to the youngster, when I heard a great shouting and laughing all over the theatre. The people clapped their hands as if they were tickled at something. When I looked back on the stage again I saw what it was about. A man was standing in the doorway, covered with snow, disputing with a hack-driver, that looked like the fellow that I met at the railroad when I first arrived. Everybody on the stage seemed glad to see this man; they called him Batkins. He brushed the snow off his clothes, warmed himself all round, appeared quite at home, and after the hack-driver was gone they all had a good talk together. It came out then that he was a member of the General Court, and had a speech all ready to speak. I was in hopes he was going to speak it. I was bewildered, astonished at his appearance; it appeared to me as if I looked just like him, or felt just as he looked. At last they all went off to supper; the great picture rolled down, and the congregation began to laugh and talk with one another.

I thought the play was over, and rose up to go out; but only a few seemed to be moving. I asked Miss Wilson about

it. She said there were three parts more of the play, and asked me how I liked it. I told her I did not see into it yet; but I should like to know who this Mr. Batkins was, and where he really did come from. Miss Wilson explained that this Mr. Batkins in the play was an imaginary character, and the person I saw was Mr. Warren, as it was in the bill. I told Miss Wilson that I understood that much. I asked her if he meant to play-act me. Where did he ever see me? Before she could answer, the bell rang, and the picture was rolled up again, and more people came on and talked. Then the room changed right before your eyes to a street, with all the buildings. There was one foppish sort of a man, who in some respects reminded me of Mr. Bean. I began to see a little more about the "Silver Spoon." The young man who wanted to marry the young girl, and I thought she acted as if she wanted to marry him, seemed to come to a stop because his father, a rich man, had made a will, and only left him a silver spoon. Then they rolled down the picture again, the music played, and the people talked as they did before.

The next time the curtain was up, there were gay times, dancing, singing, eating and drinking, and more talk about marrying. Mr. Warren — or Mr. Batkins as they called him — was everywhere, trying to make his speech; and I really thought he got a little fuddled, and before that part was through he danced with the women, and did what then I did not think I should have done; but I am not sure, at this day, but I might have done the same as he did.

I was a good deal interested in the piece, for I saw that some of the people were doing just as I had seen people do. If somebody did not let out the truth somewhere, it appeared to me there was to be some swindling done between the lawyer and the ragged rascal that was playing he was a son to the young man's father, who was gone abroad, and who was to marry the school-teacher. The fellow who, I thought,

acted like Bean, was going to cheat the rich lady, her cousin, to get her fortune, and it appeared to me that Mr. Warren had got mixed up in the matter too. I began to feel a little curious when Mr. Warren began to court the house-keeper. I rather thought he must have had some practice in that way, it seemed so human-nature like, though I had never tried it; but it put notions into my head that with such a nice-looking woman as was acting the part of Aunt Hannah, after what I had seen, I should not object to trying it too. I say now, at this time, after all I have seen, that the courting between Aunt Hannah and Mr. Warren was the thing itself.

Before the play was over I saw how it would be. The rascals got served right, and all the clever people had things about as they wanted them, except Mr. Warren, who never had a chance to speak his speech. I wanted to hear that, — because I felt I was somewhat in the same way as he was. When the curtain came down the last time, and in fact a little before, the people began to go off. I did not like that very well, because I could not hear the last part of what Mr. Warren was saying. I thought the rest of the people, who were in such a hurry, had seen the play before, and knew all about it; but we who had not, ought not to have been deprived of our money's worth.

Walking home with Miss Wilson, we talked the matter over. I asked her if she really thought they meant me. She said she could not tell, but Mr. Warren certainly did remind her of some things she had heard me say. He looked something like me, was about my size, and had just such an umbrella. I asked her if she knew Mr. Warren. She said she did not; but she met him often on the street, as he was going from the Museum to his home.

I made up my mind to this idea, — I would go and see Mr. Kimball, and find out what family this Mr. Batkins belonged to. This play was running in my head all night, and made

a great impression on me, politically and socially, and opened my imagination in an entirely new direction.\*

\* My coadjutor objected to my doing more than to refer to this play. I state in this note, I do not pretend that I have given a full description of it, or all that happened on the occasion of my visit to the Museum. People can go to see it for themselves, as I did, and when they read my biography they will be able to distinguish between the imaginary Batkins, as Mr. Warren, with his mimical powers, represents him, and the true one, myself. — J. S. B.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## I CALL ON MR. KIMBALL.

AFTER a day or two, thinking it over, and keeping my intention to myself, one forenoon, just as I had come from the State House, I went into the Boston Museum. There was a young man at the office where they kept the tickets for sale, and as I went up the steps he was getting ready to receive me, with a smile, which I supposed was because he thought he had a customer. I asked him if Mr. Kimball was the proprietor of the Museum. He said he was. I asked him if I could see him. He wanted to know if it was on particular business. I told him it was somewhat particular. He asked me if it was on personal matters, or business of the Museum. I told him a little of both. He said Mr. Kimball did not like to be disturbed in the morning, unless for important matters, or when any of his personal friends called. He asked me if I knew Mr. Kimball. I told him I was not personally acquainted, although it appeared by the goings-on here that he knew me, and I thought he would be glad to see me. The young man said, if I would give him my address, he would send it in to him. I said I would rather introduce myself to him; but he might say, if he chose, that I was a member of the General Court.

He went away from the office window, and in a short time returned, asking me to walk into the hall, and Mr. Kimball would see me as soon as he had completed a matter of business then in hand. I walked into the hall, and thought, as he was so polite, I would look around a little at the pictures and curi-

osities. I do not know exactly how long I was engaged in this manner, when I saw a gentleman coming towards me. He was smiling. I then discovered he was a fellow-member of the Legislature, and it appeared to me as if he knew me. He was about the first person I had met among the dons who had no collar to his shirt. He came up to me, offered me his hand, asked me how I did, and if I had come from the State House. I told him, after shaking hands, that was where I came from. He said, "You have sent word to see me."

I looked at him again; he reminded me of a picture of Governor Briggs that I had seen. I spoke to him thus: "Mr. Kimball, I came to see your play the other night, for the first time in my life that I was ever in a theatre."

He stopped me. "This is not a theatre; this is the Museum."

"Well, but the other building is. I want to see that man that acted out Mr. Batkins."

"Mr. Warren?"

"Yes, that's what they called his name. Now, my name is Batkins, and I am the representative from Cranberry Centre. What I want to know is, how you and Mr. Warren come to put me on the stage?"

I saw Mr. Kimball laughing to himself, and I rather gathered that he thought I was a crazy man. He said, "I am glad to see you, Mr. Batkins; but I think Mr. Warren can give you more information on the subject of your relative, if he is a relative, than I can."

"Well," says I, "Mr. Speaker," — forgetting for a moment that I was in the Museum, and not in the State House, — "I mean Mr. —" I hesitated; he gave me the word: —

"Proprietor, sir. I am the proprietor."

"Well, Mr. Proprietor, I don't know where Mr. Warren lives. I don't suppose all your actors live in the Museum."

"No," he said, "they live out of it."

"Yes," said I, seeing a chance for a joke, "and you

must make a good living out of it too, if you always have as many people in to see you as there was when I visited it, and they all pay for their going in."

He did not seem to see any joke; but said he was a little busy, and if I wanted to see Mr. Warren I had better call on him at his residence. I asked him if he would give me an introduction to him.

"Certainly," he said. "Walk in with me, unless you choose to look around at the curiosities."

I told him I had seen the mermaid, and the waxwork, and the elephant's bones, and I wanted to tell him I had seen a real elephant at the "Saints' Rest;" but I thought better of that. "If it is the same to you, I will look at the pictures while you are writing the letter."

He went into a room, and I employed myself with listening to the conversation of some country people, I should judge, who walked about holding on each other's hands, as if they rather liked that way of enjoying things. Mr. Kimball soon returned, with a letter, which he gave to me, saying he should be happy to have me visit the Museum while I remained in Boston, and presented me with a complimentary ticket, which I have to this day. I wished him good-morning, asking him about what was the best time to find Mr. Warren at his abode. He said "About four o'clock."

"I thank you for your politeness, sir," was my response, as I looked at the letter, then at him, and added as a query, "Mr. Kimball, is Mr. Warren a married man?"

"I think not. Good-morning, Mr. Batkins."

"Good-morning, Mr. Kimball," — my eye half on him, half on the letter.

He went away into his office, you understand, and I went down the steps into the street. This was on the outside of the letter: "William Warren, Esq., Present. By Mr. Batkins." He did not seal up the case of the letter, the envelope, so I

thought I would just step into an alley way and read it before I gave it to Mr. Warren. I put the letter in as a document. The real one is not in my possession, but it went on about like this: —

"BOSTON MUSEUM, Thursday A. M.

"MY DEAR WARREN: — This will be handed to you by Mr. J. S. Batkins, the member from Cranberry Centre, who desires to see you, upon matters which he will communicate to you.

"Truly yours,

MOSES KIMBALL.

"W. WARREN, Esq."

"So," says I, "Mr. Kimball's name is Moses; but he has not put on the letter where Mr. Warren lives." I thought I would not go back to bother Mr. Kimball. As I was not going to call on Mr. Warren until four P. M., I thought I should find somebody that could tell me where he lived.

There was no session at the State House, and I had the rest of the day to myself; so I walked down to Washington Street, to see the sights and the pretty women that I told Aunt Dolly of. When I got home to dinner Miss Wilson told the name of the street in which Mr. Warren lived, and the number of the house. I had not exactly made up my mind what to say to Mr. Warren. Two or three times when he was on the stage I felt like getting up and speaking my mind, but now I was somewhat cooled down. I started off, however, in good spirits, and it was not long before I was at the door. I pulled at the bell, and while the door remained unopened I was practising the best manner of presenting myself. I felt more disturbed than I did to go to the governor's room in the State House. A boy opened the door. I asked if Mr. Warren was at home. He said he was, and showed me into a parlor. He knocked at the door of Mr. Warren's room. A voice within said, "Come in;" but it did not sound like the same voice I heard at the Museum.

While the boy was in Mr. Warren's room I was gazing



about, looking at the pictures hanging round, and the images of people set upon blocks; but by their faces they did not seem to be anybody that I knew.

I used to be particular in those days about anything peculiar that struck me when I went into a house for the first time. I noticed the smell of something that gave me an idea Mr. Warren's folks had had something very good for dinner, and I supposed his wife was a good cook. I remembered that Mr. Kimball told me Mr. Warren had no wife; so I gave the credit of the good smells to his house-keeper, and I thought perhaps I had come too soon, and that Mr. Warren had not finished his dinner.

While engaged in these reflections the boy returned from Mr. Warren's room, and asked me if he should take my coat and hat. I kind of hesitated, and on the whole I concluded that I would go in just as I stood; so I told the boy I was much obliged to him for his politeness, and while he was holding out his hand for my coat and hat, I supposed, I could not help recalling to my mind the nature of my business, and was almost half minded not to go in; but the boy opened the door, saying, "This way, sir." I lifted myself, thought of Cranberry Centre, and, making my old-fashioned bow, I walked in, and what happened will be found in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### MY INTERVIEW WITH MR. WARREN.

SURE enough there he sat before me. I looked at him with a smile, but with some hesitation. I spoke first. "Mr. Warren, I believe; am I right?"

"My name is Warren."

He had been smoking and reading. He laid down his book, and rose to welcome me. I handed him Mr. Kimball's note. He read it, looked at me, laughed, or rather smiled, and said, "Mr. Batkins, I am very happy to know you. Sit down; have a cigar?"

I accepted the courtesy of the chair, but declined the cigar. As I sat down he looked at me, and I looked at him. I began: "Mr. Warren, I went to the Museum one evening to see the 'Silver Spoon,' and in that play there was a man that was called Jefferson S. Batkins. Now, that is my name, and I am the representative from Cranberry Centre. What I want to know is, if you ever saw me before?"

"Never, to my knowledge."

"Did you ever hear of me?"

"Never, sir."

"Then how came you to play me in the 'Silver Spoon'?"

"I did not, sir, play you; I played a character conforming as nearly as I could to the idea of the author."

"Mr. Warren, I don't know how plays are made; but do you think it is fair to put a representative on the stage to make all the folks laugh at him, and put his name in the play-bills too?"

"That is a matter of education and taste, Mr. Batkins. They put my name in the play-bills, and it gives me great pleasure when my friends and the public are pleased to laugh at me."

"Well," I said, "Mr. Warren, as near as I can make out, that's your trade, and I think you must be pretty good at it; perhaps I am no judge, for I never saw a play before that night; but if any of my friends from Cranberry Centre should go to the Museum and see me, — that is you, Mr. Warren, acting out me, you understand, — they will think that I really did some of the things you did."

"Mr. Batkins, what was there objectionable in anything that I represented?"

"Why, you must understand, Mr. Warren, in the first place, I am unmarried."

"Yes — well, that's the way I played you."

"Yes, but I never paid my addresses to Hannah Partridge. If any of the girls should see the play that know I intend to get married, and really think it was me that you were acting, they would all tell me to go and have Miss Partridge. That was a nice-looking house-keeper you had there. The fact is, Mr. Warren, I thought it was all real but myself, and what bothers me still is, how you get at this play-acting, making everything seem so real."

"Mr. Batkins, as you are a legislator, I suppose you to be familiar with Shakespeare's works."

"Shakespeare's works? No; since I've been up to the House I've heard considerable of gas-works, water-works, soap-works, and fire-works, but not Shakespeare's."

"Is it possible!" said Mr. Warren. "I had hardly supposed there was a man of your age in Massachusetts not familiar with Shakespeare. What has been your reading, sir, in a literary way?"

I told him my first book was "Robinson Crusoe," then "Charlotte Temple" and "Eliza Wharton," the "History

of Rome," and some other books of the kind. I told him the story of my ride. He laughed, and said that ought to be put in the "Silver Spoon." We talked about a great many things, and I began to think he was a pretty nice sort of a gentleman. He explained to me that when the author wrote the play, this part was given to him; that he went to the State House, when the General Court assembled, to see who there was there that seemed to agree with the author's idea. He found a number of country gentlemen who appeared to come up to the idea of the author in representing a class. The author gave the name of Batkins to his ideal, perhaps had visited Cranberry Centre himself, selecting you as his model Mr. Batkins.

I listened to him, and asked him if that was the way plays were made. He said, sometimes not. There were plays in which none of the characters were like anything human. I asked him who paid for making plays. He explained to me that it was the public at last, but the manager first.

On the whole, I was pleased with my visit to Mr. Warren, and upon asking him if some things could not be altered a little, he said I must see the author about that. I asked him what kind of men these play-authors were. He said there were different kinds, like men in all other professions or trades. I asked him how much a play was worth. He said you could only tell by trying it. I asked him if all authors had the same price. "No," he said, "some work on the principle of the negro who sold brooms." I asked him how that was. He said, "Two negroes, who were broom-sellers, met to discuss the practice of underselling. Cæsar said to Johnson, 'How is it you sell brooms cheaper than I do, when I steal the corn I make them of?' 'Why, Cæsar, easy enough. I steal the brooms all ready-made.' So some authors steal the stuff and make the plays, while another set steal the plays ready-made. Hence the difference in price."

"Mr. Warren, I am obliged to you — I am really pleased to make your acquaintance."

"I am very happy to have met you, Mr. Batkins; shall be happy to see you often."

"Mr. Kimball has given me an invitation to come to the Museum every night. I mean to see you often; and if you should ever visit Cranberry Centre I shall be happy to see you at the homestead. I could introduce you to some singular people, and if you want to put them into your plays, you can."

I thanked him again for the insight he had given me into plays, as it seemed to me a grand way of blending instruction with amusement. I told him I should go and get a book of Shakespeare, and read the "Silver Spoon" part of it. He smiled in a very gentlemanly way; said Shakespeare had been dead many years, although many of his plays had lived until now; that he did not write the "Silver Spoon." The author of the "Silver Spoon," however, he said, was his neighbor; and if Mr. Batkins would call upon him, he had no doubt he would permit him to read the play, make any alterations he desired, and possibly give him some information as to Shakespeare's works.

I again bade him adieu. He smiled, and said, "*Au revoir*, Mr. Batkins." I inquired of Miss Wilson, when I returned home, what language that was. She said it was French, and explained the meaning.

While noting down the heads of these facts in my journal, I thought I had received considerable light from my visit to Mr. Warren. I shall not describe his appearance, for I do not suppose there is anybody in New England who has not seen Mr. William Warren, to say nothing of a great many people in the United States and foreign countries. If there are any such people, and if they read this book I am making, I advise them to see him. They say he does look

just like me; and for that reason I have applied to him that I may have his picture in this book, when the reader can judge.

I had made up my mind to go and see the author of the "Silver Spoon." As that will come in its proper place, I shall dismiss the subject to return to matters of the State House, which at this time were very interesting.

After I had asked Mr. Kimball if the actors lived in the Museum, I wondered why I should have thought such a thing. What a family to provide for, to be sure! When we have men on a farm, generally we find them in board and lodging; that is, when they are hired by the year, or in hay-making-time; but farming and play-acting are different things.

When I arrived at the State House, as I was passing through the Doric Hall, I saw a man with a travelling-bag, in conversation with Joseph. He appeared as if he was in a consumption. When Joseph left the man I asked him who that sickly man was. He said he was a representative from . . . , who had been sick, and had just come to Boston. He was looking for his room, and wanted me to show it to him, as he was tired, and wanted to go to bed. I told him the members did not lodge in the State House. He said he thought they did; he had been in the Senate Chamber, and showed his credentials; but they told him his place was in the other hall. Joseph said he had sent him to a boarding-house. I don't think my mistake about Mr. Kimball's actors indicated so much ignorance of Boston ways, as the member from . . . did, when he thought he was to have his "per diem" pay, and to have board and lodgings in the State House.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## I GET THE FLOOR.

MR. JEROME SPLENDID SILK was a character in the "Silver-Spoon" play, you understand; that is, the character is real, but not the name and invention. I think this dramatic form a good method to warn people against the conduct of individuals, whose names it might be unsafe to write, to print, or to speak the truth to the individual himself, except by some of the rhetorical applications to him, as if to another person.

It will not be forgotten that I objected to the way I was used, name and all, to represent a not over-qualified specimen from the rural districts, in the "Silver Spoon." Mr. Silk, not a member, was represented as rather "coming it over" — to use a vulgar saying — Mr. Batkins, of the Museum. I had protested against that author's ideal, as Mr. Warren called him, being identified with me, in anything, socially or politically; but I have to state that I did make the acquaintance of a man, — a colonel as he was called, — who tried his wits on me, as Mr. Silk did on the Batkins of the "Silver Spoon." He borrowed my money, over-persuaded me to use my influence, and give my vote, for the carrying of a bill, which, in the opinion of some members of sound judgment, was of no more pith than Silk's act for the growth of caterpillars. The author of the "Silver Spoon" put that allegorically. So shall I, in using the name of Mr. Silk, to conceal the real name of the member, and the act he invited me to support. I shall call it the act for the promotion of the growth of caterpillars. If

my readers can see the individual in my picturing of the linaments of his face, in the adornments of his body, very well; and, you understand, if he himself recognizes in Mr. Silk a person whose name was on the roll in the session of 1852, I am satisfied without his acknowledging the fact in the newspapers of the day.

Colonel Silk, then, was one of the best-dressed men that ever had, at that day, answered to his name upon a call of the "yeas and nays" in the House of Representatives.

There is a kind of dog, called a poodle in old times, or lady's lap-dog. These animals recently have had a new classification, and are of different breeds and shapes, to distinguish which at this time I shall make no attempt. The kind I refer to is usually small in dimensions, with white curly hair, carrying, in manner and motion, an expression of considerable self-esteem and conceit, I suppose in consequence of being selected as ladies' companions, endowed with all the social privileges some other parlor nuisances enjoy, whose insignificant bark, jerky snarl, and showing of teeth at the entrance of strangers, are well known to visitors in a certain kind of society, whose characteristics it is no part of my duty or pleasure to recapitulate. Silk, then, looked like one of these poodles; it would be necessary, of course, to trim his ears a little, and enlarge his features, to complete the likeness, his locomotion being usually on two legs instead of the quadruped's manner of passing to and fro on four on occasions of business or pleasure, as the case might be. Silk had no perceptible tail, and the likeness between himself and the poodle terminated at the line involved in his shirt-collar surrounding his neck, to which his ordinary habiliments from below upwards were contiguous. Silk's coats, vests, and other articles of dress were in the extreme of the fashion, as I have before hinted, in saying he was one of the best-dressed men, in the State House, of the session of 1852. I believe he was by profession a lawyer, a broker, or something of the sort.

Colonel Silk was ready to speak on every occasion, and appeared always equal to the emergency, and frequently, for I sat near to him, when I was about to get the speaker's eye or ear, — which I always found it difficult to do; of which fact I inquired of Mr. Banks the reason. If he gave me one I don't think I understood it or profited by it. As I say, if I tried to get a chance to speak, Silk would ask me what I wanted, and when I had begun to explain to him, he would say, "Yes, I see; I'll do it for you," and, sure enough, somehow or other, Mr. Banks always gave him the chance. I had at this time received a letter from home, saying, that I — On the whole, I will put in the letter without the name, and let my friendly reader put what construction upon it he may deem best.

"CRANBERRY CENTRE, March, 1852.

"J. S. BATKINS, — DEAR SIR: — Great complaints are made here of your silence on a question important to the interests of Cranberry Centre. The people are disappointed. Mr. Spring is to visit Boston, and use his influence to find somebody to support a certain bill, which is to be of vast consequence to Cranberry Centre. Look to your laurels; 'win your spurs;' let Cranberry Centre be heard from."

I did not hear of this while I was at the homestead, but I thought it ought to be attended to.

When I read this letter over again, I was determined to make some sort of a speech before Spring could arrive. I requested Colonel Silk, if he saw me about to rise, not to disturb me. The caterpillar bill, as I called it, had got somehow before the House; its exact stage then I have no means of now explaining. One day, when the House was unusually thin, — I believe there was some holiday work going on, — I proposed to make my attempt. As soon as I took my seat, I pulled out my great written speech from my pocket, and laid it upon my desk. I called upon Joseph, one of the pages, and asked him for a journal of the previous year. I had not "won my spurs," — my reader knows that was in my

speech, — Spring had "won his spurs." I looked over the speech; the page brought the journal, and, seeing my speech on the desk, said: —

"Mr. Batkins, are you going to speak to-day?"

I said, "Yes, if I can get the opportunity."

"I will look out for you," said Joseph, and left me at the call of some member near the speaker's desk.

After a little business the subject of interest to me was taken up. I rose. "Mr. Speaker," said I.

This time I caught Mr. Banks' eye, who recognized me with a smile. "The member from Cranberry Centre," said he.

At last I had the floor. Nobody else said a word; members turned round to listen. I repeated the words, "Mr. Speaker," and everything about me seemed turning round. Bean, the sea-captain's wife, Feathergilt, Spring, Aunt Dolly, Sarah Trivetts, Dr. Slawter, everybody and everything was tumbled together about me. I saw a pair of spurs in the air, bright and shining; they seemed to perform a movement as if to light on my head, notwithstanding their proper place of attachment, for use or ornament, is in another direction. It is impossible for me to describe all that passed in that flitting moment of dizziness and confusion. The time I had so much desired had come; but the man was not there. My first glance at real things was Joseph at my side, who had brought a tumbler filled with water to me, evidently supposing I intended to make a long speech; and this explained the meaning of his saying, "Mr. Batkins, I will look out for you." I took a draught of the water, then another. I looked about; all eyes were gazing at me, and every eye appeared as large as the light upon a locomotive engine.

A Boston member, always well posted, and always setting things right if they were getting into a snarl, after a sweep of his eyes all round the hall fixed them on me, and made a

motion with his hand as if to say no to something. I felt that I would give my right in the farm almost if somebody would do something to stop my going on, in any proper way. After, at intervals, in small draughts, swallowing half the water in the glass, I again set up myself and said faintly, "Mr. Speaker." The member who shook his head at me rose from his seat, and said, "Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order."

The speaker said, "The member from Boston will state the point of order."

"I will, — I do not believe there is a quorum in the House. I wish it to be known," was the response.

"The point is well taken," said Mr. Banks.

The clerk was ordered to count the House, and when the number was given, the speaker declared there was not a quorum of members in their seats, and the House could not transact any business. This was joyful news to me. I was stopped; but it was not my intention to have it appear in this light, you understand; so I raised my voice courageously, pretty much as a man will who has been frightened by an attack of an ugly dog after his owner has appeared and called him off. Says I, looking indignantly, after another sip of the water, "Mr. Speaker, I" —

The Boston member arose; said he, "Will the member from Cranberry Centre give way a moment?"

I did not know exactly what he was driving at. I knew what I wanted, and that was not to make a speech, but let the news go to Cranberry Centre that I had once obtained the floor. So I ventured to say that if I gave way I should hold the floor until I had made a motion. Mr. Speaker Banks said no motion was in order except to adjourn, as there was no quorum present. I sat down apparently in a huff, without agreeing to anything, when the Boston member arose and said, "Mr. Speaker, I move the House adjourn."

This was seconded by many voices; the question was put, and the House adjourned.

Some members hastily left the hall; others gathered in little parties. As they frequently looked at me, I suppose I was the subject of their conversation.

I think this was the first time an adjournment had been made in consequence of insufficient numbers at this session. I thought it was hardly fair, as none of us had earned our "per diem" wages, or the two dollars and a half per day, as was the plain English of the thing. I mentioned this to a member whose seat was next to mine, and who was making up his newspapers to send home, as he said he sold them to a tavern-keeper in his town for half the subscription price, during the session. He looked at me and smiled. Said he: —

"Mr. Batkins, frequent adjournments will make the session longer, and as many of us could not earn two dollars and a half per day at any other work than legislation, we ought not to complain."

I replied, in that light it was an advantage to such members. By this time the Boston member who made the motion to adjourn came to my seat.

"Mr. Batkins," said he, "I have not had the pleasure of an introduction to you; but I shall be glad to know you better. My name is Tenpinson."

I call it Tenpinson, you understand. He spoke his real name; there was no such name on the roll as I give him. I state this that my reader may not have the trouble of looking over the list of 1852, if his curiosity should lead him to such inquiry. Tenpinson, on the play-plan of representation of character under an invented name, was a large specimen of Boston development, raised in an agricultural town not many miles from Boston, and transplanted early in his youthful days to the soil which has produced so many specimen men of mark under city culture, whose blossoms first

expanded in the rural districts. I shall not name them at this time.

His head and face were of the ox pattern, without the horns; a little shortened, until its appearance was not unlike the representation of a full moon in the almanacs. There was always a smile upon his lips, which was seconded by a merry twinkle of the eye. The constant use of tobacco supplied the frequent motion of his jaws in the manner somewhat of the ruminating animal chosen as an illustration of physiognomy in his case, whose cud-chewing propensity is well known, although the cud is formed of a different kind of plant compared with that used by the member to exercise his jaw gymnastics. The physiological fact of an ox losing his cud, and not living long unless he is provided with a new one, of course is not paralleled in the case of the member referred to. His round forehead was sparsely covered with hair, his neck was short; from it was continued a body of such ample proportions that the weight of the whole concern was some more pounds than two hundred avoirdupois. With this large body, he had but a small voice, and after much exertion his breathing apparatus was evidently destined to prevent the proper amount of what Dr. Slawter called oxygen to move the vital current according to the requirements either of long walking or long talking. He was considered a joker, and had a way of enforcing attention to the display of this talent by a squeaky laugh, and a poke with his finger at some part of the listener's body, which, in the experience of some persons, lasted for some hours after the first sensation inflicted upon the field of his enterprising digitation. I had received one of these finger-points upon my ribs as an accompaniment to his self-introduction. My experience, I dare say, was not that of a person who saw any joke in his impressive style. I rather withdrew from the reach of his arm as I repeated his phrase of "hoping for a better acquaintance."

"Batkins," Tenpinson continued, "I don't know what your

speech was to be about, and am sorry that I should be obliged to disturb you; but the fact is, it was understood by a party of us that there should be no quorum this morning, so that an adjournment would be a matter of course. You see there is always a way of doing things, but it is not necessary always that everybody should know how the thing is done. Now, I am willing that you should come into the ring. If you do — why, if Cranberry Centre helps Boston, Boston will help Cranberry Centre. Your predecessor, Spring, understood this thing, and found his account in it."

"In the ring?" said I to myself; "that's the ~~the~~kleenk, as the man in the 'Silver Spoon' called it, and in my letter too." It would not do for me to join that, for I was always to vote against the Boston members. "But if Spring did it perhaps," thought I, "that's the way he 'won his spurs,' or the straps that fastened them on, and that is pretty much the same thing." "Well," said I to Tenpinson, who had just been talking to another member, "I will think the matter over."

"All right," he said, and walked away with a member, to say something to Mr. Banks, who had not left his chair, and who, I rather thought, was not far out of the ring, if he was not already in it. I rolled up my papers and my speech, and, as I descended the stairs in the State House, I felt more like a legislator than at any other previous day of the session; and the words I heard from Mr. Tenpinson, that he was willing I should come into the ring, kept humming in my ears, until I found myself repeating them in the street. I am not ashamed to state it now, that such was my condition of curiosity to know what this "ring" meant, in my then days of political ignorance and innocence, that it is my opinion that Eve, when listening to the serpent, was not more thirsty after knowledge than I was at Tenpinson's \* promise of good for Cranberry

\* NOTE OF EXPLANATION. — Those who desire a reason for everything a person may say or do, may ask why I selected the name of Tenpinson. I answer, the per-



Centre, which I was to learn if I accepted his rather plainer proposition than that made in the Garden of Eden by Satan, in his persuasive and inviting form. I went home to think the matter over, and there I heard Spring had been inquiring for me, and in my opinion was manœuvring to secure my seat, and win more "spurs," or saddles and bridles, as the case might be.

son referred to was a great hand at rolling ball. I never played the game; I was told he used to knock down all the pins with one ball. His chums called him "Old Tenstrike." I thought Tenpinson would read better than Tenstriker, my original idea.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### I CALL ON THE AUTHOR OF THE "SILVER SPOON."

I AM under considerable restraint in composing this chapter. The reader will perceive the novelty of the situation. I think, if the facts of this interview were confided to a third person, to discourse upon, it would be more satisfactory to all concerned; however, I shall endeavor to describe what occurred, as correctly as my memory, assisted by my journal, will permit. I am not allowed to make any reference to personal peculiarities, or to make comparisons as to the likeness of animals, as in other cases. Imagination, my reader, must supply the omission, if you are unacquainted with the individual himself.

One afternoon on a disagreeable, sleety sort of a day, I started for the residence of the author of the "Silver Spoon." I hesitated a little before I rung the bell, as to which door of the house I should call at. I did not know but I should have to pay him a fee, as I was going to consult him, first, you understand, professionally. I found out at the theatre and the taverns, and a great many other places, the difference in doors of entrance made a difference in the price of tickets. I concluded I would go to the office door, where two or three people were just coming out. Before I rung the bell I thought I had better make up my mind what disease I would consult him about. In doing this, and thinking of my speech, as in the case of Mr. Warren, I made some noise with my feet. The door was opened, before I rung the bell, by the author himself. I knew him at once by what some of the people had told me. I pretended ignorance, however, and asked if the . . . . was at home.

"Walk in, sir."

He had a cigar in his mouth, but it was not lighted. I walked into the office, and at his invitation sat down. He asked me at the same time if there was anything offensive to me in the smoke of tobacco. I said no; but I understood doctors generally agreed it was injurious.

He said, "You must not always believe what doctors say."

"Then you do not think it is injurious?"

"You see my practice. With your permission I shall set this a-going."

He lit his cigar; but he kept his eye on me, saying, when it was well going, "What can I do for you?"

As I had not made up my mind what disease I was to consult him about, and as he kept his eyes so fixed upon me, looking me all over as if he had made up his mind about something in my case, I was a little uneasy. When I used to call on Dr. Slawter I felt differently. So I thought I would put it in another way, and I said, "I called to see you, sir, to ask you if you see anything wrong about me."

"Yes, you are not married."

"Where do you see that?"

Giving a long puff, and sending rings of smoke up in the air, one after another, he replied, "I see it in your strong expression of happiness and self-reliance."

"Are you a mesmerizer?"

"No."

"Then you don't see any particular disease about me?"

"No."

"Did you ever see me before?"

"That's what I was thinking; but I have come to the conclusion that I have never seen you, but somebody very like you. You are from the country, sir?"

"Yes, sir;" and to make matters short, I thought I would

tell him who I was, and not ask for any medical advice. "My name is Batkins, sir."

"Oh, yes! that's where the resemblance is. I saw your namesake at the Museum."

I pulled out the play-bill from my pocket, showed it to him, and asked him if he was not the author, as there stated. He said it was one of his jobs. "I have been to see Mr. Kimball and Mr. Warren about the matter, and that is what I have come to see you for. I am Jefferson S. Batkins, and I come from Cranberry Centre, and I want to know a little more how these things are done. Mr. Warren said he thought you would explain the matter, and give me some information in regard to Shakespeare, who, as I understand, was a great maker of plays, and though he has been dead more than two hundred years, his plays are acted now."

"That is very true; Mr. Warren can tell you more about Shakespeare than I can."

"Well, you can tell me about this 'Silver Spoon'?"

"Not much; have you heard this play, Mr. Batkins?"

I told him I had.

"I thought when you came in I had seen you somewhere."

"What I want to know is, if you think it is right to put people on the stage before they are dead, and while they are walking about the streets, so people can point at them as they do at me, and say, 'There he goes,' as they do since I was put into the Museum playhouse?"

"Why not, Mr. Batkins? The great object of life with everybody is, to be in a position such as yours, to hear other people say, 'There he goes.' That's fame, that's reputation, that's notoriety, Mr. Batkins."

"Did you ever know of such a case before?"

"I think I have."

"Not such a case as mine? You did not know me at home?"

"Personally, —no."

"How came I in your play?"

"Naturally enough. The dramatist or the novelist, in describing any particular class of persons, creates a representative, and in proportion as that creation appears to be real, it is recognized as the type of a class."

"I do not know that I see clearly what you mean; but how came your creation, as you call it, of a representative to be called *Batkins*; and how comes he to be the representative from *Cranberry Centre*?"

"An accidental coincidence; you are the type of certain country representatives."

"And you have known living men put on the stage with other men to act them out?"

"Certainly, Mr. *Batkins*, — men and women too."

"My case seems to be a little different. When you created me to represent a class, how came you to call me *Batkins*, — J. S. *Batkins*, too?"

"By mere accident, as in the case of '*Paul Pry*,' in the comedy. I never knew a person of the name; there are many that are like the author's creation, and a real one might turn up. So in the farce of '*John Jones*;' it would not be very singular to have a '*Mr. John Jones*' inquire of the play-maker how he came to put him on the stage, '*Major Jack Downing*' and '*Colonel Pluck*' were both put upon the stage; so was '*General Jackson*,' '*Solon Shingle*,' and '*Sam Patch*.'"

"And they all saw themselves there?"

"I cannot answer that."

"I knew Mr. *Shingle*, and when he is put there again I will go and see him. And so they put women on the stage too, and other women act them out?"

"Yes, many years ago, a celebrated lady, who was disturbed at the criticisms of the press, made a pen-creation with the lively title of '*Bugs*,' — bugs being her name for the

critics. The *Bugs* piece was put upon the stage, introducing the lady herself in a representative character, — a blue-stocking."

"A blue-stocking, — what is that?"

"A term used in past days to signify an intensely learned or literary lady. In this case the lady was an actress of ability, an authoress of some note, — one of the family of the great *Kembles*. Her case, in some degree, is not unlike yours, Mr. *Batkins*."

"So Miss *Kimball* did have somebody else act her out?"

"Yes, a gentleman represented the authoress of the '*Bugs*,' following the old ways of Shakespeare's time, when boys and men acted female characters."

"A man acted Miss *Kimball*, the same as Mr. *Warren* acted me?"

"Yes, making proper allowances, of course."

"Was this Miss *Kimball* a relative to Mr. *Kimball* of the General Court, who keeps the Museum?" I inquired.

"Not any, Mr. *Batkins*; a different name, — *Kemble*, not *Kimball*."

I asked if Shakespeare put real men and women in his plays.

"Yes, many historical characters; others imaginative, but reflecting the age and body of the time, and the subtleties of human nature."

"But he did not make any representatives to the General Court," I ventured to say.

"No, but: —

"Each change of many-colored life he drew,  
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new," —

as *Johnson* gave it."

I asked what *Johnson*.

He said, "*Sam*."

I told him I was afraid I should not understand Shakespeare. I was engaged in studying, and, I was not ashamed to

own it, some matters that I had neglected in my younger days, and I did not suppose it was necessary to understand Shakespeare, in order to perform my duties as a legislator.

"No, to understand Shakespeare, however, would seem to imply some previous mental training. If some legislators had so read Shakespeare as to understand him, they would not be found framing and defending useless statutes, to control human appetites and tastes. No poet is borrowed or stolen from more than Shakespeare. Distinguished orators, often ignorant of their origin, give credit to the Bible for their quoted phrases, when a stage play of Shakespeare contained the enforced figure, or bold assertion of some nervous, energetic truth."

As he referred to distinguished orators, I asked if Cicero and Demosthenes borrowed ideas from Shakespeare. He gave a droll slant of his eyes at me, and after a pause said:—

"No, Mr. Batkins; they flourished many centuries before Shakespeare was born."

We had gone away from the object of my visit, which was to get the hang of Batkins in the "Silver Spoon." As I was about to ask him how he made these plays, a messenger came in and delivered a note to the author. He read it hastily, saying, "Mr. Batkins, I am obliged to leave you for a short time. Here is something to amuse you." He placed a volume of plays upon the table. "Read Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors,' Mr. Batkins, and you will discover how two persons can be so alike as to interfere with their recognition. When I return you shall give me your opinion of the Dromios. Excuse me."

He left me, and I thought I would look about. I saw something to remind me of Dr. Slawter's office. . . . There was a bookcase full of books; a sort of undersized bureau, for the purpose of keeping . . . Upon this was an image, I supposed, of some great Boston . . . I afterwards discovered my mistake in this idea. I sat down to

read the book. It was as hard to get at as the "History of Rome," full of hard names, and begun, as near as I could make out, about a pair of twins and a shipwreck. I could not see that it had anything to do with the two Batkinsees in any shape. I think I should have soon fallen to sleep, but my friend returned, much to my satisfaction, and asked me how I liked the book. I signified to him that I thought there might be good reading in it, but I wanted to know a little more about things nearer home. I told him I hoped he would excuse me, but I wanted to know a little more about the putting me into a play.

"Certainly;" he said, "I will tell you all about it. Sit down."

I told him I was much obliged to him for his politeness and his information, and I asked him whose image that was on the top of his . . . He said, "That is a bust of Edwin Forrest, the tragedian." I thought he was a fine specimen of mankind, and so expressed myself. He did not look much like Mr. Warren; of course he did not look like me. The author said no; but if Mr. Warren and myself were seen separately, it would be as difficult to tell which was Batkins and which was Warren, as in the play of "Errors" it was to distinguish the two Dromios.

I asked my friend if Mr. Forrest could make as much merri-ment on the stage as Mr. Warren did. He smiled, and said, "Both are artists, Mr. Batkins. They excel in different lines. I advise you, Mr. Batkins, when Mr. Forrest acts, to go to the theatre, and hear him in one of Shakespeare's plays. I shall be glad to know your opinion of him."

I asked some questions as to Dr. Slawter's theory of changes and transmission in the blood.

I assured him that I was satisfied with my interview, and

as I signified my pleasure, and took up my hat and coat to retire, my friend said, "I shall be happy to see you any time you may be pleased to call, Mr. Batkins."

I accepted the invitation to call on him again, with a promise from him to visit Cranberry Centre, if he had an opportunity, when it would give me great pleasure to introduce him to some of the notable persons of the place.\*

\* As will be seen, there are *points* in place of some parts of our conversation, which my coadjutor declines to have published, and refers me to a passage in the second chapter of this book, as to the agreement between us, with this remark: "Mr. Batkins, I do not object to the use of the words, 'author of the Silver Spoon,' but I cannot permit the use of the author's name, or allow you to circulate my professional or political opinions."

I yielded; it is hard to write and not print, and if my reader does not know who the author of the "Silver Spoon" is, he must look for it on the bills when the play is performed. — J. S. B.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A RECEPTION PARTY.

ONE morning, not long after my attempt at a speech, which was frustrated, as my reader has been informed, by the Boston ring, or kleenk; as they had it in the play, I found upon the table in my room a letter, which smelled as sweet as a barber's shop, directed to me in a very nice handwriting, which I opened, and read as follows: —

"REVERE HOUSE, Wednesday evening, March — .

"MISS AMANDA FEATHERGILT's compliments to Mr. J. S. Batkins, and begs his acceptance of the enclosed invitation for to-morrow evening, from my friend, Mrs. Hambleton Squiek, who receives on that occasion, she having just returned from Europe. Miss Feathergilt has the privilege of inviting one friend. Miss Feathergilt thought she could not use it more discreetly, at the same time more satisfactorily to herself and Mrs. Squiek, than by placing it at the disposal of her friend and neighbor, Mr. Batkins."

The enclosed invitation was printed on a shining piece of stamped pasteboard, and was as follows: —

"The pleasure of your company is requested on Thursday evening, March — , 1852, at 8½ P. M.

"MRS. HAMBLETON SQUIEK."

This invitation stirred me up considerably, for many reasons, moral, political, and social. I had heard at the State House that this party was coming off, and that it was to be quite an aristocratic affair. The governor was to be invited and other distinguished officials, including the mayor of Boston, and some of the aldermen, and members of the lower board, with other city dignitaries; but as my memory is not sufficient to

retain all their names I shall omit to name any, and thus avoid giving offence to the survivors, if any still remain. It was said the President of the United States was invited, but it was doubtful if he came so far from his sphere of official duty, to give a law — as I then understood the spoken word; it was spelled *eclat* — to the occasion.

I did not dream of an invitation, but it had come, and from Miss Feathergilt. I should go to Mrs. Hambleton Squiek's great party, certainly, if I followed my own inclination, and I thought I would not consult Wilson on this matter, as I was in the habit of doing on many what I considered difficult questions. I whistled and almost sung, as I walked about the room with the invitation in my hand, I was so elated, when all at once a thought came over me that was a drawback on my hilarious condition. My best suit of clothes was hardly the pattern to appear in at such a gay party, as Mrs. Hambleton Squiek's was to be, in the famous Revere Tavern; and could I afford to lay out money for anything new? I overhauled my stock, and, looking at my best trousers, I was reminded of the accident to the minister's, at the bank meeting, in Simms' Folly, and did not care to have a repetition of any similar outbreak in my own case.

I went up to the house at the usual hour, and inquired of one of the men I had had some talks with before, as to fashions in Boston society, how some gentlemen dressed, when they attended some of these high free-blows. I obtained the desired information, which, if I had attempted to follow out in full, would have taken a number of my "per diems" to have footed the bill.

At this day it seems to me impossible that I should have known so little of matters and things which to others were every-day occurrences. It was evident that I must dress up some, and, without making any long story about it, I went down to Oak Hall, and selected a new pair of trousers, a hand-

some yellow vest, a pair of white gloves, and, yes, I borrowed a coat, as there was not time enough to have one made, and had them sent home. When I gave my address, — J. S. Batkins, — the young man that tied up the bundle seemed delighted to have me for a customer. He wanted to know if he should send the clothes to the State House, or to Cranberry Centre. I smiled, and wrote the name of the street and the number of Wilson's house, and handed it to him. As I was leaving Oak Hall, I observed the young man beckoning to some of his fellow-shopkeepers to look at me, saying, "That's him, — Batkins," and after I had walked some ways from the door, which was opened for me by a very nice-looking gentleman, I turned round and saw, I should think, half of Mr. Simmons' workmen looking after me.

I was not offended; on the contrary, I was pleased that I was getting to be so well known. I never felt bad, to tell the truth, when I heard my name spoken in the streets, — Batkins, — with "There he goes" added to it, and at last I used to read it on the Museum play-bills, on the walls of the houses, with real pleasure, and even now, at this late day, I am not sure that my heart will not swell with emotion, if I should see printed at the booksellers' doors and in the newspapers: "For sale, 'The Life of Batkins.'"

But, as is often the case, I am anticipating the future. Whatever should have occupied my mind, during the interval of my securing my new clothes and the hour to prepare for the party, it did not obtain pre-eminence. The State House and Cranberry Centre, for the time, were partially put aside.

I do not propose to record the incidents of my preparatory operation. Upon looking into a mirror I was satisfied with my appearance. I certainly had not seen myself so well attired before. As my overcoat and hat would not be seen by the party, I had made no change in these useful, if not ornamental, parts of my equipage. I put them on, walked to

the Revere House as if I was no stranger to the streets leading to that great tavern. I ascended the steps, passed under the portico, and was met by a young man, who took my hat and coat, gave me a check, with a number 76, and placed the venerable garments on a shelf near some of the more elegant outfits of Boston's favorite sons. I was then shown upstairs to a handsome parlor filled with ladies and gentlemen, among whom the Feathergilt family were prominent. Miss Amanda, I thought, looked as well as any of them, and a great deal less like a rat than ever I saw her before. I was presented to the hostess of the evening, as they called her, Mrs. Hambleton Squiek, and her husband, Mr. Squiek, — he was the host; I was the guest. That was the first time in my life I understood these terms in their proper relations.

The people talked on all subjects. I was introduced to many people; among the rest to a lady who moved majestically round the room, — the widow of General Swamscott, who, if the question of quantity was to decide it, was the belle of the party. I began to wish I knew Mrs. General Swamscott better, as she talked of war, politics, and legislation as well as a man; and I thought of what Bean said; if I had a wife like Mrs. Swamscott she could assist my political prospects very much.

I thought Miss Feathergilt seemed to be a little jealous of my attention to Mrs. Swamscott, although she introduced me to her, and my conscience, which always had a great deal to do in keeping me about right, did whisper to me that, as I should not have had the pleasure of being at this party but for Miss Feathergilt, I ought to give her a little attention. Miss Feathergilt joined us, saying to Mrs. Swamscott, who was laughing merrily at something I said, — I dare say a good joke, though I might not have been aware of it, — "Will you permit me, my dear, to rob you of Mr. Batkins' company for a moment? I desire to present him to Alderman —, I have forgotten his name, and cannot obtain it now, — a rather fat man."

"Oh, certainly," said Mrs. Swamscott; "we shall meet again, Mr. Batkins, and continue our conversation."

She made an elegant courtesy, kissed her hand to me, and swept away from us, throwing her dress about in a way such as I never saw before except in a theatre, where the ladies seem to do everything in a style that will put romantic notions into the head of most any man, not even excepting a member of the General Court.

I obeyed Miss Feathergilt's request to come with her, and in another part of the room she introduced me to her friend, the alderman, who began to talk with me about the prohibitory law, then on its passage at the State House. I gave him my views, as usual at considerable length, while Miss Feathergilt was engaged in conversation with a curious-looking gentleman, who I was told was the editor of a temperance newspaper.

The alderman said, "Batkins, you country members are too hard on us in the city; if you don't want any rum, don't have it; but let us have it, if we want it."

I told him I was willing for everybody to have what they wanted, if they could get it.

"That's right. I knew by your looks you was all right. You will vote against this new law. It's no use to make it; people will do as they please, law or no law. How is it going?"

I told him I did not know; I guessed "all right."

"Ah, that's what you all say. Now, Batkins, you know the governor will veto any prohibitory law, don't you?"

I told him I could not speak for the governor.

"Then you are not in the ring?"

"The clique? No."

"See that fellow," said the alderman, pointing to the curious-looking gentleman referred to as the editor of the temperance newspaper, — "he is here mousing round to see if this reception is on temperance principles."

I was amazed at this. Says I, "Mr. Alderman, this is a



private party; the prohibitory law would not prevent the use of wine in this tavern, on such an occasion, would it?"

"Why, yes, if you have rum, somebody must sell it; but, between ourselves, this party is not altogether a private party. Mrs. Squiek's husband wants to go to Congress. The dodge is to be temperance, to get the votes of his district. I don't know but he lives in your district. Now, this is a strictly temperance levee. You see the force of public opinion. Squiek is in the habit of taking his 'tods,' and, for the matter of that, they say Mrs. Squiek does too; so that cold-water editor is invited here as a compliment to his clique."

I told the alderman he surprised me; and so he did, and I was getting information too, as to how the "cat was jumping," as the old saying is.

"But," continued the alderman, "as you are all right, I'll show you there are two sides to the question. Come with me. I will introduce you to some first-rate fellows."

I saw that Miss Feathergilt was still engaged in conversation with a lady, and I followed the alderman up two or three flights of stairs, where I heard some loud laughing and smelled tobacco-smoke. A door opened, and displayed, spread on a large table, bottles, glasses, cigars, eatables and drinkables, including those things in the tin boxes that I saw at the Museum, that made Mr. Warren so sick, that he called "little fishes biled in ile." I was asked to imbibe, after having been introduced to the party assembled. They were talking about Mr. Banks, who, they said, had just been there. I did not see him, so I cannot say he had been there. I declined the hard drink, but, for appearance' sake, pretended to drink some of that squirting wine they had, — champagne, they called it, — and tried to eat one of the fishes; but either the ile, or the thought of Mr. Warren's experience after I had seen him try it in the play, prevented my enjoying the luxury at that time, but which since, as it is said to be necessary in order to appre-

ciate olives, I have done in the case of sardines, learned to eat them.

After a few moments with the alderman, I returned to the parlor. As we came downstairs, he observed, "Mr. Batkins, this, you see, is a temperance party, and that fellow will publish it as such in his paper to-morrow, if you do not undeceive him."

When we arrived, the guests were engaged in partaking of refreshments, without the upper-room accompaniments, — cakes, oysters, salads, ice-creams, fruit and lemonade. Coffee and tea were in abundance.

I joined Miss Feathergilt, assisted her in securing some ice-cream, while I thought I would partake of some oysters one of the waiters placed in my hands; but the thought of their use many years before to my eyes, by order of Dr. Slawter, after my interview with the sea-captain's wife, or the idea of Bean's trick upon me at that time, rather turned my inclinations into disgust. I declined the oysters, and swallowed a plateful of a pudding they called Charlotte something, much to the enjoyment of Miss Amanda, who said she was delighted to see my expression of fondness for the pastry with a feminine name. It was a compliment to the original Charlotte Russe. I said, "Charlotte how, Miss Feathergilt?" She said, "Russe." I did not quite catch it, but I said, "Yes," with a smile. I told her I was always fond of feminine names, and if all feminines were as nice as this pie she called Charlotte Russe, I should not wonder if they had admirers in abundance.

Amanda seemed pleased, and whispered, "Mr. Batkins, did you say anything very particular to Mrs. Swamscott?"

"About what?" said I, reaching for another piece of Charlotte Russe.

"Did you tell her you was a bachelor?"

"No, indeed."

"What did you say to Mrs. Swamscott about marriage, Mr. Batkins?"

"Nothing. Why do you ask me that question?"

"Because she asked me if you were a marrying man."

"Well, what did you tell her, Miss Feathergilt?"

"I told her at one time I thought you had some inclination that way; but on the whole I could not say."

She was still eating a piece of frozen colored cream, but I thought looked at me as much as to say, "Batkins, you ought to marry me." I confess sometimes I did think I ought to have given her a hint that way, at least; but then Aunt Dolly did not like her, and I felt I ought to please Aunt Dolly; so I said to her, "I am too old, and have given up the idea, or if I had the idea, I do not know where I could find a woman who would have me. I should not like to be refused, now, would you, Amanda, that is, Miss Feathergilt?"

She hesitated a moment, looked at me, took up a large piece of frosted cake, and said, "Mr. Batkins, now tell me, are you engaged to any lady?"

I replied, "Miss Feathergilt, I am not."

"Mrs. Swamscott didn't ask you to marry her, did she?"

"No, indeed, Miss Amanda."

"Well, Mr. Batkins, if you have no preference for any lady, and you should think of getting married, you can have me one of these days."

I was pleased at this proposition, but yet I was amazed, you understand; nevertheless, I did not know how to answer her I could not say no, and, to tell the truth, as I have hinted, Mrs. Swamscott had done something to me which sent me on the matrimonial anxious seat; but she had not offered herself in so many words.

I said, "Miss Feathergilt, you have taken me by surprise by your complimentary offer. I know there are many good things about you. I am under obligations to you; but Aunt

Dolly don't exactly like you. I am under a kind of promise not to marry, if I ever do marry, — and I do not know as I ever shall, — I say I am under a kind of promise not to marry anybody that Aunt Dolly would object to."

"Well, Mr. Batkins, I do not want you to marry me unless I am agreeable to you, and I think I can be so; but if I am agreeable to you, or should I be, I will take the risk of Aunt Dolly's agreeing to it on my own shoulders."

"Shoulders," I looked at them outside of her dress. I thought they were broad enough to risk it. I said, "Miss Feathergilt, when the session is over, we will see. I take this opportunity to thank you for the invitation to this party of Mrs. Hambleton Squiek's. I see the people are beginning to go home, and your father will be expecting you."

"Oh, no, Mr. Batkins, he has gone home long ago. Ma was not well, and could not come, so I told pa you would get into the carriage and come with me. Our acquaintance commenced with a ride."

"Yes, in a shower. Very well, I will get my hat and overcoat and go with you, Miss Amanda, with pleasure."

"Just speak to Tom at the door, Mr. Batkins, and he will call the carriage. I will be ready soon."

I left her. I saw Tom; he called the carriage. Miss Feathergilt came to the door, and entered the carriage. I followed her, and rode home with her. Thus ended my visit to Mrs. Hambleton Squiek's reception party, but as to Amanda and Mrs. Swamscott let my reader wait. Time and patience work wonders.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN.

I HAD very materially added to my list of experiences. I had so often heard the subject of marriage discussed in the manner that never gives offence to a bachelor, by interested representative candidates for wedlock, that I more seriously than ever began to take to heart some of the recollections of these pleasant discussions, and I actually did, sometimes, find myself putting to myself the query whether Mrs. General Swamscott meant anything when she said no man should be a public functionary who had not a wife to assist him in framing a little democracy in his household. My notion of domestic government in the family kingdom, however, had been rather against democracy in the territory. My father's doctrine was of a high order of the patriarchal, and insisted upon the authority of a king in the paternal office. My mother held a different opinion, and practically, I believe, endeavored to carry out her views. Her reign, as it was called, was comparatively short, and I do not propose to open a page in family history at this time, as it is not necessary to settle the question of Mrs. General Swamscott's matrimonial strategy, as she called it, or the tactics of love in the presence of the enemy, she maintaining that bachelors and old maids were enemies of progress, and, if they did not surrender unconditionally, were to be captured and punished, according to the usages of war.

I cannot well describe Mrs. General Swamscott. She was a

widow, and labelled as a specimen of wine, instead of woman, her age would have dated from a grape season of forty years before. She was bulky and tall. I have seen a picture of Columbia, with the flag around her, which conveys my idea of Mrs. Swamscott exactly. I do not know how she appears to other men's eyes. I have heard how her figure and embellishments were talked of by some persons. As they were generally the expressions of women of more diminutive stature and less masculine proportions, I shall not repeat them. The deceased general was undersized, as they would have said had he offered himself to the recruiting officer to be enrolled among the enlisted men. As he never proposed to do duty as a private soldier, he was not refused, and when he offered to become the commanding officer of the lady now the relict of the late general, his size proved no obstacle, and they were married. She never spoke much in my hearing of her married life. There were no offspring of Swamscott, which made the military widow more eligible, her future husband being not entitled to a step-father's duties and delights.

To continue my description of Mrs. General Swamscott would not much enlighten my reader as to her appearance, if he should meet her, nor would he recognize her by my word-painting of her beauties of feature or character; yet she did appear to me to possess a determined will and firmness of purpose in a cause worthy of her talent, to cause a husband, unless he possessed similar qualities, and had practically made her acquainted with them, to "Hail Columbia!" whenever she pleased, and not say the same thing to any other lady and let her hear of it. The lady had made impressions on me sufficient to cause me to think of her as a companion at the breakfast-table and other places where wives and husbands meet, as it were, on neutral ground.

I looked at her as she majestically crossed the street on a rainy day, in defiance of rain and storm, and as she stepped over

a young river, from the roadway to the sidewalk,— something of a distance,— I could not help exclaiming, in the words of somebody, "If she were mine I could say:—

'I am monarch of all I survey.'"

This exclamation grew out of an ecstasy of admiration at the display of that part of her person enclosed in stockings and boots. Of course, my practical experience in getting at the weight of cattle by a general estimate of the proportion of parts unseen with the parts seen was an advantage in settling, as it were, about her weight, when she was covered up in the various and mysterious articles of woman's wear; but now I had a glimpse of more than usually meets the eye when a lady's proportions are to be considered,— not the case of course in horse and cattle questions.

I cannot explain what I am about to relate. While I was suffering with this paroxysm of delight at the firm step and agile movement of Mrs. General Swamscott, the thought came to me, that the power that had so gracefully and readily transferred the body of Mrs. General Swamscott over the water, however concealed in the tight-fitting stocking and delicate boot, might, if directed against any part of the person of her companion, be as effectual in, gracefully or not, readily enough moving him into the street or elsewhere, as her whim or caprice directed. I heard afterwards this course of gymnastics she did sometimes practise upon the general, though I will not be responsible for the truth of the saying. Thus, in a moment as it were, "in the twinkling of an eye," my love for the widow, or something like it, resolved itself into a "No, I thank-you" kind of state of mind, which caused me to chuckle over my continued state of single-blessedness. One question in my mind is still unsettled, whether I was seen by her or not, or if she made the leap over the sluice-way, in order to display that agile movement, which, to women of large

proportions, is a source of pride and perhaps excusable vanity.

Closing my account with Mrs. General Swamscott, to whom the reader will recollect I was introduced at Mrs. Hamilton Squiek's by Miss Feathergilt, led me, naturally enough, to think of the proposal made to me conditionally by my neighbor and admirer of Cranberry Centre. To put it fairly, I might say she had offered herself to me. I suppose a great many marriages grow out of similarly made propositions, and I am free to say I do not see any more harm in a lady's proposing to a gentleman than in a gentleman's proposing to a lady. In fact, it is, properly considered, the more natural way. According to sacred writ, it must have been Eve who proposed to Adam, whatever of good or evil came of it. We can't always tell, you understand, so that the affair turns out well, what is the difference, be that as it may?

When I rode to the house of a friend on the evening of the party, where the Feathergilt's were visiting, Miss Amanda set things to rights, by telling me why she spoke her mind so freely. I do not know that it is necessary to repeat here all she said. She left matters so that I was not to be compromised, if I saw anybody I preferred, or if Aunt Dolly would not give her consent. I met her the next day. She gave me the news from the Centre, and said she should come down to hear my speech on the prohibitory law. This was a soft spot to me, and it would be of no use to say that it did not have some effect upon me, and I am not sure that it did not lead to my thinking less of Mrs. General Swamscott even before I witnessed her jumping qualities, as I have before mentioned.

It was pretty clear in my mind that to preserve my political position, I must be married, and I began to think Miss Feathergilt, if I should ever go to Congress, would shine at the capitol. I held up on that idea; it appeared selfish. I did not think money would influence me in such a matter. I

must confess, as my reader is aware, I knew her father was very wealthy, and was desirous that his daughter should marry some one distinguished in public life. This set me thinking that some other of these Boston officials might be tempted a little to offer her marriage, and I might suddenly hear that some alderman or councilman had taken from Cranberry Centre its most wealthy maiden; in that case the name of Batkins would not take the place of Feathergilt, nor the Feathergilt fortune assist the Batkins' ambition to a seat in Congress. With this in my mind, I ascended the State House steps, and was just in time to answer to my name, and vote with the majority.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## SIXTY DOLLARS.

I WAS at my post of duty at the State House every day. It was instructive, interesting, and amusing to me to listen to the debates on the liquor law. If I had been a stranger to our ways of conducting public business, I should have thought there was danger of producing a war in the State House, and if the words of the representatives meant anything, it would be a war to the knife, — though I did not exactly understand what that belligerent metaphor meant in a war of oratorical weapons.

The liquor law bill, with the various proposed amendments, by both friends and enemies to it, was unmercifully pounded with strong language from day to day, by the war-horses and the colts, now in their first battles, and smelling for the first time the smoke of the conflicts on the floors of the Senate chamber, and the popular arena of the House.

The speeches were terribly convincing on both sides, causing me great embarrassment, and requiring constant changes in the disposition of the strong language, out of which I was constantly constructing and reconstructing my — as it was hinted at — powerful maiden speech. I was making notes of what I supposed to be strong points, in my memorandum-book, while the debate was going on, and I dare say I expressed my sentiments on the same by an approving smile, an affirmative nod, or a shake of the head, a turn of the eye, a shrug of the shoulders, when there was a doubt in my mind, or a positive

negative conviction, — if there was ever anything positive in me at that time.

I was observed by some, if not "the observed of all observers," for Tenpinson said to me one day, "Batkins, we expect when your turn comes you will not leave a leg for this monstrous conception to stand upon."

I smiled as usual, but I made no reply; the rhetoric here was too much for me. I think he understood me that I agreed with him that the bill was "a monstrous conception," and that of course I should speak and vote against it in every shape; but that would be acting with the Boston clique. I had not yet arrived at that determination. Then as to the bill, — this "monstrous conception" not having a leg to stand upon, — I could neither see how a bill could be said to have legs, nor by what process, if it had, my speech was to perform the operation of amputation.

My friend, whom I have agreed to have my readers call Colonel Silk, took every occasion to be near me when I was taking notes, and one day he said, "Batkins, you must be laying yourself out for a great speech. Now, in confidence, tell me, — is it not so?"

A little off my guard, I said, "Yes, colonel, I am trying to put things together a little. I do not know how I shall come out."

"Come out?" said the colonel, "how should you come out? You will not, of course, try to compete with these lawyers, with their great forensic efforts, which, after all, are 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' One of your plain, straightforward, common-sense, farmer-like speeches, going right to the mark, would knock their airy fabrics into annihilating space."

I smiled again, saying, "Cincinnatus was a farmer. I never read any of his speeches. But Cicero and Demosthenes were not farmers, eh, colonel?" and here I smiled again.

The colonel said he believed they were not; the days of such men were over. "Batkins, give it to them. I wish I had been a farmer."

I have heard people say, in order to account for some strange marriages, that there were times when the human mind was strangely compliant, and, as it were, bent on its own destruction, so far as a determination to carry out an idea is concerned; and also, as it is said, flattery, expressed or implied, is an agent powerful to produce this state, in opposition to preconceived opinions. I must have been in this state, and acted upon by this agent, when I asked the colonel if he would like to hear me read my speech.

He replied, "With great pleasure, Batkins. I was about to ask for that privilege; but you farmers are such long-headed chaps." If he had said long-eared, I suppose I should not have felt pleased then, but my reader will think he would have been right, when he comes to the sequel. After a pause and a smile, which might be translated into the phrase, "I guess not," yet willing to take the credit implied in the compliment, I responded: "You flatter us from the rural districts, colonel." I was about to draw on my recollections from the "History of Rome" for something Cæsar said, or something somebody said to him, on this account. It came thus: —

"I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Cæsar."

It will be seen how history repeats itself: Cæsar and Batkins! The colonel said there was no flattery in his remark. "I shall be delighted to hear your speech, and if I can see anything to be improved, and you will not be offended, I shall be pleased to offer you some suggestions."

I told the colonel, after the adjournment I would meet him, and we would go into one of the committee rooms, and I would read my speech to him. I had to go down to the market to

receive some money for a neighbor. Then I would go home for my speech, and meet him in the major's room, at three o'clock, in the State House.

The colonel left me, saying he had some business to do at the bank, but that he would be punctual at three o'clock. Just at this moment, my friend Joseph, one of the pages of the House, — I dare say every member of the session will remember Joseph, — I thought, was trying to speak to me; but the colonel took him one side, and while thus engaged I left the hall. My reader will discover hereafter that I was right in my conjecture that Joseph had, at that time, something to say to me.

I received the money at the market-house, — a building I frequently visited, — went to my place of abode, rolled up the loose sheets of paper on which my speech was written, and after dinner I wended my way to the State House. The colonel was "on hand," as he remarked, and without loss of time we repaired to the then unoccupied green-room. I shall be brief in the narrative of what occurred.

The colonel took a chair, lit a cigar, and said, "Go ahead, Batkins."

I commenced to read, when the colonel interrupted me by saying, "Batkins, read straight on; if I have any remarks to make I will defer them to the end; then we will have a cheerful talk over the matter."

I began again, reading steadily on, looking up now and then to see what the effect was upon the colonel, particularly where the "spurs" came in. I thought he was remarkably attentive for a person of his bustling way. He had his feet up on the table, his hat on over his eyes, and two or three times I thought his cigar dropped out of his mouth, and there was a sound not unlike a snore. When I had concluded he said, "Splendid, Batkins, a d—d fine speech, that will knock thunder out of them."

I smiled, rolled up my speech, and asked him which side it would, in his judgment, knock the thunder out of.

He said, "All of them, Batkins. You have hit 'em all round."

"That was contrary to my intentions," I said; "I did not mean to hit anybody. My object was to make a conciliatory speech, to harmonize different antagonisms."

The colonel said there was a large amount of concealed power in the speech. I did not smile this time, for it appeared my speech was not understood, and I asked the colonel if the power was concealed how he discovered it in the speech.

He said, "A man cannot always understand himself."

I thought the colonel appeared a little uneasy about something. He was walking about the room, every now and then looking at his watch. I said, "Colonel, what's the matter?"

He said a man had agreed to call for him at about this time, and had not kept his agreement, — a thing he despised. "But, Batkins, I say, as I said before, that's a splendid speech; it will be a great honor to you and to your town; it wants a little trimming here and there, — speeches generally do, — we will talk it over, Batkins, this evening, if you will join in a supper at Parker's at my expense, if it will be agreeable to you."

I said, "Colonel, it will be agreeable to me."

At this time there was a knock at the door. Joseph, the page, came in, inquired for the colonel, and said there was a man looking for him. The colonel seemed much pleased, and told Joseph to show him the way in, — there was nobody here but his friend Batkins.

After a short delay, a man entered; in one hand he held some papers, in the other some bank-bills. He and the colonel had some conversation together. The colonel pulled out his watch, saying, "The bank is closed; too late to draw;" then turned to me, saying, "Batkins, I am sixty dollars short." He felt in all his pockets, emptying them of all their contents,



tooth-picks, penknives, leadpencils, some small silver coin, omnibus tickets, buttons, and a comb. "Just you lend it to me until the morning. I'll give you a check or a due-bill, and be much obliged to you. I will do the same for you any time; that is a splendid speech of yours, Batkins; I should like to have my friend here read it. Mr. Peel, this is Mr. Batkins, of Cranberry Centre, that you have heard me speak of so often, — one of our strongest men."

Mr. Peel said, "Yes, I have heard of him."

I said, "How do you do, Mr. Peel. — Sixty dollars, colonel?"

"Sixty, only until to-morrow. Sixty dollars, Batkins, only until to-morrow."

I intend to make this matter as short as possible. I loaned him the money and took his note. He and Mr. Peel left the room with my sixty dollars, that is, my neighbor's money. Joseph entered. "Joseph, what is it?"

"Mr. Batkins, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing just now, Joseph." I held the due-bill in my hand. "Do you know the colonel?"

"The man who has just gone out?"

"Yes, Joseph."

"I do, Mr. Batkins."

"He's good for sixty dollars, eh?"

Joseph was silent.

"What is he?"

"A sucker."

"A sucker, Joseph? I thought he was a lawyer, a broker, or a solicitor. What's a sucker?"

"A sucker is just such a fellow as that colonel, Mr. Batkins. He has been borrowing money of you? I thought that's what he was after. I wanted to tell you this morning to look out for him."

"Joseph, he is good for sixty dollars, eh?"

"Not for a cent. I wouldn't trust him for a steel pen."

I did not like to think so; so I said, "Joseph, I guess the colonel's good." The idea then came into my mind that the scamp was asleep when I read my speech to him, and had not heard a word of it.

NOTE. — I had, from a conversation with Joseph, a more perfect account of the colonel's operations; and, somewhat indignant at his treatment of me, I had resolved to print his real name, upon the testimony of Joseph; as also Joseph's definition of a "sucker;" but my coadjutor objects, for the following reasons: First, it would be libellous, and subject me to action for damages; and, next, it is not proper to print anybody's name in connection with your own in a book like this, unless you have permission to do so. The explanation of the term "sucker" is superfluous; you must allow something for the possibility of your readers being sufficiently informed upon that part of natural history involved in the question, as also upon the application of its characteristics to the colonel by the State House page.

I reminded my coadjutor that I had not asked permission of Mr. Wilson, nor the speaker, Mr. Banks, nor Mr. Warren, nor Mr. Kimball, and he had not objected to their names being used. He replied, "All public men. You connect them with no ambiguous personal action. Totally different matter, sir."

When I write my life again, or any other person's, I will do it on my own resources. The reader will now see and understand the points again in place of carefully prepared extracts from my journal. My coadjutor will not yield, so I must.

—J. S. B.

## CHAPTER XL.

## GOVERNOR KOSSUTH.

FROM this time until the end of the session my journal is so full of copiousness that I am compelled to abridge in order that my doings may come within the bounds of a reasonable space. As the harness is being taken off from the old war-horses, about to enjoy their freedom in the high grass of such pastures as their own toil or the generosity of friends and relatives may have provided for them, I hope the young people now rising up to take the reins of government in their hands will appreciate their services, and will read this chapter of my life with attention and profit.

The fourth month of the session was near its end; for a time, everywhere, where men and women were congregated, the name of Kossuth was repeated from mouth to mouth. Austria and Hungary, with the tyranny of the one and the sufferings of the other, were the themes of constant conversation. Newspapers were filled with reports, differing as the one or the other fluctuated between opinions, in accordance with their party tests. Geographies and histories were in demand. I am willing to confess that I was entirely ignorant at that time of the cause of quarrel between Kossuth and Austria; but from what I heard Mr. Kossuth say, he was an ill-used governor. As to how our governor would have behaved under similar circumstances, may be implied by any one who will read his speech on the great Hungarian's reception. All I have to record is, that after much preparation Kossuth came, escorted by the militia, including the famous governor's body-

guard. All business of the ordinary kind at the State House ceased; politics were laid aside; "the lion and the lamb" of party lay down together, to honor the Hungarian chief. I would at this point give my impression of his personal appearance, and to what animal I should liken him, with regard to some examples given heretofore; but as he was a foreigner, — a nation's guest, — I forbear, and refer my young reader to the newspapers of the times, and the pictures on the bonds he distributed, if any yet exist unpaid in our ancient and wise-headed Commonwealth.\*

Our governors and military men in that day were in the habit of wearing showy uniforms, stiff-looking caps, and gay feathers of almost the peacock's hue, or hues. I noticed the difference of the Hungarian governor's hat, — a slouchy affair, with a dark feather lying close over the crown. The hat of Kossuth outlived all the ex-governor's sayings, doings, and displays; it still bears his name. Though "such is fame, such is reputation, such is notoriety," I doubt if half the men that cover their crowns with the exiled Hungarian's head-piece know its origin, not to speak disparagingly of the hat, or of the distinguished wearer of it, who introduced it to our republican land.

Kossuth was received at the State House in a gorgeous manner. He visited both branches of the Legislature, and there I was introduced to him, and shook the Hungarian republican by the hand. Another great day for Cranberry Centre. Seth Spring, in all his glory, was no object of envy to me that day. I wonder if Kossuth remembers me. After that it was jubilee for a week. He met the citizens at Faneuil Hall, Bunker Hill, the Revere House Tavern, and other places. I shall never forget that legislative banquet to Kossuth, "while memory holds its seat in this distracted globe."

\* This remark has no personal reference to the governor, its civil and military head. — J. S. B.

In the Senate an order was passed, after some debate, to provide tickets for the Legislature, at the State's expense; the vote was fifteen in favor, eight opposed. When it came to the House the order was indefinitely postponed. It was settled by the lower branch that the tickets should be sold by the sergeant-at-arms. A Boston member said it was inconsistent with the dignity of the House to have its officer perform such a duty, and offered an order authorizing that officer to decline such service.

This order, the patriotic and far-seeing lower branch, of which I was a member, rejected by a nearly unanimous vote. The tickets were put up for sale at the different taverns of repute, and limited to eight hundred, besides those reserved for invited guests. An incident was put into the paper, which was significant as to the demand for the article of tickets, and proof of the enterprising character of the Boston people. A ring was formed to buy up the whole lot on speculation; but the committee declined to assist. Kossuth bonds were for sale at the different taverns.

When the evening came, all that had tickets were assembled in the Doric Hall of the State House. A procession was formed, and in due time we entered the cradle of liberty, as the Boston people called this celebrated old Faneuil Hall building.

There are no words in the English language, at my command, to describe fitly this sumptuous banquet. The galleries were filled with ladies, who had taken their tea early, in order to be present at the exciting festival in honor of Governor Kossuth. Although I never pretended to be a ladies' man, I thought it looked rather mean to be sitting down eating all these good things, while the ladies were looking on. I do not remember that these thoughts reduced my appetite any, as I saw that the ladies themselves were amused by the band of music, the eloquent speeches, and witty toasts of the distin-

guished speakers. They enjoyed "the feast of reason and the flow of soul;" they waved their handkerchiefs and parasols, adding much, by their smiles, to the hilarity of the occasion.

It is about that way with the women-folks everywhere; they seem always to be doing something to make mankind happy, without getting much of the real fun themselves after all. Many of the people around the tables had their wives, their daughters, their intendeds, or their mothers, their sisters, or some female acquaintances to look up and smile at. I had, so far as I knew, not one. This set me to thinking, until I was aroused by the applause in consequence of one old gentleman's rising to speak, who said he was eighty years of age. I was much pleased with him; his name was —

I thought, if the Emperor of Austria had been in a sly corner to witness the proceedings, he would have been in a passion, perhaps, and have sworn a little, — if emperors do swear, — when he heard our governor, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Banks, and the rest call his enemy, Governor Kossuth. I do not know whether the actual presence of the emperor would have made any difference in their energetic pronunciation of this title. I suppose it would depend some whether this banquet had been given to Kossuth in the Austrian dominion or in Faneuil Hall. There was some talk of war with Austria to compel the emperor to restore Governor Kossuth, if necessary. Not much was heard of this after the departure of this noble guest of the Commonwealth. At a late hour the banquet came to an end.

I have not stated how I obtained my ticket. I did not pay for it. Mr. Tenpinson asked me if I was supplied with a ticket to the banquet. I said I had not yet secured one. I was not sure I should be in town, as I had an invitation to go over to a place called Chelsea. He interrupted me by saying,

"You must not be absent; if you are not there it will be noticed. I have more tickets than I need. I shall be happy to supply you, if you —" \*

\* My coadjutor has drawn his pen over a conversation between Mr. Tenpinson and myself, to be sure, somewhat of a personal nature; and the printer will leave it out. I do not know that I have explained exactly how things are understood between us; it was something like this: I was to write what I pleased, my coadjutor was to read the manuscript, add words if they were needed, and strike out anything improper, impolitic, or unnecessary. Here is what he wrote when he had read the manuscript: "After Mr. Tenpinson's offer to supply you with the ticket, it is not necessary to state you accepted it, or why. You were at the banquet; how you obtained your ticket is of no consequence to the reader; but your version of the conditions of receiving it might be a reflection upon Mr. Tenpinson's character, who was a member of the House, and who with his wife and children are still living."

\* I omitted to state that I had invested no money in Kossuth bonds. If one had been in my possession I should have had it pictured as a companion-piece to the bill of the departed Cranberry Centre Bank.

I put this in to account for the points. — J. S. B.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### MY SPEECH. — THE MAINE LIQUOR LAW.

I AM to give in this chapter an account of what occurred to me on the day of the passage of the Maine Liquor Law. It will be understood that Cranberry Centre was not near the town in which the governor resided. I had never exchanged opinions with His Excellency, as regards public measures or political policy. I had talked considerably with Joseph, the page, as to how the members viewed the situation. I found him well posted, as he called it, on what was going on. I am not ashamed to say, now and then I spoke some of my speech to him, without telling him what it was or who was to speak it. My coadjutor informed me that a celebrated foreign play-maker was in the habit of reading the scenes of his plays to his servants for their criticism; if they said it was all right, he sent the play to the play-actors, and they spoke it off to the people, as I heard them at the Museum playhouse.

When I asked Joseph what he thought of it, he said it was first-rate, and that it would "knock 'em." Now, I had heard the governor make speeches. We both had been store-keepers, and there, I suppose, the similarity between us personally, ends. He was a governor; I was a representative. Dr. Slawter used to say that the different quantities of oxygen in the atmosphere of different places produced different effects upon the temperaments of different people, inspiring their brains with more or less patriotic ardor and native genius. Perhaps the atmosphere of Cranberry Centre had less oxygen in it than that of the governor's more genial home. He was

opposed to the liquor law, although a temperance man. I was a temperance man, and not in favor of it; there was all the difference between us. His messages are preserved in the archives of the State House; mine are to be preserved in this biography of a "self-made man." His have been read; I hope mine will be.

During the protracted and exciting debate I had listened to the arguments of the friends and opponents of the famous bill. I knew, from Joseph and others, that it was expected on all sides, that *Batkins* would, at a proper time, come out in a strong speech; in the language of Colonel *Silk*, one "that would knock thunder out of them," and in Joseph's more concise phrase, would "knock 'em." My reader is aware of the preparations I had made. He also knows my situation. I was to speak for Cranberry Centre, and for the Honest Man's and Independent party. I confess, upon this speech might depend my election in the autumn, and with it the opportunity to serve my fellow-citizens again in the State House, and to enjoy the hospitality, amusements, festivities, and other delights of social intercourse in the Athens of America.

I have no desire at this day to stir up the coals of animosity buried in the ashes of the consumed opinions and excitements of that never-to-be-forgotten time. I will only say it was a question of morals to be enforced by the prohibition of alcoholic beverages by the civil forces of the Commonwealth, backed, if necessary, by the military and naval arms.

I will state that members of the great parties used various means to enable them to conceal their opinions and their votes. I, as a representative of the Honest Men's and Independent party, — a faction, as some slurringly called it, — was under no necessity of this kind, preserving that happy medium between extremes, which, naturally followed out, would prevent anything positive being done to benefit or to injure the human race.

Perhaps I am getting tedious. I caught the speaker's eye amidst the struggles of the mighty orators and astute schemers for a chance. It was near the hour at which the final vote was to be taken. All eyes glanced from me to the clock as the speaker pronounced, in that sententious and powerful manner so natural to him, "The member from Cranberry Centre, Mr. *Batkins*. Preserve order." His hammer fell most resolutely on his desk. I had at last a chance. I was excited, — excited as I imagine a wild bull would be when fifty dogs were let loose at him. At the top of my voice I began: "Mr. Speaker, as the time is short, I have to suppress the indignation I feel at the Boston members, who would trample on the rights of the country." Here I was called to order. The usual parliamentary forms were used to choke me off. I shall not repeat them. I was declared "in order," and told to "proceed." The interruption confused me. I, however, began to speak, when another member rose and asked me if I would yield to a question which might economize the time, and also, perhaps, elicit information which might have the effect to change his vote. I said I was willing to yield to a question, but did not desire to have my time taken up by any explanatory remarks. The speaker said, "The member from Boston will state his question."

I sat down; the member from Boston arose. "Mr. Speaker," said he, "I desire to know if the member from Cranberry Centre will answer this question, whether or not he is overseer of the poor of the town of Cranberry Centre, and what are the emoluments of the office? I have a reason for this question, Mr. Speaker, and when the member from Cranberry Centre has answered this question categorically, I shall be prepared to give my reasons for the question, and the House will see the important bearing it has upon the vote the gentleman from Cranberry Centre may record in this House."

Now, everybody will see, you understand, that this question

was only put to me to interrupt me, or to prevent my making my speech. It did not seem a very hard thing to do to answer this question. Some members about me said, "What of it? Go on, Batkins." The member from Leadenville whispered, "This is Spring's work." The demand to answer did not disturb me so much as to answer categorically. I did not know what that word meant, at that time. Cat-e-gorically upset me, and sent my speech into flinders. How was I to select the best parts, and in about ten minutes speak them to the excited and crowded House?

To those persons who have never witnessed the close of a debate in the General Court upon an important question, I have to say, — go and see it. Why, it is like the last end of a game of foot-ball, when the kickers are expecting every minute to hear the school-bell ring, which must end the game, if neither side has beat. And here I would remark that some of the questions that come into the General Court appear to be like foot-balls, to be kicked about a certain time, and then have the bell ring to close the session, which carries the measure, or foot-ball, over another year, to play the same game over with. The result of the interruption and the category was as follows.

I concluded that I would answer the question. I did so in these words: "Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member's question, I say, categorically, I am overseer of the poor of Cranberry Centre, and I glory in it. Though in an humble sphere of duty, it is duty, and somebody must do it. As to the pay, I am out of pocket by the office, no doubt, but it is for the public good I serve."

For this courageous effort I was rewarded with applause, clapping of hands, and stamping of feet, just as the people did at the Museum when my friend and representative of me, Mr. Warren, tried to make his speech; but as I looked around, I began to feel the responsibility of my situation. I had seen a

picture in a book of a man carrying on his shoulders a representation of the globe. I used to think he had a heavy load to carry, particularly as he had nothing to stand upon. I since have discovered that his name was Atlas, one of the exploded heathen individuals of classic days. I have no doubt Mr. Atlas' sensations were not unlike mine. I felt I had a load to carry. When the fear of a failure of my memory came upon me, I remembered my father's resource at the "indignation meeting." I thought it safe to adopt his plan. I put the sheets of paper, with my speech written on them, before me. I asked my neighbor, a representative from a town in the western part of the State, to watch me as I went along, and read what came next, if I stopped, so I could hear him. He agreed to this mode. One member had made an allusion to the eagle over the speaker's chair,\* and said that it was taken from the top of the monument on Beacon Hill, where it had roosted for many years, to warn the sailor, as he approached the harbor, of any danger. Another member asked him if the eagle ever screamed. The member replied, that he did not know; but that, if the House passed the liquor bill, the eagle would scream so loud that the speaker, the members who voted for it, and the governor who signed it, would never have a chance to come to the State House, officially, again, especially the country members. I thought he looked at me. He was a Boston member, and they applauded him as they applauded me, only I think a little louder for him, which the speaker stopped by a blow of his hammer, as he had done in my case.

In the theatre or the Museum they have no speaker to stop applause. Mr. Warren told me that applause from

\* The person who assists me, in other words, my coadjutor, informs me that his grandfather was a stone-cutter, and a specimen of his skill may be seen upon the tablets now in the State House, formerly a part of the Beacon Hill monument. Who carved the eagle, since immortalized by his present position over the speaker's chair, is not known to him. — J. S. B.

the audience when play-acting goes on makes the actors feel better. I think it would be so when members of the Legislature speak speeches. It did me good; what little grit I then had came up to the surface. My mouth was dry. I looked about for Joseph, who saw what was the matter. I paused. Joseph came to me with a glass of water, handed to him by Colonel Silk, who was near the speaker's desk. I took a large draught. I was excited, and the refreshing beverage excited me more. I thought it had a strange taste, but my thoughts were hurrying my tongue. The oxygen was at work; the eagle was flying before my eyes. I determined to begin with the eagle, and get the "storm" and the "spurs" in the best way I could. This is my speech made on that occasion: —

"Mr. Speaker, I regret that the member from Boston thinks the eagle, which formerly perched upon the monument, will scream the country members out of this House. He will be mistaken. This bill, upon which so many men expect to win their spurs to ride over the rural districts, either will be a law or not. Yes, sir, —

"When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war,"

and when votes meet votes, then is the time to count the chickens, not before they are hatched."

This rhetorical agricultural introduction of chickens caused some merriment. It was not in my written speech, nor was the eagle. I had got adrift. The hands of the clock were moving on. I looked to my neighbor for a hint, but, except the spurs, I had said nothing by which to direct his attention. The next strong point to the spurs, in my mind, was Spring's mantle, so I started again on that, as follows: —

"Mr. Speaker, when my mantle falls from me, which fell from my predecessor, let it be remembered that Cranberry Centre was true to public duty, and that I represented on this

occasion Cranberry Centre, and when that eagle screams again, Mr. Speaker, let me say, Mr. Speaker — Mr. Speaker, I am — "

I took another drink from the glass. The speaker's hammer fell. I looked at the clock; my time had expired. Before I sat down my eye wandered to the gallery, and there, sitting by the side of Mrs. General Swamscott and Mrs. Hambleton Squiek, was Amanda, — Miss Feathergilt. I did not know she was in the city, but she had come, as she had promised, to hear my speech, and by the force of parliamentary rule was disappointed. I picked up my written speech, and put it into my pocket. The member who had the right to the last speech was on the floor. I was dizzy. All was confusion. Everything seemed to be turning round. I had vertigo, the doctor said. I was assisted to an ante-room, but did not recover until after the yeas and nays had been called, and the act passed by a not large majority. This will account for the omission of my name upon the passage of the prohibitory law.



## CHAPTER XLII.

## MY WRITTEN SPEECH.

"MR. SPEAKER: — We are upon the eve of great events. Sometimes, when the serenity of the cerulean arch above our heads is undisturbed by a cloud, suddenly a speck appears, no larger, perhaps, than an infant's hand, and in that hand or speck lurk the whirlwind, the hurricane, the tornado, and the mad, devastating tempest.

"Sir, I represent Cranberry Centre, an inland town. A pious, virtuous, law-abiding, conscientious people are my fellow-townsmen; they are determined to put down iniquity throughout the world. Sir, Cranberry Centre is an inland town, not washed by the waves of a great ocean that bears upon its bosom the pollution of foreign shores.

"Sir, I have listened to the debates in this hall, sacred to our independence, which have burst on our ears from lips soon perhaps to pass to that bourn from which no traveller returns. I wish to pour oil over the troubled waters of discussion on this bill, and to calm the storms of eloquence from the Athens of America, with the pacificating breezes fresh from rural atmospheres, — from Cranberry Centre.

"Mr. Speaker, this bill is calculated, however honest the motives of those who support it, to cause a great deal of dissatisfaction, — a condition, if possible, to be avoided by a free people. Sir, in my native town, which I am always proud to name, — Cranberry Centre, — if I am known for anything, beyond the rest of my fellow-townsmen, it is for a desire never to hurt the feelings of friends or enemies. It is our duty as

legislators, as well as good citizens, to legislate in this spirit; but, sir, while I believe in meeting calumny with a smile, and disarming the impotence of rage with a temperate magnanimity, I can say, in behalf of my constituents of Cranberry Centre, that there is a point that makes even a worm turn; that is, when the booted heel of man is ready to crush him.

"Much has been said of the clique of Boston members, who are determined to rule the country or ruin the State. I do not believe all that is said on any side. If I saw any movement in this direction, I should say to these gentlemen, beware how you put your foot upon the men, women, and children of Cranberry Centre, or you will see such a squirming and turning of worms as no amount of political anodynes will ever assuage.

"Sir, I have in my eye a gentleman of great culture, whose bed has been upon roses, who drank in with his mother's milk inspirations from the classic groves of Harvard, and who is said not to be in sympathy with the hard-handed, whole-souled, but less learned people of the rural districts. He, sir, has spoken for Boston. I am to speak for the rural districts, for the — the pious sons of pious ancestors, and owners of the soil, whose hands are seldom covered with kid-skin gloves.

"No, sir. If that gentleman who has won his spurs in this debate, and with these spurs intends to ride over the old war-horses of the country, sir, the law-loving Christian representatives of the rural towns, without saddle or bridle, Mr. Speaker, then I say to him that we of the rural abodes of industry have seen the spurs taken from many a presumptuous bantam rooster, whose business was to go about the farm pillaging, — pillaging, Mr. Speaker, foraging, — foraging, sir, without in any way contributing to the increase of chickens, sir, or in any way using his faculties, given him for noble purposes, for the public good. If the gentleman uses his spurs here, I suggest to him that there are those who will unstrap them, batter

their points, and Cranberry Centre will sustain the act, if it should be performed by a member who represents a neighboring constituency. But, sir, it will not be done. This is a libel upon Boston. As to Cranberry Centre, look at her, — there she is. It is not for me to say more.

"Boston, Mr. Speaker, is a great city, sir; a noble city, sir. Far be it from me to underrate the power of Boston; its wealth, its virtue, its magnanimity, the beauty of its women, and the learning of its men, give it a world-wide celebrity. I do not compare Boston with Cranberry Centre, and upon Boston now the country ought to call for such a majority on this bill, either one side or the other, as will not put upon us in the country, who are interested in this bill, the necessity of voting at all, to the injury of one side or other of the feelings of our constituents. I am willing, sir, to set the example of neutrality. I am willing to deprive myself of my right to vote, — to yield a right, sir, to prove my willingness to have justice done. Therefore, sir, I appeal to Boston members, whose patriotism knows no bounds, to do as they have so often done, to sink mere partisan views, and, while assisting Cranberry Centre, to assist themselves, to assist the Commonwealth, to assist the Union, to assist the world. I know they will do it. Old men will thank them, old women will bless them, the middle-aged of both sexes will join in the thankings and blessings. The young of both sexes, just now entering upon the work of life, courted and uncourted, married and unmarried, will also join in their praise. The children, boys and girls, will listen to their fathers and mothers, as they tell the tale of Boston's greatness, Boston's philanthropy, Boston's consistency, Boston's generosity. Their little voices will be raised at the Sunday school, at the meeting-house, on the playground, to sing an anthem that shall echo from continent to continent, from California to Japan, from pole to pole; and the children yet unborn, when they arrive, shall learn to lisp

the name of Boston, and raise, too, their tiny voices to swell the anthem louder than the loudest swell of Boston's organs, coupling forever, in words that burn, the names of Boston and Cranberry Centre, now, henceforth, and for evermore."

My reader will probably understand, without further explanation, that this speech was arranged in accordance with my views, first, to say something to shut up Spring's mouth, then to praise Boston, as was recommended to me to do, by Mr. Tenpinson. Of course, I did not go into the merits of the bill; but there are two sides to all questions. There was a country interest which I was bound in honor to go with against the Boston clique, and therefore I was prepared with a speech that begun and ended pretty much like this one, only if I spoke against Boston I was to use a different line of argument. That part was to come in where I thought best. A member had asked, "Who opposes the country; who tramples its rights under foot?" and replied thus: "It is not Boston, the guardian, the jealous guardian, of its own rights, and everybody else's. Whenever a good thing is to be done, Boston is ready to do it; whenever a bad thing is to be put down, Boston is ready to do it. Let us hear no more from country members about Boston's pride or Boston's injustice."

The above extracts were spoken in a debate on another bill, you understand; but I was bound to be ready to hit Boston if I could get a chance. That part of my speech will be found in another place, as spoken on a future occasion.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

THE cause of my failure in my speech was never precisely understood. I was detained at Mr. Wilson's house a day or two from sickness, caused in part by my anxiety, not a little augmented by the discovery that Colonel Silk would probably never pay the note he gave me for the sixty dollars that I loaned him, — the property of one of my neighbors, for whom I had sold some hogs in the winter, and let the money lay in the hands of the pork-dealer, as he agreed to allow interest for the same. My neighbor had written to me that if I saw any way to lay out the money to advantage he should be glad to have me do so. If I had profited by Mr. Bean's practices of financiering I suppose I should have stated to my neighbor that I invested the money on his account, and as I had not guaranteed the colonel's note, the loss would have been my neighbor's, not mine. Of course, no such idea came into my mind. A doctor was called to see me, who thought there must have been something put into the water handed to me by Joseph, which, in addition to my mental exhaustion, had induced the vertigo. He recommended me to abstain from the excitements of public life for a time.

The first day I went to the State House, after my mishap, I had a conversation with Joseph as to what was said about me. Joseph said there was a difference of opinion among the members. Some thought I was drunk. Confidentially to Joseph, I said it was my opinion that that was what the doctor thought. I told him I was a temperance man. I asked Joseph what was in the tumbler he gave me the day I made the speech.

Joseph hesitated, then said, "Mr. Batkins, it was gin and water, — more gin than water."

I asked Joseph who put it in. Joseph said he could not tell; that it was not his duty to tell anything that occurred among the members. He heard a member say to another member, "It could be done for five dollars," and he thought it meant "gin could be put in the water for five dollars."

"Gin, Joseph?" I asked, — "gin in a temperance Legislature; gin in the State House; how did it get there?"

"It was bought: I bought a bottle for a member who had the colic one day."

"Who was the member?"

"Colonel Silk," Joseph said.

"He put it in the water, Joseph?"

"I did not say so."

"Did the colonel pay for the bottle of gin?"

"No, Mr. Batkins, — he never pays for anything."

"Who did pay for the gin?"

"The Commonwealth."

"What, for gin?"

"No, — brooms, dust-pans, inkstands, penknives, — incidentals."

"Is this so, Joseph?"

"It is, and more too, Mr. Batkins."

I have not mentioned that branch of the Legislature known as the Third House. As I had no great experience in their ways of working, except on political questions, I had no interest in concealing my opinions. There were bills of a private nature, that I considered it fair to ask for information about, before I voted. I used to consult Wilson, very often, on matters introduced by Boston members, and sometimes I voted with them.

I was somewhat surprised when Joseph informed me as to the doings of the Third House, and I found that I had un-

consciously been interested in their schemes. Joseph said the reception party was one of their operations.

I told Joseph, as the session was near the end, if he knew anybody that wanted to buy the colonel's note, I should like to sell it.

Joseph said, "Nobody would give a cent for it."

I asked him if I could not stop his per diem at the treasurer's office.

Joseph said, "No. He always draws out in advance."

"And you think he put the gin in the water, Joseph?"

"I did not say so, Mr. Batkins."

Joseph left me to attend to his duties as a page. I could not but hope that the colonel would pay me the sixty dollars.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE VETO.

THERE are some proverbs or sayings which serve on many and opposite occasions. This one ought to be put up in every legislative hall and alderman's room throughout the republic: "Wise men change their minds; fools never do." Now a question comes in here, what are the proofs that a man is wise previous to the change? Mr. Birch, and in fact Dr. Slawter also, in the philosophical talks I have had with these gentlemen, had a good deal to say of the logic of events. Algebra, logic, and law, I could never understand, and therefore they are of no use to me in the solution of some of the problems of human nature. Without the aid of these sciences at an early age I could discover why my father changed his mind in regard of the railroad running through the old burying-ground, notwithstanding it desecrated the grave of my mother; and his grief, or sympathy, with others at this attempted outrage caused him to be the prime mover of the "indignation meeting." "Mrs. Simms' man," it will be remembered, put the thing in such a light that my father could see the way to change his mind. The old burying-ground was dug up, the ancestral bones of the fathers and mothers of the hamlet were deposited in the new cemetery given to the town by the railroad corporation, and a valuable piece of land added to my father's farm, with other and divers prospective advantages secured to my father by the railroad. If there is any occasion for logic, algebra, or rhetoric here, in order to

be clear that my father was a wise man, so be it; and let my reader use them.

When Mr. Boutwell was made governor, the year preceding my entry into public life, I had not heard much of him, only that he kept a store in the country, as I had done, and of course, as a store-keeper, I had a fellow-craft feeling for him; and for that reason I hoped he might get elected if the people were willing. I had a notion my father voted for him; and it is of no consequence now to say whether I did or not, nor is it important for anybody to know how I voted in the Legislature.

I will say this, so far as my allegiance to the Honest Men's and Independent party's policy would permit, I was disposed to sustain the governor on personal grounds, on account of his mercantile antecedents. I used to wonder if he had such a financial clerk as I had, in the person of Aristarchus Bean. I studied his inaugural message to the two houses, to one of which I belonged. Two passages made a great impression upon my mind, not yet removed, because of the great moral improvement going on in the Commonwealth on the one part, and my notions of politics on the other. I copy from the message: —

"The number of convicts in the prison is rapidly increasing, and there is a melancholy prospect that all the cells will be occupied in three years."

This had reference to the State's institution at Charlestown, to be seen from the cupola of the State House by any person who does not care to travel across the river. I saw it from this point. I do not know how this prophecy has been fulfilled. The governor's address closed with the following information to us, and through us and the press to the people: —

"I take this occasion to announce my determination not to be a candidate for re-election, and to assure you of my purpose, under Divine Providence, to labor in private life with equal

zeal, and greater freedom, for the welfare and honor of the Commonwealth."

At that time I believed what he said, and in my own mind concluded that after two years I would follow his example.

Of my own will I rarely changed my mind, or vote, and perhaps that places me in the category of the not wise.

I have said before, after a great struggle, they — not we, I was absent — passed the prohibitory law, and what was then called by some a bomb-shell, fell into the Senate, in shape of the bill returned, with a veto message, and the governor's reasons for not signing the same.

I am not writing the governor's life or history, political or personal, therefore I shall not do more than make an extract from the message, and I do this only for the purpose of furnishing evidence presumptive, sustaining a philosophical theory, of which the governor, if he ever reads my life, may desire to take advantage. This is the governor's composition, not mine nor that of my friendly assistant: —

"Two considerations have great influence upon my mind. I know of no government, either despotic or republican, which has permanently succeeded in limiting the use of intoxicating liquors, except so far as it was sustained by the conscientious opinion and practice of a majority of the people; and further, I cannot, by any process of moral reasoning, relieve myself of the duty of resisting the passage of a doubtful measure, under such circumstances that, in the certain ultimate defeat that awaits it, is to be overthrown the cause it was intended to support."

I shall do no more than to remind my reader that after some tinkering, as it was called, the liquor law bill was sent back to the governor, whose signature made it a law, and whose reasons for the change of his mind and consequent action were given in a message on the last day of the session. I shall make no extracts from that message.

During his practice in store-keeping I have no doubt he found it necessary to raise or fall on the price of some articles of produce or merchandise, from one week to another, or even from one day to another, in consideration and in consequence of the fluctuation of trade, or the tricks and habits of opposition store-keepers.

Some of us legislators, who were not in the governor's confidence, found it difficult to account for this change from our stand-points. We could see no reason if his first arguments were sound. To be sure, his position as governor was on a higher altitude; he could see farther into a futurity beyond our political horizon; but as he had declined to be a candidate for re-election, and as he was to work hereafter with "equal zeal and greater freedom in private life for the welfare and honor of the Commonwealth," the mystery was not explained. I am able to account for it only upon Dr. Slawter's notion of what he called molecular changes, as referred to by me before. The governor was probably undergoing the last of the series of changes involved in the seven years' period just about to terminate, so that the opinions he had formed during that seven years were not those of the governor five days subsequently given.

I came to the conclusion that politics will almost make a man forget the ten commandments. Party discipline is remorseless. How can a man keep the fifth commandment, and vote against his father or mother?

Although I did not put full faith in Dr. Slawter's philosophy of molecular displacement as a whole, I cannot deny that it looks reasonable, and appears to be the only way in some instances to account for the changes people make in their politics, religion, and other matters, and the increasing desire for divorce from marriage vows. I admit the theory, and thus it stands: If a man marries a woman, and she changes in seven years, she is another person, — in fact, not the woman the

man married; or the change may be in the man's molecular arrangements, and the new shape not please either. As neither party in law can be bound by a contract another party has made, believers in this doctrine, about to enter into matrimonial engagements, should be allowed to make conditions to meet the new order of things, and thus lessen the number of unmarried females in the census returns of the Commonwealth, in my opinion. I give this hint to future legislators.

The business of the session was finished; everything was made harmonious; all the little quarrels and mistakes were adjusted; the speaker made a speech complimentary to the members, in reply to a resolution of thanks passed by them complimentary to him. In the Senate there were similar manifestations, as I was told. I really think everybody wanted to go home, and we showed the exuberance of our spirits like school-boys when the vacation is given out. We had a session extra, and I was invited to take the chair, which I declined. I was then told I could have an opportunity of finishing my speech on the liquor law. Joseph came to me to tell me it was a mock session, and I must not speak unless I went in for the fun. If a foreigner had been present, I do not know what he would have thought to see legislators acting like so many boys. The mock session was participated in by the members of the Third House. The next day the General Court was prorogued in proper form until the Tuesday next preceding the first Wednesday of January, 1853. The session of 1852 was among the things of the past. I had received my per diem and mileage, made Joseph a present to remember me by, and received from him some stationery, pencils, and pens, and parted with him with a desire expressed on both sides that we should meet again on some future occasion. Joseph was a promising lad, and did not "tell tales out of school;" if he thinks it would be fair to inform me who put the gin into the water, I shall be happy to hear from him. I have not received the colonel's sixty dollars to this day.

## CHAPTER XLV.

## SETTLING UP.

NEARLY five months I had been a sojourner in Boston, with the exception of the time occupied in my visit to Cranberry Centre, on political grounds. I had made many acquaintances; I had been to several meeting-houses, to lectures, to the Museum, to the theatres, and to some parties, with Miss Wilson. I had heard much of the iniquities of Boston; but with the exception of my visit to the "Saints' Rest," and the deception of the hackman, I cannot say I saw any worse things in public than were to be seen in my own Cranberry Centre. I must say, I knew of things being done in the Legislature, or in the committee-rooms, that if it were not in politics, and for the good of the State, might savor of a lack of "doing as you would be done by," particularly when practised by deacons and ministers, who always prayed before doing anything out of the every-day course of life.

I have described the closing moments of that ever-to-be-remembered session which connects my name with the proud history of the old Bay State. I carried off all my public documents, and left nothing to show to my successor, whoever he might be, that the now empty place had been the seat of Batkins. A boyish propensity for a moment returned to me, with considerable force of inclination. It was that of most boys who, having jack-knives, are disposed to cut their names upon trees, doors, or school-house desks and benches, meeting-house pews, and other wooden fabrics offering facility for the practice of this youthful passion for wood engraving. I did not, however,

carve upon the vacated seat J. S. Batkins. I was tempted, but I fell not.

I will not describe my emotions, as for the last time, though then I knew it not, I descended the steps of the State House. It was spring, and I was about to return, like Cincinnatus, to the plough I left, the cattle, the sheep, old friends and neighbors. I should again see Miss Feathergilt, whom I had frequently found myself calling Amanda. I had not seen her since my affair on the day of the speech, which I was so unfairly prevented from "getting off," as the phrase was, though I should say, speaking, which I think in better taste. But I was consoled, in a measure, by a letter from Mr. Bean, in which I was informed that, in consequence of the indignity put upon the town by this uncourteous act to its representative, the people, without respect to party, were determined to get up an ovation to receive me on my return.

Now, I do not know how my reader would feel under similar circumstances, but I was pleased with the idea. Mr. Bean wrote to say I could use the suppressed and martyred speech in reply to the chairman of the committee who would welcome me back.

Some people may pretend that I encouraged a childish feeling; but here comes in one of those sayings, as they call them, that I believe in. I have seen it, and I have felt it, in more things than one: —

"Men are but children of a larger growth."

It is, I know, usual to laugh at boys for dragging their sleds up a long hill, for the pleasure of riding down. I have seen quite old men try to do the same, and sometimes, after dragging the sled up hill, somebody else would get the ride down. My reference to sledding is rhetorical, particularly as to old "coasters."

So I felt proud of the reception I was to have, and already was revolving in my mind whether I should choose the style



of Demosthenes, Cicero, or Seth Spring, in my speech. No one could stop me after I once started, and I should have the opportunity "to define my position," as they termed it, on a variety of topics. Ah, if I could feel now as I felt then! My boyish fancy, which you know was never one of the fastest, revived again, as in the knife-cutting design I had upon the mahogany of the State House seats.

I had also the opportunity to hear Daniel Webster speak a speech in Faneuil Hall, — a real Boston speech. The governor was there, the postmaster, the mayor, and many other public and private functionaries, besides myself, with the city government of Boston, at whose invitation Mr. Webster spoke his speech. When they came into the hall the cheers were long and loud. The mayor introduced Mr. Webster to the people as our esteemed friend and townsman, Hon. Daniel Webster. At that moment I thought of Cranberry Centre, and the reception preparing for me. Mr. Webster rose majestically on the platform, and spoke handsomely for some time. He said the path of politics was a thorny path, and on this occasion he should leave the briars and go in for a time among the roses. He said folks sometimes said he was the man that made Noah Webster's Dictionary. He said Boston was a noble place, and he wanted to know where you could find another Boston. I put some of his sayings on my memorandum-book, thinking some of them would do for Cranberry Centre, with a little change. Two lines of poetry that he spoke made a good deal of laughing. They were as follows: —

"Ye solid men of Boston, make no long orations,  
Ye solid men of Boston, drink no strong potations."

This was near the end of the speech, and all the people, white-headed, solid old gentlemen and all, gave three cheers for this poetry, though I did not then see through the joke of it.

I never heard so much merriment before, except at the Museum, when Mr. Warren was making his speeches.

When the speech was over, I went home and found I was full of enthusiasm, and begun to think everybody liked to be applauded, and that the path of politics was not so thorny, after all. While reflecting upon all that had happened, I thought I would write an address to the people of Boston, and have it printed in the "Boston Post," that paper having spoken kindly of me, before I had the pleasure of being introduced to the editor. I wrote the address, and read it to Wilson; he thought it did honor to my qualities as a man, but, being a legislator, he thought it had better not appear in print, as my motives might be misapprehended. I followed his advice then, but I do not think it ought to slumber any longer in obscurity, when addresses in my judgment no better are the subjects of great praise. I subjoin portions of the document; it began thus: —

"TO MY FRIENDS IN BOSTON.

"About to leave this hospitable city, I desire to express some of my sentiments of gratitude before I return to Cranberry Centre. I am no man of letters, in the literary acceptance of that term; but it has sometimes happened that in the course of my official duties I have been called upon to write a letter, and I did it." [This was from Mr. Webster's speech. When he spoke it, the cheers and applause were vociferous. I suppose now everybody knew what it meant.]

"The citizens of Boston and vicinity first heard my name at the Museum; therefore first I address myself to the players of Boston, and particularly to those who act plays, to whom I am indebted for many ideas unknown to me before.

"I have a very high opinion of the play-actors' way of telling a story; and all I have to say of a number of them with whom I became acquainted, is, they appeared to know more of

history and politics than the average of my associates of the State House. I wish to place my acknowledgments for services rendered by some of them as individuals, on the same page that I record my delight at the amusement they offered me, on the stage, in their professional vocation. All I have to ask of them is, if any of them hereafter should present me to the public in a dramatic form, to remember that if their business is 'to hold the mirror up to nature,' it is not best on all occasions to hold that mirror up in public to some things, however natural they may be. I do not propose to criticise the players; in me that would be a ridiculous assumption and out of my line, you understand; only this was my private opinion, now publicly expressed.

"As to the clergymen, I do not desire to put upon this record any characteristic remarks. I agree as to their usefulness in a professional point of view; but as to charity, although that is a favorite topic of discourse, I really do not think, you understand, from my point of view, they all practise it any more than some other classes of their fellow-citizens, particularly when they preach politics, or any of the fine arts.

"As to the doctors, I did not need, during my sojourn in Boston, many professional services, and therefore was under but little obligation to them, so far as the domain of medicine was concerned; but as a legislator I had need to consult them, and in my official visits to some of the State institutions I did avail myself of the opportunity. They agreed pretty well with our old physician of Cranberry Centre, Dr. Slawter, who used to say, 'So much depended on matters that you never could know anything about, it was extremely difficult, at all times, to make up your mind in a case that was in any way doubtful.'

"As I may visit Boston again, and require the services of some of its eminent physicians or surgeons, I think it best,

you understand, not to put into print what I thought of some of them.

"As to the lawyers, to whose good offices I owed much, I dare not say exactly what I think. I am ready to pay those to whom I may have been indebted; but I fear to mention any names in connection with such services, as, although I was informed that the advice given was gratuitous, still, under the influence of molecular or some other change, my words might be made a foundation for an action against me, or my executors, if I have any, by their heirs, administrators, or assignees, if any such persons survive them.

"I feel like recommending to patronage many of the storekeepers and traders with whom I had dealings, and in consequence, in part, of my former occupation, and partly from my public official character as the member from Cranberry Centre, they frequently sold me articles at cost, giving me the opportunity of adding a profit when I bought for others, and saving a penny for myself when the articles were for home consumption."\*

This was the substance of my address. I settled with Mr. Wilson for my board and lodgings during the session, to his satisfaction; and as that was a kind of family affair I avoid further particulars. I do not think he could make a fortune keeping a boarding-house for members of the General Court, if their appetites were equal to mine, and the weekly pay was no greater than the price for which he gave me a receipt in full.

I shall not attempt a description of the final separation between myself and the Wilson family. Words are always inadequate to fully express emotions and sensations, and it is in this

\* I have to acknowledge some omissions made against my judgment.

I think the dramatic form of expression excels. It reproduces the scene, as it were, and I would adopt it at this time, but my friendly coadjutor advises me not to do so. He says that in the mere separation of friends there is no great dramatic effect, and that it is so common an affair in every-day life that but little imagination is required to appreciate any peculiar case, and therefore it will be understood at once when only mentioned in proper connection with the natural order of events.

Mr. Bean's letter came duly to hand, informing me that all the arrangements were made for my reception, and that a committee would be sent to Boston to accompany me to Cranberry Centre. The committee arrived, and with them I took my departure for home, giving a last, lingering look at the State House cupola as it faded from my view.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### MY RETURN TO CRANBERRY CENTRE.

IN the earlier part of my history, it will be remembered, mention was made of the "County Gazette," in which journal my name first appeared in its account of the accident originating in the then young but fertile brain of Mr. Bean. For some years that journal was the organ of a party in the district, making itself a useful ally to the machinery of politics about election time. Some disappointed politicians, upon the principle of "divide and conquer," proposed to set up a new journal. Assisted by some discharged printers, rival paper-makers, and some furloughed editors from other parts of the State, the idea became a fact; a small sheet bearing this imposing title, "The Independent Success and Weekly Forum," was issued from the office secured for the publication of this new candidate for public favor. I was asked to subscribe for this paper, and did so. It had been reported that the "Success" had outlived its usefulness; it had become an unprofitable concern to its projectors, some of whom had secured places under the government in some way. In the race of competition it had compelled the proprietor of the "County Gazette" to additional outlay. This, undoubtedly, was of advantage to the subscribers and readers, and to the character for enterprise of the older journal, but it lessened the profits, so that after some negotiation, and upon terms not made public, the two rivals were consolidated, merged into each other, and the "County Gazette," as stated in an editorial valedictory, salutatory and congratulatory, was again the organ as

before. It is from the account given in the enlarged "County Gazette" of my reception, by the people of Cranberry Centre, on the following day, that my readers and the rest of the world will be informed of what occurred on that memorable occasion. I kept several copies of the "County Gazette," and I have no doubt any one curious in such matters, by consulting the files of papers, will find I am corroborated not only in this but in the case of the accident so often referred to by me.

"At an early hour yesterday morning there was an unusual excitement in our usually quiet town. Flags were raised upon the town-hall and at the railway station, a telegram having been received the evening before that our distinguished townsman and representative, J. S. Batkins, Esq., would arrive about noon the following day, from Boston. We believe it was the expressed desire of Mr. Batkins that he should be permitted to return without any parade, but his desires were overruled. The members of the Committee of Arrangements left a day or two since, and are to return with him. An hour before the expected arrival of the train the streets were filled with our people on their way to the station. A platform had been erected, and a band of musicians were in attendance. Many ladies were present. The day was auspicious. At length the whistle of the engine was heard; now all was excitement and animation. In a few moments the train slowly approached the station; this was the signal for cheers, which were increased as Mr. Batkins, on the arm of Aristarchus Bean, Esq., stepped from the car to the platform. The band had been playing —

"See, the conquering hero comes!"

"Mr. Batkins looked a little careworn, but at the sight of his fellow-citizens his face beamed with smiles, and he bowed in acknowledgment to the enthusiastic cheers that awaited him. As he ascended to the raised platform in the square,

ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and the applause was deafening."

"The Honorable Seth Spring, one of his competitors in the canvass which resulted in Mr. Batkins' election, was selected to welcome him home, and after the cheers had subsided addressed our distinguished representative as follows: —

"Mr. Batkins, sir, I am selected, sir, as the organ of your constituents, to welcome you to Cranberry Centre. Sir, it is not given to everybody, however strong may be the will and the inclination, always to perform a duty; but, sir, intentions are to be appreciated and rewarded, even if these intentions fail to be carried out. Now, sir, the duty imposed upon me on this occasion is a pleasure, and yet I may fail to perform that duty satisfactorily to your constituents, to you, or to myself. At a time, sir, when none but the strongest men, the men of tried ability, were needed in the Legislature of the State, from the country, to meet the constant inroads made upon our rights, our interests, and our good name, by the Boston members, the sagacity of your fellow-citizens discovered in you just the man, in their judgment, for the occasion. I need not remind you, sir, that in honorable rivalry I was opposed to you; that I was defeated; but I bow to the will of the people, sir, and rejoice that you have returned to give to them an account of your stewardship. (Applause.)

"Sir, all know your modesty, your amiability, your honesty, your distrust of your own ability, as well as your determination to do your duty, according to the means at your disposal. We know, sir, that you were inexperienced in the wiles and mazes of political intrigues and corruption. We did not suppose you would beard this lion clique of city influence in its den with wild vociferation, belligerent harangue, and vindictive invective; and we have not been disappointed in your masterly inactivity. You have fully realized our expectations. No doubt you have learned much that will be useful to you in your retirement. I do not desire to anticipate the

pleasure my fellow-townsmen are to enjoy, when they hear from your own lips the speech you failed to secure the opportunity to make from your place at the State House, by any reference to the noble sentiments which adorn it, and which, if it had been heard, I have no doubt would have struck consternation to the enemies of rural progress.

“ ‘Perhaps, sir, by this time you have learned that a seat in the Legislature is not a bed of roses to those of your peculiar temperament, which renders its possessor unfit for the stormy debate, when veterans are in the opposing ranks. Your caution, sir, and prudence, sir, are to be commended. Your expressive silence, sir, when Cranberry Centre was insulted, showed the contempt you had for windy, wordy declamation, and the scornful look that you gave that representative, who, by unparliamentary trick, had closed your mouth was to him almost indignant annihilation; but, sir, I will detain you no longer from expressing to your friends, irrespective of party, who are here in crowds to welcome you, your own views as to the reasons why you have been deprived from stamping upon the legislation of the session the impressions of your genius, talent, learning, knowledge, and patriotic force, for which supposed latent qualities, still latent, yet to shine, you had been selected by your townsmen’s votes. Every part of the district will rejoice at your return, and as the cheers of your friends strike your ear, the hill-tops and the rocks, if they could speak with tongues, would join their mighty voices, and the name of *Batkins* would startle the sun in its noon-day splendor. I have now the pleasure to introduce to you *Mr. Batkins*, fellow-citizens.’

“At this point the applause was deafening, and loud cries for *Batkins* were heard above the din. *Mr. Batkins* was a little nervous, and after bowing in recognition of the welcome, the band played —

“ ‘Hail to the chief!’

“When the inspiring notes of the band had died away, *Mr. Batkins* advanced to the front of the platform, and the cheers were renewed. At length silence prevailed, and *Mr. Batkins* began his speech: —

“ ‘*Mr. President*, *Mr. Moderator*, *Mr. Chairman*, and fellow-citizens: Notwithstanding my objections to this demonstration, it appearing to be the wish of my fellow-townsmen, I consented, and, fearing to trust to my memory, I began to write a speech, which I intended to read to you as the spontaneous reply of my heart to the spontaneous welcome you have given to me, on my return to my native town after my sojourn in Boston, through your chairman, the Honorable *Seth Spring*, who was my predecessor. I thank you, *Mr. Chairman*, I thank my fellow-citizens, for this noble welcome. *Mr. Chairman*, you said a seat in the General Court was not a bed of roses. No, sir, if you are disposed to serve your country, it is a bed of thorns. Sir, you have heard of the toad under the harrow, trying to get away from the three-cornered machine filled with rows of iron teeth, as it ran through the gravel and rocks of cultivation. In just such a spot I’ve been. No toad, under any kind of harrow, is in greater danger than is a representative from the rural districts who undertakes to oppose, as you observed, sir, the lion clique of Boston members.

“ ‘I shall repeat here what I would have said to those arrogant representatives and senators of that Boston clique. Yes, sir, go back to Rome, if you have read its history in the days of *Cæsar*, *Cicero*, and *Romulus* and *Remus*. Rome, sir, originally was not like this favored country of ours, the home of its aborigines; if I have read its history aright, sir, it was a rural district; its dwellers dwelt in peace and happiness; but, sir, in my early days, the “*Life of Charlotte Temple*” fell into my hands, and upon the title-page were

some verses, one line of which I chiefly remember. This was its beginning : —

“ ‘She was her parents’ only joy;  
They had but one — one darling child,’ —

and the ending, sir, was thus, if my memory serves me : —

“ ‘But, ah, the cruel spoiler came!’

“ ‘So was it with Rome, when emigration was made the policy of the people, thieves and murderers came to it from all tongues, all nations, and swelling the number of its inhabitants until it fought and conquered half the world in the European hemisphere.

“ ‘I want to see no such fate for Cranberry Centre; yet what sad forebodings had the governor, of some parts of the State, when he said, in three years the cells of the State Prison would be full. And this is Boston influence! Sir, I may say of Cranberry Centre,—

“ ‘She was her parents’ only joy;’ —

her parent the State; and, sir, I hope it may be a long day before either I or my successor shall have it to say : —

“ ‘Alas, the cruel spoiler came!’

“ ‘But it may come. If it does, it will come in the shape of Boston influence. Ah, sir, money is the sinew of war, money is the engine of destruction. It is this we have to fear; money will be the spoiler if the spoiler comes, and in cities money gathers and grows. A city is a gigantic money monster; money, evil as it is, derives much of its power for mischief, because it is a necessary evil. A sufficiency is well; but what does a Boston member know of a sufficiency? Sir, I had not

time myself, but a friend, by his assistance, in part enables me to thus portray the power of money. No wonder the proverb has it, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the place established for a different class of citizens; but, sir, Boston has money, and what does my friend say money will do? For money, man works, toils, digs, performs all menial offices, braves all dangers, and sometimes when I say man I mean woman, as I usually do in speaking of a race.

“ ‘But, perhaps, my fellow-citizens, I weary you; if so, I will pursue the subject no further.’

“ ‘Here Mr. Batkins was interrupted by cries of ‘Go on!’ and loud cheers. He bowed gracefully, and proceeded: ‘I was speaking of the money power, Mr. Chairman, and you did me but justice, sir, when you referred to the noble sentiments which, as you were pleased to say, adorned my speech, and which, if it had been heard in the State House, would have at least expressed my views, whatever its effect may have been upon the case-hardened despots, who were determined not to listen to it; but, sir, I have not forgotten that hour nor that stifled speech. In conclusion, my fellow-citizens shall hear it now. I should have said, had I been allowed to proceed, among other things this: What does a great writer say of cities? That they are huge sinks of iniquity, sores upon the fair skin of civilization; sinks, sir, into which are drawn all that is pure and lovely from the rural districts to mingle with the luxuries, wealth, and dissipation, which fill the gilded temples, made and furnished to tempt our youth to ruin. Such are cities. Boston is a city. A city is a tyrant. It puts its chains on the rural districts by its money power; but, sir, whatever city is nearer geographically to Cranberry Centre than any other, I say to the representatives of that city, it shall never put the manacles upon Cranberry Centre, so as to prevent its representatives from being heard, while the green

hills of the Commonwealth shall keep their verdure, or the native bird of freedom builds its nest upon the trees of the forests that crown their snow-white crests, teaching its young eaglets to soar above the steeples and chimneys, towers and domes of the American Athens, flapping their wings in warnings to its inhabitants, the would-be usurpers of the people's rights!

"After this brilliant peroration the applause was tumultuous. Mr. Batkins was congratulated on all hands and many wished that it could have been heard in the State House.

"The band now played the 'Star-spangled Banner' closing with 'Yankee Doodle,' that inspiring national air, in comparison with which 'God save the King' appears to be a psalm-tune. A splendid barouche, drawn by four white horses, now drove up. In this Mr. Batkins was seated, and with some members of the committee, they were driven rapidly to the homestead of Mr. Batkins, senior, the residence of our distinguished representative and honored guest. The crowd dispersed, and thus happily closed these interesting ceremonies, and so far as we have heard no accident occurred to mar the general joy of the occasion."

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### AFTER-THOUGHTS.

AFTER my arrival at the homestead, I was welcomed by my father, Aunt Dolly, and a few friends, without the formality of speeches. I retired to my room, which I had somewhat improved, and which I intended to convert into a library when all my books arrived. I began to think on what I had spoken. The Hon. Seth Spring's address to me differing some from what I expected, my written speech did not generally fit the case. I did not know but, in endeavoring to make selections from other speeches, trusting to my memory, I should fall into the same error that I did in trying to bring in the eagle over the speaker's chair, you understand, in my State House speech. I felt pretty well on the road, but when I heard the band playing I asked Mr. Bean what tune it was. He told me it was —

"See, the conquering hero comes!"

I felt a little, as the saying is, like sinking down in my boots. Then again when they played what I was told was —

"Hail to the chief!"

I became quite nervous. Was I a conquering hero? Was I a chief?

The incidents of the rest of the day were not of importance enough for me to take any notice of them. I was under an impression that Mr. Spring did not put things in just the light



he ought to have done. It appeared to me as if he was making an apology for what I did not do, rather than praising me for what I had done.

I retired at an early hour to rest; but my dreams were not of a happy nature, although composed of a mixture of Spring, Bean, the four white horses, my speech, Miss Feathergilt, and a variety of other promiscuous and incongruous subjects. I had undertaken to read over my speech, and that may in part account for the antics my brain was playing, as I lay upon my bed upon which I had had so many nights of sweet repose. The crowing of the cocks, the neighing of the horses, the bleating of the sheep, the lowing of the cows, the grunting of the pigs, and other well-known rural sounds, to which I had been so long a stranger, roused me from my disturbed slumber, and I felt, for the first time, I was at home again. After one of Aunt Dolly's famous breakfasts I walked about, in conversation with my father, asking him his opinion of Mr. Spring's speech and my reply thereto.

My father said, "Jefferson, Seth Spring is an artful, long-headed fellow, Jeff, — a scholar, Jeff, — and them scholars handle words so that they sound smooth and nice, but cover up a lot of sly hints, dry knocks, and sharp digs at an opponent. Now, to be candid, Jefferson, I do not think your reply to him was just the thing; but we shall understand it better when we read it in the "County Gazette." I walked about the farm, but did not mingle that day much with my fellow-citizens. In the afternoon I received our copy of the "County Gazette," my father having been one of the original subscribers to that venerable journal. Among the first articles that met my eye was the following: —

"We have devoted a considerable space in our paper to-day to the account of the reception of our representative, Jefferson S. Batkins, Esq. We have heard many remarks made as to the singularly ambiguous style of Mr. Spring's address, as

also to some of the points in Mr. Batkins' reply. We defer offering any opinion in this day's issue, reserving what we may have to say upon the subject to a future time."

I went to my room with the paper. I read the speech, and the editorial remarks, with which I agreed in the main. Mr. Birch called in the evening, and together we studied over Mr. Spring's address. Mr. Birch said it was one of the best specimens of ironic praise it had ever been his fortune to read, and as it was delivered, emphatically so. He said it was the perfection of scientific lip labor. After this interview with Mr. Birch I confess I did not have so high an opinion of my powers as I had encouraged myself to believe I had from the applause given to me by my constituents on the day of my arrival.

I am free to say, at this time, I did not think my speech in reply was a very brilliant affair, but in conformity with my plan to publish my blunders as well as my successes, and inasmuch as it had been printed in the newspaper, I have given it to the world at this late day as a specimen brick out of which my fabric of reputation was erected.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

## POPULARITY.

Nothing of especial interest occurred for some time after the nine days' wonder of my reception had passed away. I had completed my library, had shelves made to hold my books, and maps were adorning the walls. I was fast preparing myself for a second term at the State House, assisted by Mr. Birch, who transferred the stores of knowledge from his mental granary, the brain, to mine, in return for which labor I transferred various products from the farm, in the shape of mutton, beef, vegetables, butter and cheese, with now and then a keg of our Old Orchard, which he declared was superior to much of the imported liquor under the designation of wine. I had much assistance from Mr. Birch. His family made no objections to a present now and then, from Aunt Dolly, in the shape of some nice mixtures of her preparation.

I began to have more faith in the saying, "Learning is better than house and land;" but I was not quite convinced of the full truth of this old-fashioned proposition on my mind; it is still open to discussion, and I believe a fair share of both would be better for an individual; but I am yet inclined to think that if I could have but one of these blessings I should choose the house and land, and take my chances for the other, or do without it altogether. Socially, I had increased the number of my acquaintances; with the exception of a few visits to the neighboring towns on business I divided my time with my books, my sheep, and other matters of agricultural interest. Occasionally Hon. Seth Spring called on me, but somehow I

had a suspicion that he had other than friendly motives when he came to the homestead. He appeared to me to be my Brutus, although, you understand, I did not think I was exactly like Caesar.

The "County Gazette" gave notice of my movements. My name was suggested as a candidate for the office of president of an agricultural society. On one occasion this information was given: "Our friend, Mr. J. S. Batkins, we understand, is studying law, with a view to practice in that arduous profession." The town had procured a new fire-extinguisher, and the name given to the machine was in my honor; painted upon its red sides, in gold letters, the people could read "J. S. Batkins." The railroad corporation had proposed to honor me in a similar way, by fixing my name to the next new locomotive to be put upon the track.

A place had been opened for the sale of oysters and other fishy refreshments, as was stated upon the sign, though it was said ale, cider, and stronger drinks could be had privately, although against the provisions of the newly made liquor law. This place was called the "Batkins Arcade."

A society of ladies had been formed for some purpose of moral reform. I was gratefully remembered by them. Perhaps the name of this charitable assemblage of ladies will give some insight as to the purposes of this organized female institute: "Batkins Association for the Prevention of Pauperism, and Needle-woman's Refuge." This was painted on a sign over the door of their rooms. Although I never attended a meeting of these benevolent ladies working under my name, I had been frequently invited. So far as appearances could be relied on, I was the popular Batkins, and was frequently told so by my friends.

During the summer and early autumn a project was started for annexing a part of Leadenville and West Cranberry to Cranberry Centre, and this was to be the great question at

the fall elections. I set myself to work to master the subject. I had expressed an opinion, however, that it would end either in Cranberry Centre being annexed to Leadenville, and called Leadenville or West Cranberry, or the joint territory be called Cranberry only, annihilating the Centre.

I was laying out my work, and told some of my friends that after my next term I should decline politics altogether, and follow the governor's example, to promise "to work with greater zeal, in private life, for the good of the Commonwealth;" but to tell the truth I do not think I meant all I said. I remember in the "History of Rome," which I was still reading, how Cæsar pushed away the crown three times, that he had been working a long time to get upon his head, before he accepted it, to hide his ambition, and got the prize at last. I do not know that this matter of history was in the governor's mind; but as, doubtless, he was better acquainted with Roman history than I was, it is not unlikely it had some effect upon him. I confess it did on me.

Now and then I had a chance to show off my education to the minister and Dr. Slawter. Hon. Seth Spring was too many guns for me; when I tried to prove to Bean how fast I was becoming a learned man, he only laughed.

The more I listened to Mr. Birch, and talked with Seth Spring, the more hungry I got for the logic and the rhetoric. I used to cram my head with book-learning, until I had a dyspepsia of the brain, as Dr. Slawter called it. He said it was not right for children and old people to put too much indigestible material into the brain, any more than it was to fill the stomach with all sorts of mixtures, at short notice, in large quantities. My coadjutor reminds me that he is not assisting me in a medical work, and that my views on dyspepsia are out of place; therefore they subside.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### ARISTARCHUS BEAN.

IN the earlier account of Mr. Bean's career, I may not have described him in such manner that he would be recognized. I referred to his style of dress, his elegant curls, his habit, when he desired to make a good impression upon lady customers, of setting these head-ornaments into lively action by pushing his fingers through them in his peculiar style. He was then a young man; youthful vanities had been superseded by a manner more in accordance with the position he now occupied, and in keeping with advanced years and experience. He was no longer a slender-waisted dandy. The heat of his actively working brain had thinned his flowing locks, now trimmed close, with here and there patches of white hairs, incidental to maturing years. His head and face were not unlike an eagle's, somewhat humanized by the growth of a grizzly beard, cut also to a point at the chin, his whole facial expression embodying the peculiar characteristics so often exemplified in the portraits of ancient fighting men. There often played about his lips a sort of chained, self-satisfied smile, which indicated firmness of purpose when any action based upon this quality required its display.

It is not usual to see an individual to whom such an assemblage of features belongs excited by mirthful provocation. Yet the dark and piercing eye, the heavy brow, dilated nostril, stern and rigid lip, — so threatening when compressed, — yielded to the impulse of the new emotion made by wit or humor, giving full effect to the change in loud and boisterous

laughter, with other extravagant expressions of joy. A combination of these natural conditions evoked sarcasm and invective at will, which, when let loose in a storm of words, overpowered and drove opponents to the wall, notwithstanding aggressive or defensive efforts of antagonists of high intellectual power.

Bean was a riddle to us all. Dr. Slawter is responsible for these analytical paragraphs, who also gave this opinion: "As to his parentage, if tried by physiological tests, a union of two strong contrasts must have produced these singularly alternating characteristics." Was he like father, or mother? Both being to me "unknown quantities" I shall leave the matter to some professor of algebra to cipher out. Whatever his origin, Bean was a power in Cranberry Centre, and had steadily risen to the position he now occupied. He never spoke to any one of his birthplace or his parents.

He had been heard to say that in time he would hold Cranberry Centre in his hands; usually, in his projects, he was in advance of his time, and though shrewd men would speak of his plans, when first proposed, in derision, they were found at last engaged in seconding his views. Whatever he undertook succeeded. He never sold a foot of land once in his possession. Whatever scheme he engaged in he still preserved an interest sufficient to control the actions of those who were associated with him.

Bean & Co. was still the firm name at the store, where I first experienced his talent for financiering. No one knew who were his partners. That he should influence many of the business men of the town, of means and ability, in whose concerns he had managed to become more or less connected, is not strange, but that he should be able to control the actions of such men as Hon. Seth Spring and Peter Feathergilt could not be explained by any course of reasoning open to ordinary sagacity and intelligence. He obtained a reputa-

tion for eccentricity in his movements and the selection of agencies, as in my case. It was noticeable that some persons who had suffered by his sharp practices were employed by him in other services which were usually made by Bean as profitable to his agents as to himself. He was liberal in gifts of money for benevolent purposes, yet economical in his personal expenditures; an unostentatious bachelor, living in a simple, and as far as was known, proper manner, with the exception of some gossip as to the sea-captain's wife.

After my return from Boston I learned that the means used to make my name popular for the next election, by its use on the fire-extinguisher, the arcade, and similar places, were all arranged by Mr. Bean. The broad avenue leading to the large woollen mill, called the Angola Woollen Works, erected by Bean & Co., was called "Batkins Avenue," in honor of me. We frequently had conversations upon the approaching political canvass. I had expressed some fears of a combination against me, which he laughed at, saying, "Leave your case to me. I shall say who shall be elected; and who I say, will be elected. Put yourself in my hands, or rather leave yourself there, for you are in my hands already. Do as I tell you, Batkins. Bean and Batkins are a match for Cranberry Centre." As I thought I knew him so well I felt secure on politics. When we parted at one of these interviews, he said, "Batkins, I shall come to the homestead on Friday evening, and by ourselves we will talk the matter over."

Friday evening came. At the appointed time Bean came also. He looked about him as he entered my "study," as the room was now called, even by Aunt Dolly, who, having been enlivened by my success and popularity, was influenced by her molecular changes, and was as pleased with my political success as my father or any other of my friends and well-wishers. She expressed her opinion now on all occasions that

she "always thought Jefferson would come out right in the end."

After Bean had satisfied himself with a general survey of my collection of books, maps, images, pictures, and a terrestrial globe I had bought of Mr. Birch, for two turkeys, he threw his hat upon the table, seated himself in my grandfather's arm-chair, which adorned my study, and was frequently an object of admiration to visitors, in consequence of its somewhat antique style. It was leather-covered, and decorated with large brass nails. I had often speculated upon the number and quality of the persons of both sexes who had been seated in that old arm-chair, either in the way of ordinary use, or out of curiosity to know how it felt. It was, indeed, a comfortable chair; I am not to mention any other person's experience than my own. Bean's opinion coincided with mine, for, as he stretched himself out, with a hand on each arm, he said, "Batkins, this chair is fit for a king to sit in, — a royal seat. A sovereign is in it now, 'every inch a king.'"

For the sake of the joke, as I supposed, I said, "Yes, or a queen either, and every inch a queen."

"Queen?" said Bean. "What do you know about a queen's inches or necessities? Kings and queens are humbugs, Batkins; so we independent sovereigns ought to think and, so thinking, speak. Never mind the kings and queens; let us talk business, Batkins. What are your views on annexation?"

"Well, Mr. Bean, I have not exactly made up my mind as to that subject. There are two sides to it."

"Yes, there generally are just two sides to everything, when there are not more than two. Batkins, are you a Whig or a Democrat?"

"Mr. Bean, I don't know as we need talk about that."

"Why not? You intend to run as representative for Cranberry Centre this fall, don't you?"

"Yes, but I calculate, you know, to be nominated by the 'Honest Men's and Independent party.'"

"Moonshine, Batkins! that party died with you. I made that party; it has gone up. In this election only two parties will run candidates, Whig and Democrat. Annexation will be the local issue; which side do you take?"

I remember how carefully I put this question: "Bean, which side do you think will win?"

"That will depend somewhat on the candidates. With a good man, I think the Whig ticket will win; but it will be the last time in Cranberry Centre, if it does."

"Well, had I better go on the Whig ticket?"

"You can't get there, Batkins. Seth Spring is booked for that."

"Well, then, I must go on the Democratic ticket."

"You can't do that."

"Then what shall I do?"

"Stay at home, Batkins. I have done all I could for you. In politics you've been a noodle, Batkins. Your popularity is all gone."

"All gone, Mr. Bean?" said I, astonished. "Then what's the use of my name on the town fire-squirter and other places?"

"Capital, to retire on. Keep your name before the people. You killed yourself by not making a speech in the Legislature, and, as if that was not enough, you buried yourself, by your reply to Seth Spring on the day of your reception, fifty fathoms deep."

"The County Gazette' praised my speech, Mr. Bean."

"I told them to do so. Seth was too much for you, in his reception speech."

"You selected him to make it."

"Of course I did. I knew he could smash you in a better

style than any other man in town, Batkins, without your seeing it."

"Mr. Bean, what does all this mean?" I looked at him with an assumption of dignity, mixed indignation and surprise. "I thought you were my friend."

"So I was; so I am. I made you; I will do it again, if you trust to me. Political manœuvring is an art, a science, a trade. You know the story of the pig's peculiarities. According to Irish authority, when you desire he shall go in any particular direction, you must make him think your desires are in the opposite way. I don't compare you to a pig; you are not obstinate at all; you will go, not where I drive you, but where I lead you. Batkins, before you can run again for Cranberry Centre, you must get married. Legislators should be moral men. Bachelors will be suspected. The representative from Cranberry Centre must be like what you have read in your "History of Rome" about Cæsar's wife, — "above suspicion."

"But, Mr. Bean, — I acknowledge you know more of politics than I do, — has it not been always considered something like a stain on the character of a man to be only a yearling, as they call it? and that will be my case, if I do not go to the State House next year."

"Not in your case. Your party is dead. It cannot give you a nomination, and if it did it could not elect you; they are bound to kill you off, Batkins, both parties; and they will do it, because it is my interest that it should be done. I control both parties' nominations, Batkins. I am Cranberry Centre in this election."

"Well, Mr. Bean," I began to expostulate. He put his hand over my mouth.

"I know what you mean. You shall be let down easily. You shall have a nomination from both parties, and then you shall decline. I will secure that, and that is much better than to be defeated."

"This course will not prevent me from accepting a nomination at some future time, will it?"

"Certainly not. Nothing prevents anybody from doing whatever they please in politics, if they have the means. Follow my advice, Batkins; keep cool. You shall go to the Senate, you shall go to Congress, and you may yet be President of the United States."

"No, Mr. Bean, that would be impossible."

"Nothing impossible in a free country. How many years is it, Batkins, since I swindled you out of a part of your stock in the store, dissolved the firm, and became sole proprietor? That was my first financial operation."

"Mr. Bean, you could not have done as you did then but for an accident that involved an injury to my moral character. I was afraid of you then. I was under your thumb, as the saying is."

"Were you?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I see. You mean the sea-captain's wife, Matilda; the wagon accident, Batkins; that was a success. I have held you by that ever since; but you did a good thing for me. That store was the stepping-stone to my fortune. I have done good things for you, and I am going to do more, only I must work in my own way. I have Cranberry Centre under my thumb also. I am king of Cranberry Centre. Seth Spring, the aristocrat, the Hon. Seth Spring, moves when I pull the wires. The wealthy old Feathergilt will do the same, with your assistance, Batkins; and what would give me control of this town would give me control of the State, of all the States politically, and make you president, Batkins."

I supposed him to be joking, — a faculty he indulged in often; yet still I asked him how it was to be done. I give his reply according to my recollection, as I have in similar cases, as regards people's sayings: —

"Batkins, I have no doubt, in clearing up land, you have found rocks that your two yoke of cattle did not or could not move."

I replied that such had been my experience, and I could show him the land. He said that was unnecessary, and asked me what I did then. I told him I took more cattle and put on.

"Yes," said he, interrupting, "and then the rock moved."

I assented.

"That is all you have to do in any case of power applied to obstacles. Use the multiplication table. As the power of resistance increases, so increase the moving power. This, carried out, is clear; the only difference is between Cranberry Centre and the United States. Money, Batkins, money and brains. I have the money, and I can buy the brains, either with money or its equivalent, of enough politicians to do the job."

"Mr. Bean, you will excuse me if I differ from you. It is a majority of the people who rule, and they cannot be bought."

"Nonsense, Batkins! Some people can be bought just as well as the politicians, only the trade has to be made in a different way. A drove of cattle start for market, Batkins; they are a majority, and ought to rule. How do the parties stand? Perhaps thus, — I have seen it so: fifty cattle are driven to market, a majority, by a man, a boy, a dog, a horse, — that's a minority. At the end of the journey the cattle are at the butcher's. The man has their value in money, the boy a new pair of boots, the horse his oats, the dog, perhaps, a new collar, and an extra bone; do you see it?"

"Not exactly."

"The cattle represents the people, a majority; the other party, the politicians, is a minority. That's the way it is, Batkins. Do you see it now?"

I told Bean I thought he was exaggerating, using what Mr. Birch taught me were rhetorical figures on a large scale.

"All true, Batkins; the largest number of the people, after a life of toil, when their last day comes, have not enough left of money to bury their bodies. The worn-out ox is worth something, — his hide, his hoofs, his horns, his bones, and other parts that may be sent to market or turned to a profit in some other way. Money, Batkins, is power, and the only power that can give a minority the power to rule. Money is king; money is emperor; money is president."

"Mr. Bean, honesty —"

"Honesty — bosh! — I say it to you, Batkins, I took, that is, I stole your money at the start, in a scientific, financial way. I put a small commission of that stolen money in the contribution box for a thanksgiving dinner for the poor. Do you think the man who furnished the plums for the pudding of the poor, discovered anything wrong in the money, provided the deacon did not subtract enough to pay for his own turkey, on the ground that upon his own estimate of his pecuniary resources and outgoes necessary to sustain his official position, he was as poor, comparatively, as any one at the poor-farm, or elsewhere, of pauper indications?"

Bean rose, and put on his hat. "Now, Batkins, as a friend I have spoken freely. You know the programme. Spring will be elected; next year after he will go to Congress. You keep studying books. I have employment for you in a more pleasant way than politics. Batkins, you must get married; you are old enough, and I have a wife selected for you."

As we walked downstairs together, I asked him who the lady might be. He said, "Miss Amanda Feathergilt."



## CHAPTER L.

## FEMALE STRATEGY.

MR. BEAN'S programme had been carried out; the election was a thing of the past. Hon. Seth Spring was elected by a handsome majority, as was recorded in the "County Gazette." My letters of declination of the nomination of both parties for a second year to the State House were also published in the "County Gazette." Many persons professed to be indignant at my course, and were determined to run an independent ticket with my name upon it, — to which course Mr. Bean made no objections, as he could thereby ascertain how many independent voters it would be necessary for him to buy, or have their employers send out of town on some important business, on election day. The result was in accordance with his views. I was honored with a place among the scattering, having six votes, which determined the strength of the independent ticket, and my personal friends, who were not trammelled by party discipline, or proof against Bean's attacks upon the rights of free suffrage in various forms.

Whether it was the excitement growing out of my declining the nomination, my father's occasional indulgence in extra amounts of old "Medford," to show his contempt for the prohibitory law, or the natural infirmities of age, I do not know; but Aunt Dolly was visited with some severe ailment which required the attendance of Dr. Slawter, frequently, for a few days, a professional nurse, and a reasonable amount of physic, of a considerably active kind, as I was informed. Aunt Dolly was willing to receive the visits of the minister, which my father thought was pretty good evidence that she thought at

last her time to go had come. As my father had been a coroner and a justice of the peace, he should have understood the value of evidence; but either the "Medford" had unsettled his powers of judgment, or he did not get all the facts in the case, I do not know which, for his mistake was apparent in Aunt Dolly's comparatively speedy recovery, confessing that she never felt better in her life, and hoped she should live to see Jefferson put down all his enemies.

I had something to relate as to what occurred in Aunt Dolly's chamber; but as it was mixed up with some things that had happened, and some that had not, I am in some doubt, at this moment, where would be its proper place in this narrative. I have decided to omit it for the present, and will narrate some other matters of contemporaneous history connected with my own affairs.

Simms' Folly, now called Swansdown Terrace, was the residence of the Feathergilt family. Mrs. Feathergilt was suffering from some difficulty which prevented her from being seen in public. Mr. Horace Feathergilt had gone to Europe. A new house-keeper had been installed. Miss Amanda had made frequent visits to the homestead during Aunt Dolly's illness, bringing to her nosegays of beautiful flowers, and fruits from the conservatories and hot-houses of her father's splendid establishment.

Miss Feathergilt and myself were on friendly terms; we occasionally met in the streets, and at the houses of mutual friends. She had never renewed the suggestive proposition, made to me incidentally at Mrs. Hambleton Squick's party, as to matrimonial matters. I had never started any subject in conversation with her which might naturally lead to such conclusion. I had intended some time to feel a little into Aunt Dolly's present views; but something always interfered, and this event of her sickness postponed the subject indefinitely.

## CHAPTER LI.

## "A SCENE."

AFTER a very slight explanation I shall yield to my friendly assistant, who says that some of the series of incidents involved in a visit to Swansdown Terrace will be better developed in dramatic form than in narrative. According to the best of my memory, with what documentary evidence was at hand, or that has been placed at my disposal, it will be found as near the truth as possible after the lapse of so many years.

I will state here that upon a verbal message from Miss Feathergilt, brought to me by Mr. Bean, I was invited to spend an evening at Swansdown Terrace on this occasion, with a hint from that gentleman as to my slow movements, in the following words: "Batkins, don't fail to secure Miss Feathergilt's acceptance of your proposal to marry her, which you will make, and have the day named, or the sea-captain's wife will make you a visit at the homestead that may not be agreeable to you. It is my wish that you should marry Miss Feathergilt; it is for your interest. Before your interview is finished I will call at Swansdown Terrace, — having business with the father of the lady, who, I trust, is hereafter to bear your name." I accepted the invitation. Bean was satisfied with this explanation.

If the reader will imagine himself looking into one of the windows opening upon the garden in the rear part of Swansdown Terrace, he will perceive an elegantly furnished apartment; a cheerful fire burning in an old-fashioned grate,

screens and furniture proper to its control and management, of highly polished steel, not inferior to any modern style of fireplace decorations.

Candleabra, filled with wax candles, lighting the splendid draperies which conceal the doors and windows from ordinary view. Elegant tables, chairs, couches, divans, cabinets, and bronzes, adorn this apartment. Mirrors of large size, reflecting in sections of the apartment, give the appearance of an extensive suite of rooms, opening into one grand saloon. Upon a table of exquisite workmanship are books and objects of art, of unique character and intrinsic value, composed of gold or silver, with precious stones. "Robinson Crusoe," "Charlotte Temple" and "Eliza Wharton," are filled with different colored ribbons used to mark selected pages for easy reference. Miss Amanda Feathergilt is standing with one foot upon the polished steel fender before the fire, in a superb costume for evening dress. Jewels sparkle in her ears, her hair, and about her neck.

*Amanda* (after a glance at a mirror with a look of importance). "Why don't he come?"

(At this moment the draperies part; through the doors which they concealed, Mr. Feathergilt enters.)

*Mr. Feathergilt.* Amanda, my dear girl, you do look charming. I am sure he cannot decline the honor we intend him, sustained as it will be by so much wealth.

*Amanda.* Father, I should think not; do you like Mrs. Kinderdeck, our new house-keeper?

*Mr. Feathergilt.* She came well recommended. Mr. Bean knows all about her. I think everything is right; however, Amanda, this affair must be settled. I am getting old. Your mother is infirm, and you ought to be married, and be protected by some one who will have a legal right to be in the position to do so.

(A servant enters, who announces Mr. Batkins.)

*Mr. Feathergilt.* All right.

*Amanda.* Show him into the reception-room, Jane, and when you hear my bell let him come in.

*Mr. Feathergilt.* That is right. I have some business with Mr. Bean; that done, Mr. Batkins and myself will decide upon your wedding ceremonies.

(Mr. Feathergilt and Jane go off through the draperies. Amanda stands at the table in a picturesque attitude, taking from the table "Robinson Crusoe," which she appears to be reading. She then touches a bell. Through the draperies Mr. Batkins enters, Jane leading the way. She retires at a signal from Miss Feathergilt.)

*Miss Feathergilt.* Good-evening, sir. Be seated.

*Mr. Batkins* (after looking about with some surprise). Good-evening, Miss Feathergilt. Well, I declare you are dressed up better than ever I saw you before. Mrs. Hambleton Squiek or Mrs. Swamscott could not hold a candle to you now. What book is that you are reading?

*Miss Feathergilt.* My favorite "Robinson Crusoe." (She hands it to him.)

*Batkins.* So it is, and there is a picture of "Man Friday." How I used to read that book!

*Miss Feathergilt.* I know you did, and you asked me once, Mr. Batkins, if I should not like to be your "Man Friday."

*Batkins.* Oh, no. You said you should like to be my "Man Friday," if we were on a desolate island.

*Miss Feathergilt.* Did I? Well, if I did, I have not changed my mind.

*Batkins.* Miss Feathergilt, I did not come here this evening to talk about "Robinson Crusoe." Since I have been a public man, my reading is of another kind; but I am now in the condition that I thought I might be some day, that is, I intend to be married, and if you think you can overcome

Aunt Dolly's objections to you, I am willing to accept your proposal.

*Miss Feathergilt.* My proposal, Mr. Batkins! What is that?

*Batkins.* You said, at Mrs. Squiek's party, this: "Mr. Batkins, if you have no preference for any lady, and you should think of getting married, you can have me one of these days." The time has come for me. The question now is, has "one of these days" come for you?

*Miss Feathergilt.* Did I say so, Mr. Batkins? Well — I —

*Batkins.* That is what you said; I put it down in my book that night.

*Miss Feathergilt.* If — I did say so.

*Batkins.* You did, Miss Feathergilt. I have done something I was afraid to do before now. I want to ask you when I shall marry you.

*Miss Feathergilt.* I am ready any time. Father said, if we agreed as to the engagement, he and Mr. Bean would arrange the time.

*Batkins.* Mr. Bean! Oh, well, if you are willing, I am. I suppose that is all there is to do for the present. We don't need any writing, do we, between us?

*Miss Feathergilt.* No; we don't need any writing; but don't we want to do something, that our friends may know of our engagement?

*Batkins.* Well, no, Miss Feathergilt. I thought we would not want anybody to know anything about it until we were almost ready to get married.

*Miss Feathergilt.* Just as you please, Mr. Batkins. What shall you call me after we are married?

*Batkins.* Call you? — my wife, Mrs. Batkins.

*Miss Feathergilt.* Yes, of course, before folks; but when we are alone?

*Batkins.* Just the same. What do you want me to call you?

*Miss Feathergilt.* I want you to call me Amanda; and begin now.

*Batkins.* Well, there is no harm in that, Amanda.

*Miss Feathergilt.* Not in the least, Jefferson.

*Batkins.* Jefferson? Well, I don't know. That does for father and Aunt Dolly to call me; but is not that a little too much like boys and girls for us, — Jefferson and Amanda? By the way, Amanda, this engagement depends, after all, upon Aunt Dolly's agreeing to it; for you know I told you that that was part of the bargain.

*Miss Feathergilt.* I will take care of Aunt Dolly's consent. There's my hand, Jefferson, to seal the bargain.

*Batkins* (takes her hand). Amanda, how do we seal the bargain, — shake hands on it, as we do sometimes on a horse-trade, or when we make a bet?

*Miss Feathergilt.* Don't you know by instinct?

*Batkins.* Instinct, it is only animals that know things by instinct. Dr. Slawter says reason is man's gift to control his instinct.

*Miss Feathergilt.* Jefferson, what does your reason say? Did you never hear about the delights of courtship?

*Batkins.* Yes, I have heard them say it was better than getting married; but we are not courting, are we? I never saw any courting.

*Miss Feathergilt.* You ought to know, Jefferson. Don't you remember the play of the "Silver Spoon"?

*Batkins.* Yes; when that other *Batkins*, they called me, was trying to court the house-keeper he did do something. I laughed at that fellow. But that was Mr. Warren, you know, not me; that house-keeper was a cunning woman too. She asked Mr. Warren to hold the yarn for her, and it got into kinks, and she put her head so close to him while she

was clearing out the kinks, that I rather thought then if she did not look out that fellow would kiss her.

*Miss Feathergilt.* And he did, I believe, Mr. *Batkins* — Jefferson.

*Batkins.* Yes, he did. If you ever saw the play you know he did.

*Miss Feathergilt.* Yes, he did, Mr. *Batkins*; would you hold some yarn for me?

*Batkins.* Yes; but I am not sure, Amanda, I should dare to do what he did. I will try on your hand first, to bind the bargain.

(*Batkins* kisses her hand, takes both her hands, is about to embrace her when Mrs. Kinderdeck, the house-keeper, enters from a concealed door.)

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Good-evening, Mr. *Batkins*.

*Batkins.* The sea-captain's wife!

This is about as I gave the idea to my coadjutor. I am not sure that it is not an improvement upon the way I told the story to him.

## CHAPTER LII.

## ANOTHER SCENE.

IN another apartment in Swansdown Terrace, the following scene was being enacted, while Miss Feathergilt and myself were arranging our matrimonial affairs; its connection with my personal history will be discovered when the reader, you understand, is better acquainted with it. This being in the dramatic form also, I claim no merit, either for the method of its introduction, or for its literary quality; in this form of story-telling you are supposed to see the people and the place, whether in a wood or a parlor, — as in the Museum theatre, or any other place where plays are acted. No description further will be given, except to say that this scene is in a drawing-room, near the house-keeper's apartments. Aristarchus Bean and Mrs. Kinderdeck are seated at a table; materials for writing are upon it.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck* (speaking in a subdued tone). That is the whole of it; and now, Aristarchus Bean, you must marry me, and quickly too. Do you hear me? You must marry me.

*Bean*. I am a magistrate. I can marry you; to whom?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. You must marry me yourself. I must hereafter be known as Mrs. Bean, with all the perquisites of such a place.

*Bean*. Mrs. Kinderdeck, did I ever promise or propose to you any such thing?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. Perhaps not, in so many words. You

said if anything happened you would satisfy me. Something is going to happen, and you can satisfy me in that way, and no other.

*Bean*. What has happened?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. Miss Feathergilt has given me notice that my services will no longer be required as house-keeper; that she is going to be married, and I know who she expects to marry.

*Bean*. Indeed! (Bean plays with the pen upon the table.) Who is the happy man, Mrs. Kinderdeck?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. You.

*Bean*. Me? I never dreamed of such a thing, — not in accordance with my plans at all.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. I'll spoil your plans.

*Bean*. Spoil my plans? Nonsense! that would spoil yours, if you have any; all women do have. I am not going to marry Miss Feathergilt, though I think I know who will, Matilda. You have assisted me. If I cannot keep you in this house after Miss Feathergilt is married I will do something for you, as when my plans are all accomplished I may have a desire for foreign travel. In money what will satisfy you?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. Fifty thousand dollars; give it to me.

*Bean*. Fifty thousand dollars! why should I?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. That is the sum I think you are worth to me; that's my price. You told me that everybody had a price, — that is mine.

*Bean*. Too much; too many dollars, Matilda.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. Then I will expose you. Marry me, or give me fifty thousand dollars, or I'll expose you.

*Bean*. Expose me? Eh, well, Matilda, I will promise to marry you.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck*. Give it to me in black and white, in writing, a regular document, one that will stand in law; and

then, if you do marry Miss Feathergilt, I shall know what to do.

*Bean.* When I go home I will write you a letter of promise.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Did you ever hear of the case of Barbara Slokum.

*Bean.* No. (Bean still plays with the pen.)

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* I did. A good-for-nothing fellow, a lawyer too. He wrote in a letter he would marry her some day, and went off and married another woman, — an old woman, for her money; just as you might do. When she brought the case into court, it would not stand in law; I don't know why. Now, I want something that will stand in law; and you know what I want.

*Bean.* Yes, — either me, or fifty thousand dollars; you don't care which.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Well, yes, I do. I would rather have you, for I like you, Bean, and if I am your wife you will support me in good style; and if I am your widow I think you will leave me more than fifty thousand dollars. I should do better by marrying you.

*Bean* (playing with the pen). How long will you leave the alternative action at my disposal?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* I don't know what you mean, Bean, by that; speak plain English.

*Bean.* How long will you give me to decide between your two very business-like propositions?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Three months.

*Bean.* Well, I will write an agreement then. (He writes with great caution, speaking as he writes.) "In three months from date, I promise to marry" — yes, your name is "Matilda —"

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Yes, Matilda.

*Bean* (writing, after a pause). Kinderdeck?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* No, you know better. That's a name you gave me; that's the name of my husband that was supposed to be.

*Bean.* Oh, yes, the sea-captain; I had forgotten. Your name is —

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Matilda Glimp.

*Bean* (repeating as he writes). "Glimp, or in default, pay to her, on demand, fifty thousand dollars after that time." — How will that do?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Let me read it. (She takes the paper and puts on glasses.) Let me see, — "Marry Matilda Glimp." No, I don't like that. You promise to marry me; but you make no statement as to who. I prefer the words "marry her myself." No, that would be no stronger; "to make her my wife," — yes, that will do. (Reads.) "Or in default to pay her, on demand, after that time." I don't like that; this paper don't state how long after.

*Bean.* Why, yes, it does, — on demand; that is, any time after three months.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Well, put in "immediately;" any time is no time. I mean business, Aristarchus Bean, as you call yourself. You are a slippery kind of chap. I know you, and that's more than anybody else does in this town. You are not going to cheat me after all these years, and what I have done for you.

*Bean* (writing). Done for me? What great things have you done?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* I have held my tongue for you, while you have made a fortune.

*Bean.* Well, I acknowledge my error; it is, indeed, a great thing for a woman to hold her tongue; and now, if you keep doing so, see what will be your reward. Now, listen. (Reads.) "Three months from date, I promise to Matilda Glimp, to make

her my wife, or to pay her immediately after the three months expires, fifty thousand dollars."

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* That don't seem quite right yet. (She reads it to herself.) I know what it wants: add, "For value received." (She lays the paper on the table, striking it with the end of her middle finger as if to give emphasis to her words, "For value received.")

*Bean.* That is not necessary; this is not a promissory note. It is not usual to promise to marry for value received.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Put it in, Bean; it will do no harm. I mean that this document shall stand against you in the courts. Do you suppose, if you were to dispute it, anybody would believe that you would promise to marry me, or pay fifty thousand dollars, unless I had done something worth the money?

*Bean.* What have you done? It is what you have left undone that I am under obligation to you for. A woman always will have her way; so I will put in "Value received," to please you. (He writes and gives it to her.) There, will that do?

*Mrs. Kinderdeck* (reads). Yes, so far.

*Bean.* Then I will sign it.

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* No, not yet. I must have a witness to see you write your name. I will call John.

*Bean.* No, no John. There is an old friend of yours now, with Miss Feathergilt, in the parlor, who is going to marry that lady; so your mind can be made easy as to any designs I have upon her. We will join them, and either or both of them can witness my signature, — a totally unnecessary addition, but which, to please you, I am satisfied to make, *Mrs. Kinderdeck.*

*Mrs. Kinderdeck.* Matilda, Mr. Bean; no lawyer's tricks with me.

*Bean.* Either way; permit me to escort you. (As he passes her before him, — to allow her to pass through the

door, he plays with the pen, which he takes with him, saying, "Before this claim is made upon me, I may have business in Spain." As to what he meant at that time was known only to himself. The reader will permit time, which does all things well, to develop.)

I now resume the narrative in explanation of the two scenes. At the close of that between myself and Miss Feathergilt *Mrs. Kinderdeck* came in, surprising herself as well myself. At that time the reader was left in suspense as to the object of her visit. Now it is known, I have only to say that we, that is, Miss Feathergilt and myself, witnessed the signature of Mr. Aristarchus Bean to an agreement, as he said, with *Mrs. Kinderdeck*, in relation to the disposition of some of her husband's property. This done, Mr. Bean and *Mrs. Kinderdeck* retired from the apartment, leaving me to the society of Miss Feathergilt. I have only to say that I remained until a late hour. It is not necessary to recapitulate, at this late day, the incidents of that evening, only I consider, and so may my readers, that this was the first time I ever sat up with a lady, "sparking," as they called the custom at Cranberry Centre, "courting," or whatever other name may be given to this method of spending an evening with an interesting and agreeable lady, no matter what her age or condition, with a prospect of matrimony sooner or later to come.

I am willing here to say that I have no doubt the earlier in life you practice this sort of humanity, the better. I regret, in my own case, that I abstained so long from the enjoyment of this universal source of innocent and rational amusement.



## CHAPTER LIII.

## A DISPUTED TITLE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the friendly relations between Bean and the Feathergilt family, a dispute had arisen about the right of way over a bridge crossing the river a mile or so from Feathergilt's mill. The road, of which this bridge was a part, shortened the distance a mile or so from this mill, and the village in which it was situated, to Swansdown Terrace, formerly Simms' Folly. Though not a highway, no objections had been made to public travel under occasional restrictions. Bean had purchased the estate adjoining Swansdown Terrace. This he had called Batkinsdale, in my honor, as he said. Occasionally he would close the bridge, post signs at either end, on which was painted: "This is a dangerous way." "Private passage." At night, two lighted red lanterns, were suspended at either end of the bridge, at some distance from it, thus to warn travellers of their rights and liabilities as well as his own. This course had disturbed Mr. Feathergilt, and he had frequently asked Bean to dispense with this method of securing his rights, and had gone so far as to offer to purchase this estate of Batkinsdale, at Mr. Bean's own price. This Bean always declined, saying, "You know, my friend, I never part with my real estate, and besides it gives to whoever has the fee of it the control of the bridge road." To the inquiry why, for any purpose of protection of title, he should so frequently exercise his right of closing the road to travel, his reply was, "I don't know what may happen, and I intend to keep on the right side of the law."

At this part of the river I was in the habit of going to practise my oratory, after the style of Demosthenes, in my primary studies to accomplish myself for the State House. Just where the bridge crossed the river, there was a descent of the water, and as it fell upon the rocks in its course, a name had been given to it, — "Indian Cascade." A story of some romantic nature had this scene for its development. It was one of the sights for visitors to Cranberry Centre, perhaps not equal to Niagara Falls, or the cataract of the Ganges, — an exhibition of which I once saw in a theatre; still it had its attractions to strollers, particularly lovers, as, with the exception of a shanty below the falls, or cascade, there were no houses for some distance.

This road and bridge, or the title to it, caused considerable irritation at Swansdown Terrace, and Mr. Feathergilt had gone so far as to say he was determined to try the validity of this title in the court, in a friendly way, of course. Both parties talked with me on the subject, and I was expected to take sides one way or the other. As usual with me, this was difficult. I could not be expected to hold contrary opinions to my father-in-law that was to be, and by this time you understand, my reader, I did not dare to appear to be in opposition to my long-tried friend, Bean, to whose offices I was indebted for all that was in expectance from the paternal guardian of her whom I now called my dear Amanda.

I must say here that the reason for my sometimes attaching the word dear to the given name of my wife to be, was, that it was generally understood that we were to be married, Aunt Dolly having been so changed by her sickness as to say to me, "Jefferson, I did not like that Miss Feathergilt at first, she appeared to be so forward; and, besides, it appeared to me that you ought to have a wife who knew about house-keeping and dairy-work; but then, Jefferson, that was before you went

to the State House, and made speeches, and that makes it a different sort of thing."

I said, "Yes, Aunt Dolly, it is so; everybody says I ought to have a lady for a wife, for if I go to Congress she might do more for Cranberry Centre than I could. Her parties would have more influence than my speeches. I hear sometimes that it is so."

"Well," said Aunt Dolly, "I don't know anything about politics, and I never pretended to. I always leave them things to the men, the same as I do killing the hogs, holding the plough, and finding the groceries; but I was a little mistaken in Amanda's notions of pride and upstartness; she has none of it."

This was the first time I had ever heard Aunt Dolly call Miss Feathergilt Amanda, and so I told her, and asked her what had produced this change in her mind.

"Well, Jefferson," said Aunt Dolly, "it was my sickness. She used to come to see me every day in that pretty pony carriage, and read to me such pretty things, I really think she did me more good than the minister, after I began to get better, even when he read the lamentations of Job to me."

"Did she read 'Robinson Crusoe' or 'Charlotte Temple'?"

"No, she did not read 'Charlot-te Temple.'" Aunt Dolly would pronounce this name as if divided into three syllables. "I do not know what the books were; but her sweet, pretty voice used to put me to sleep, Jefferson, and in one of the dreams I had, I thought you was married to her, Jefferson, and I said to myself, 'I should be thankful to Providence if it could be brought about.' And then, Jefferson, such pretty flowers as she brought to me, and nice grapes, and peaches, and oranges!"

"Ah, Aunt Dolly," I said, "how easy it is to be mistaken! and you can't always tell by the outside what is in the inside."

"True, Jefferson, some women are like a chestnut burr to look at, which says to you, you had better keep your hands off, when,

after all, there is a sweet meat inside, and I used to be fond of chestnuts in my young days, Jefferson."

"Yes, Aunt Dolly, I dare say, with some nice young man to clear the nut of the burr."

"No, Jefferson, it was my idea, though, it was a good deal with the chestnuts as with some other things,— wait until a little frost come, and the burrs would open themselves, and getting at the nut would not prick your fingers."

"I see, Aunt Dolly, what you are driving at, if you liken Miss Feathergilt to the chestnuts; but I am glad to hear your opinion of Amanda, Aunt Dolly, for now I can tell you a secret: we are going to be married."

"And bring her to the homestead to live?"

"That's my notion about it."

"I am glad of it, Jefferson; but as you are the only one left of the Batkins name I don't know but you ought to have married sooner. Miss Feathergilt, I know, will make you a good wife; still, she is so much past thirty that — Well, we can't always tell, and we must do in this as we are obliged to do in many other things,— do the best we can, and leave the rest to Providence."

I agreed with Aunt Dolly, but did not give her my private opinion, nor Dr. Slawter's; nor shall I do either now, you understand, but let time do its work.

## CHAPTER LIV.

## ABOUT MY MARRIAGE.

It had been arranged by Mr. Bean and Mr. Feathergilt that our marriage should take place at the end of a year, provided Mrs. Feathergilt's situation at the time would permit, and after a wedding tour, either to Europe or the West, I should return to politics. It had been decided that Hon. Seth Spring should go to Congress, if the annexation scheme was disposed of, and I should represent Cranberry Centre in the Legislature again, with the opportunity to settle old scores with the Boston members. It was agitated, also, to have a plurality elect instead of a majority, by which means a minority candidate was as likely to be chosen, when three or more candidates were in the field, as a majority was. I do not know who proposed this change. It could not have been Mr. Boutwell, because Mr. Winthrop received a large plurality of the popular vote, and the Legislature, following the expressed will of the people, elected a different man. I think this election had something to do with the change, and in private life I favored the change, and so gave out.

Bean was scheming in a new direction. As I never did understand his game, this time I did not attempt to inquire his motives. He said to me one day, when I was visiting Swansdown Terrace,— which, of course, I often did, and so did he,— “Batkins, I want to talk to you on a family matter; it concerns you as much as any of the rest. What do you think of running your brother-in-law, that is to be,—Horace Feathergilt,— for Congress next term?”

“Does he want to go?”

“No, of course not. Nobody wants to go to Congress before they are elected. Do you want to go to Boston next year?”

“What,” says I, “to the General Court? Well, Mr. Bean, I don't know, if—”

“There, stop; you can't come the Caesar over me. Horace Feathergilt must go to Congress. He is coming home in a few weeks, and must go in training,— that I will take care of. But, Batkins, your mother-in-law, that is to be, will not live long, and, between you and I, if she dies, her husband will soon follow,— often the way with old folks who have lived a long while together. Now, I have been telling him that he ought to make you and Horace his agents in business, and take his ease. I will assist you; in fact, Batkins, I will take all the work off your hands. Horace is no great financier, and you are not quite fit to be a secretary of the treasury, and perhaps without some help from me would not do so well.”

I said, “Bean, I do not desire any such addition to my work.”

“Well, Batkins, you can approve it if the old gentleman should ask your opinion; for you know he thinks a great deal of your opinion.”

I promised I would think of it, and we parted. Time passed rapidly, and Miss Feathergilt, my reading, my reciting with Mr. Birch, visiting cattle-shows, and occasional journeys to Boston, kept me in a reasonable state of activity. Amanda had a desire for a pair of ponies that she had heard of; and one day when I proposed to make her a birthday present, partly to ascertain her age, she said if I could purchase that pair of ponies, she should be delighted to accept them as a birthday present.

As my father expressed great satisfaction at my approaching marriage, and saw what he called good points in Miss Feather-

gilt, and as he was reckoned the best horse man in our part of the State I concluded he would make a better job of the pony business than I should. I therefore communicated my views to him on the subject, and he engaged to look after the matter. Miss Feathergilt had already practised somewhat with ponies, and used them with good effect on her visits to Aunt Dolly, who used to look out of the window when she arrived and departed, and expressed great admiration at Amanda's skill in driving. Since her removal to Swansdown Terrace she had visited Saratoga and Newport, and was inclined to introduce the fashions of those gay places to Cranberry Centre. It is scarcely worth the time to load this narrative too much with other people's doings, and I shall only remark that my father was successful in the pony trade, and in consequence of the difference in the stepping and general appearance between the new ponies and the old ones, a new phaeton was indispensable. This, with an elegantly mounted harness, was procured, and Amanda was the envy of the rest of the girls, whose fathers could perhaps afford to give their daughters such a turn-out, but did not do it.

This was said to have been a present from me; it was not; Bean ordered it from New York. He thought New England could not furnish such a piece of workmanship, and talked of a style in Paris for a family coach. Bean appeared always to be fond of Amanda, and I often wondered why he did not marry her. I asked him one day in a sort of way that I thought would elicit a square reply. He looked at me, and said, "Batkins, fools ask questions that wise men cannot answer."

I said, "I have heard so. Do you mean I am a fool? I know you are a wise man."

He said, "No; but," with a curious look that I remembered well, but did not attach much importance to, as he often said

queer things, "Batkins, a man may not marry his — grandmother."

I said "No; but Amanda is no relation to you, and certainly not your grandmother."

"I do not refer to Miss Feathergilt's age, Batkins; but merely to convey the idea that if some things can be done as well as others, there are other things that cannot be so well done as some. I spoke only in figure, Batkins, when I said, in relation to your question, that a man may not marry his grandmother."

"Yes, rhetorically, as Mr. Birch has it, eh, Bean?"

"Yes."

Bean did not appear to be in his usual good spirits. I was waiting for an opportunity to speak to him about the title to the road-way, and I wanted it to come in accidentally. Our conversation had taken such a turn that I hardly knew how to get at it. In some sermon or play I have read, I remembered this line: "A little flattery does well sometimes." So I thought I would try that. I said, "Bean, I have been waiting for an opportunity to express my gratification at the taste you exhibited in the selection of Miss Feathergilt's phaeton, and the exceeding liberality displayed in presenting it to her."

"Nonsense, Batkins! She thanked me; that's enough. What do you want now?"

"Nothing. I was going to drive her over to the mill; it naturally enough came into my mind to think of your gift. I thought I should like to express my thanks to you likewise."

"Is that all?"

I said, "That is all about the phaeton; but one day, as I was walking along that way with Mr. Feathergilt, he said it was strange you would not sell him the estate the other side of the falls."

"Did he? I never sell real estate. He wants the right of way, Batkins. No, not a foot of the land; no title in the right of way. I will shut it up when I please."

Mrs. Kinderdeck entered the room at this moment. We exchanged looks; we always did when we met. I supposed she was thinking of my interview with her, referred to in the earlier part of my narrative, — I always was, — but as yet we had not exchanged a word upon that extraordinary event. She said, with a smile, "Mr. Batkins, Miss Feathergilt is ready for you."

I thanked her, saying to Bean, "You will excuse me?"

He said, "Of course."

I left the room. How long they remained together I never knew, or what was said on the occasion. The ponies and phaeton were at the door, and in a few seconds, with my wife to be, we were dashing, as she called it, down the avenue leading to the road. This ride was quite a contrast to the ride in the shower. We laughed at that ride as I brought it to her recollection.

## CHAPTER LV.

### A DISAPPOINTMENT.

I SHALL have to compress the events of two years into a space to correspond with my plan as agreed upon with the printer; but I shall not omit any important matter on that account. I shall only, in a degree, refrain, you understand, from remarks explanatory, unnecessarily too minute. I shall leave to the intelligence of my reader, in a greater degree, the collecting of the threads of my story, and weaving them into the whole cloth, believing now the task not to be a difficult one. As to the affairs of public interest I will only say that matters at the Centre went along about so. The annexation project failed, I do not say in consequence of my not being in the Legislature. They said Seth Spring sold out to Boston. Boston would agree to it if the consolidated towns should take the name of Leadenville, thus abolishing West Cranberry and the Centre. Abolition was beginning to be a power. Conservatism was beaten. Conservatism said, that, as Leadenville had originally been set off from Cranberry Centre, if there was to be a change in name and an annexation, it all should be called Leadenville; these were said to be Young America's views as they were flashed over the wires from the State House. In the "Centre" there seemed to be a conflict of opinion, and as yet I had not made up my mind for the future.

The prohibitory law was enforced just about as Mr. Boutwell said he thought it would be, in his veto message, and productive of predicted results. The fact of his afterward having signed the bill did not seem to have much effect upon the

law-abiding people of Massachusetts in general, or Cranberry Centre in particular. His work of "equal zeal and greater freedom in private, for the welfare and honor of the Commonwealth," did not seem to have much effect upon the law-loving, sin-hating population; for, according to statistics, — figures, which, on Mr. Bean's principle, never lie, — more alcoholic liquors were sold, and more drunkards made since, than before, the passage of this transcendent invention to legislate the people up to the proper moral standard.

In my own domestic affairs there had been changes, which at this time I shall only refer to. Mr. Horace Feathergilt had returned from Europe; he had not disapproved of my alliance with the family. He had been nominated and elected to Congress, and had received almost the unanimous vote of Cranberry Centre, Leadenville, and West Cranberry, neither of which, at first, were in our district. In order to effect this, however, these three towns were added in a new arrangement of affairs. It was thought easier to do this than to have Mr. Horace Feathergilt move into the other district; it was thought that might lose him his settlement in Cranberry Centre, if such a matter should ever be of importance to him in any claim he might make hereafter upon the town for support.

I suggested to Bean that I thought that was looking a little too far ahead, as with his wealth it was hardly possible he should ever need pauper support. Bean said it was a free country, and in a free country everything in politics was possible. "For," says he, "carry out your free-and-equal process, and there is no reason why a pauper on the town-farm should not be a candidate for the presidency. The policy of nominating such a man is another thing, and that would be the question of the politician. The notion used to be that the government was the people's government; it is not so, — it is

the office-holders' government. The people pay the bills, and progress will extend this principle indefinitely."

Now and then Bean would indulge in talks on politics; but I had never heard him put the matter exactly in this light before.

"But," he continued, "Batkins, you have a great deal to learn yet; and the next time you visit the poor-farm you ask Old-sledge Slideout, as they call him, about these things; and he will tell you that he has been in Congress, and how he got there; and he is a good representative of a class that, if they are not fed and clothed by government offices, must be provided for in the almshouse or penitentiary, as the case might be."

Just as the preparations for my marriage were completed Mrs. Feathergilt died, — rather suddenly at last, but at her supposed age I cannot see how a death can be called sudden. This event put all the family in mourning. I, not yet being in the family, was not expected to wear black. This, of course, put an end, at least for the present, to my marriage and contemplated tour. It is not important to describe the funeral; of course it was a handsome one, — an undertaker from Boston, I think his name was Grave, assisting Mr. Sodder, our sexton, who had been singularly appropriately named in the ceremonies of the occasion.

For a time the people in the house were silent, and walked on their toes slowly about the rooms, as if fearful of disturbing the good old lady, who, if she had lived long enough, would have been my mother-in-law. After a while, however, their steps were quickened, their heels touched the floors, and sounds of hilarious enjoyment ascended from the kitchen and other rooms of the lower part of the house. I did not think Amanda looked so well in black; but she put it on; so did her father and Horace, and when all together I could liken them to nothing but a trio of crows. This condition of things did not interfere with business or politics, which went on as usual. Horace was excused from making stump speeches, in conse-

quence of his recent domestic affliction, as was stated in his organ, the "County Gazette."

In politics there was something mysterious going on. A new party was forming. It appeared suddenly in force, carrying the day, and all its candidates into the State House, with few exceptions. As I was not then in public life I cannot, of my own knowledge, throw any light upon their doings, and upon hearsay evidence I am not in the habit of forming any opinions. I am aware of nothing that is left to remind us of this party success in making laws for the public good, except that one compelling railroad trains to stop at bridges and crossings. If my readers desire further information they can ask the conductor the next time they ride on a steam-power railroad; I believe it does not extend to horse-power carriage.

I think, with this explanation, my reader will understand the drift of things conveyed, in part, in dramatic form. I hope his imagination, or strong perceptive faculty, will give a more lifelike vigor to the action than if a narrative were proceeding. I take it, a good deal of the effect of story-telling depends upon the story-teller, and if my reader does not keep my embodiment "in his mind's eye," Batkins to him is anybody. I have no objection to any person who has seen Mr. Warren in the "Silver Spoon" supposing me to be like him in personal appearance. To those who have not, my physiognomy must be left to their imagination, as well as my manner, shape, and, as Mr. Birch called it in French, "*ensemble*."

## CHAPTER LVI.

### A FINANCIAL JAR.

I REFERRED to the proposition of Bean, that Mr. Feathergilt should retire from the active business matters, and that he, with myself and Mr. Horace Feathergilt, should act in his behalf. Bean had succeeded, and Mr. Feathergilt, senior, gave the proper authority, which was accepted at the banks and by others who had financial interests in this connection. Mr. Bean did the work, consulted Mr. Horace Feathergilt and myself, but usually acted upon his own judgment whatever opinions we might have advanced in an opposite direction. Finance was Bean's hobby, and he rode it to win, and I should say, "won his spurs."

Mr. Horace Feathergilt had enlarged views so far as personal enjoyment was concerned. A residence of some months in Paris, or upon the continent, had not demolished his fast American views. He had rather added to his extravagant ideas a foreign eccentricity incompatible with general economy. He made no pretence to business knowledge, but relying on his father's talent of coining gold and silver out of cowhide, calfskin, wooden pegs, awls, and waxed ends, when manipulated by skilful workmen, he did not disturb his brain with any profound study as to how the thing was done. It is not singular that he should be willing to trust that able financier, Aristarchus Bean, to manage affairs, particularly when he had used his influence with the senior of the firm to permit him to abstract from its resources money in sufficient quantities to purchase a place in Newport, or villa, a house in Boston, a



yacht for coast surveys, and the needful outlays to secure a nomination and election to Congress. Miss Feathergilt coincided with her brother's views, and sometimes I thought she was getting a little more fond of Newport than was desirable for a lady destined to be the wife of a farmer, who, to be sure, had been a representative, and, as Bean had it, was eligible to be President of the United States, or any other office in the gift of the people, or, as Bean said, the politicians.

I do not fix dates: I have only to say, "about this time," as I had so often seen in the old "Farmer's Almanac," "a storm may be expected." A storm did come, and again Cranberry Centre was agitated as it never was before, and never will be again; and here I must repeat the old adage, "Truth is stranger than fiction."

One of the most perfectly appointed apartments in Swansdown Terrace was the library. It had been so in the days of the occupancy of this palace by "Mrs. Simms' man," when it was called Simms' Folly. I have no knowledge of the number of books it contained, nor what their character, but it was said to be a very fine collection. How many of these were ever read I do not know. A library was considered a necessity, in the establishment of a gentleman, of equal consideration with a billiard-room, though generally not so much used when persons of the style of Peter Feathergilt were occupants.

Something had occurred which the following dialogue in the library may serve to explain. Mr. Feathergilt had been looking over some books, and appeared to be in a similar situation to that I have referred to when I was examining the trial-balance of the books of the firm of *Batkins & Co.* Bean, self-possessed as usual, stood at the table, with his hat in his hand. Feathergilt rose from the table, walking about, giving evidence of a not over-tonic condition, as Dr. Slawter used to say. He at last came back to the table, where the impassive Bean stood, as if anticipating his question.

*Feathergilt.* Well, Mr. Bean, what arrangement did you make at the banker's?

*Bean.* None, sir; the proposition is under consideration.

*Feathergilt.* Consideration? When before did a proposition for an accommodation, with the name of Feathergilt signed to it, require consideration at any bank in New England or New York; and that bank, too, that I have saved from bankruptcy more than once?

*Bean.* It is so. There is no doubt you have an enemy at work, a political enemy possibly of the junior partner of the firm. The principal of the banking-house hinted to me as much. He says Mr. Horace Feathergilt's mode of life can scarcely be supported by the business of the firm, added to losses he knows your house has made. He alluded to his city residence, his villa at Newport, his stables of horses, his elegant yacht, and your son's magnificent but, as he calls it, prodigal hospitality.

*Feathergilt.* Well, as I find the money, I think he can afford to live in that way.

*Bean.* So I told him, sir; still for ready money we are in a state of temporary embarrassment; then there are the expenses of the election to Congress.

*Feathergilt.* Are they not paid?

*Bean.* It was thought politic, sir, during the canvass, not to have any disbursement proceed from your house, sir, nor to have any clue which hereafter might lead to a discovery, if any curious committee should be appointed to inquire as to the purity of elections. The money was advanced by friendly parties.

*Feathergilt.* Who advanced the money?

*Bean.* Myself, *Batkins*, and some friends. The sum is not paid; neither Mr. *Batkins* nor myself are anxious; others are.

*Feathergilt.* I will give you a check for the amount at once; I do not desire to have any such demand made upon my execu-

tors, or to have it charged in the books of the firm. Give me the check book; what is the sum?

*Bean.* Gross amount appropriated, fifty thousand dollars.

*Feathergilt.* Fifty thousand dollars for a seat in Congress! What was such a sum ever expended for?

*Bean.* Organization, newspapers, rearranging the district, bands of music, torch-light processions, stump speakers and their tavern-bills, votes.

*Feathergilt.* Votes?

*Bean.* Yes, sir; when we begun, things looked black. The canvass showed fifteen hundred majority, at least, for our opponent. Votes are things that elect. You said, and so did Mr. Horace Feathergilt, that you would not coerce your operatives and dependents in their votes; so that the only way to do was to buy them. We had the money, it was judiciously applied in the district, and thus the election of Mr. Horace Feathergilt was secured, and, as we told the voters, and had it printed in the newspaper, the safety of the country at the same time was preserved.

*Feathergilt.* Do you think this is honest?

*Bean.* In politics it is so considered. At any rate that's the way it is done; it was done on the other side, only we had the most guns.

*Feathergilt* (taking up the check-book). Have I fifty thousand dollars in the bank?

*Bean.* I think not.

*Feathergilt.* Where is my son?

*Bean.* He has gone to Washington.

*Feathergilt.* I will go to the bank myself. Mr. Bean, you alarm me; certainly we have in the firm's name, and on my account, abundance of property.

*Bean.* Yes, but Mr. Horace Feathergilt has drawn heavily lately; within the year, sir, a very large sum to take from

the business. But I had supposed you were aware of it. As you say, you have property, but much of it not available on a sudden call.

*Feathergilt.* Show me the list.

*Bean.* Sit down, sir; I will read a statement of your assets. I have prepared everything, sir, in case of any emergency. Mr. Horace Feathergilt, sir, has a house in Washington, which cost, with furniture and plate, one hundred thousand dollars.

*Feathergilt.* A house in Washington! What for?

*Bean.* He intends to marry, sir. I was requested to consider that a confidential affair; but the present condition of your business must be my excuse for communicating this fact to you. Your house in Boston, — one hundred thousand; Swansdown Terrace is valued at two hundred thousand, — the improvements exceeded the estimates; Mr. Horace Feathergilt's villa at Newport fifty thousand; yachts, horses, carriages, pictures, and other articles of value, say, one hundred thousand.

*Feathergilt.* What is the total?

*Bean.* Five hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

*Feathergilt.* What was the cost of the mill?

*Bean.* Five hundred thousand.

*Feathergilt.* How much have we in bonds, notes, and other securities?

*Bean.* But a few thousand dollars available. I have been obliged to use a large sum to make both ends meet in the necessary financial operation of your somewhat extended business.

*Feathergilt.* And what are our liabilities?

*Bean.* I have not yet completed the list; to-morrow, sir, I shall be prepared to show you an exact account of the affairs of the firm and its resources.

*Feathergilt.* Mr. Bean, am I bankrupt?

*Bean.* No, sir; to attempt to realize on Mr. Horace Feathergilt's investments would be to sacrifice at least one half of their value. It may turn out that you are not a millionaire; but you are not a bankrupt.

*Feathergilt.* And this comes of politics.

*Bean.* Not entirely, sir. I think I shall be able yet to have things all right. Leave it to me; do not go to the bank. I have some resources, they shall be used.

I entered the library at this moment. Perceiving that Mr. Feathergilt was somewhat agitated, I inquired the cause. Mr. Bean said, "A little disappointment, nothing more;" and together they left the library, Bean saying, as he went out, "Mr. Batkins, do not leave until I return. I wish to speak with you."

I had come to see Amanda, who had just returned from a visit to some friends in Boston. I had promised to read to her some of my speeches, which I had composed for different occasions. Under the instruction of Mr. Birch I still employed myself in this way, and had something of a collection. I used to carry them about with me in a large envelope, such as were used at the State House for government purposes, and which, with a knife, gold pens, and other supplies of stationery, I had received for the Commonwealth's use when I was representative. Upon this I had my name entered in full, and marked, upon the outside, "Private and Confidential." While Bean was absent I thought I would make a selection of the one I would first read to Amanda. While thus engaged, Mrs. Kinderdeck entered the library, I thought some what agitated, and said, "Mr. Batkins, Miss Feathergilt will see you in half an hour."

I told her I was much obliged to her. We were on speaking terms, yet I could never forget the nankin suit and the bill for groceries. I was always suspicious of her, and never

cared to be alone with her. She approached me. "Mr. Batkins, you can do me a favor, will you?"

"What is it, Mrs. Kinderdeck?" I asked, very politely, but with some timidity.

"You remember, more than two years ago, you and Miss Feathergilt witnessed a paper upon which Mr. Bean signed his name?"

"I remember it."

"It was an agreement, Mr. Batkins, between Mr. Bean and myself."

"Yes, he said so; about some property."

"He will not keep the agreement; that is, he puts it off; and when I tell him I will go to court about it, he laughs and says if I go to court I cannot prove his signature. Now, you and Miss Feathergilt saw him sign it, as you both witnessed it."

"We did," I said.

"The favor I have to ask is, will you go to court with Miss Feathergilt, and testify to it?"

"I will, Mrs. Kinderdeck. I cannot answer for Miss Feathergilt."

"I have asked her; she is willing."

At this moment Bean returned and fixed his eye upon Mrs. Kinderdeck. She left me, saying with a smile, "I am much obliged to you, Mr. Batkins;" and left the room.

Bean watched her off, then turned to me. "Batkins, what have you been saying to the sea-captain's wife? None of your old tricks." He looked at me with such a ferocious mixture of scowl and laugh that, for the moment, I could not speak. He continued, "I know; she has been asking you about that agreement."

"Yes."

"Well, what do you know about it?"

"Nothing," I said. "She asked me about your signing it."

"She is a fool. I shall make it all right with her. She has been threatening me with a lawsuit. Nobody can do anything with me that way." He took from his coat-pocket a packet, and handing it to me, said, "Here, keep that; it is sealed, — confidential and private. Sign this, — a receipt that you received it from my hands."

He turned to the table, wrote a receipt, which I signed; he put the receipt in his pocket, and gave me the packet. "Take care of it, Batkins, and, if you have any fears of its safety at your house, take it to the bank. Put it into their vault, and have it ready when I call for it." He looked at me with one of his gimlet-like expressions, saying, after a pause, "Batkins, don't mind anything old Feathergilt says. There will be hell to pay in Cranberry Centre before you are ten years older."

Mrs. Kinderdeck came in to say that Miss Feathergilt would receive me. I followed Mrs. Kinderdeck, Bean going out with us, repeating close to my ear, in a shrill whisper, the singular emphatic caution given as above. I had not the slightest idea of its meaning; but repeated it to myself as I walked through the hall. It made a strong impression upon my mind, as everything did when Mr. Bean, in a serious manner, emphasized his remarks upon it. I was going to the lady who was to be Mrs. Batkins, and intended to read her a speech that I had made for a debating club, of which I had been made a member. One of the great questions of the day was being settled in Cranberry Centre, as to whether a meat or vegetable diet was most conducive to health, mental activity, and human longevity. As usual, I adopted a middle way, and found ancient authority. Bean's strong language rather deranged my ideas. I did not read it to Amanda, but I will refer to the matter in another chapter.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### PYTHAGORAS.

NOT having abandoned my idea as to going again to the State House in Boston, under the instruction of Mr. Birch, I was endeavoring to learn something upon those topics out of which sermons, speeches, and lectures were composed. I could get some information from the minister, rather more from the doctor, and, I repeat it again, from the theatre plays. I heard a learned man speak about the transmigration of souls. As things were going on in Cranberry Centre, I was not prepared to determine how this transmigration squared with the doctor's seven-year changes. Some people said all such ideas were chimerical, and this one, started by an old heathen philosopher, by the name of Pythagoras, was the most absurd of all. On one of my visits to Boston a friendly acquaintance, that I made there when I was in the Legislature, invited me to go to the theatre. He said, on the "blending instruction with amusement" plan I could learn more of the duties of legislation than I could at temperance lectures, or the circus show. Both of these institutions I occasionally found it pleasant to attend and patronize, when it was no expense to me. As I have before related, I had been to the Museum playhouse a number of times. I was pleased always to enter that instructive temple. The sensations created within me, on the occasion of my first visit, to this day have not been obliterated. I mean the visit to the playhouse part, not to the collection of animals, the mermaid, and the waxwork, although I was pleased and instructed at that time with the natural curiosities.

I understood a little better the workings of things on the stage at this time. I thought the people, as they came into the theatre, — I did not put the name into my book, and I have forgotten it, — were of a different pattern. They were all dressed up nice, more as if they were going to meeting; they looked more serious; and though they smiled at each other when friends met, still it did not appear to me that they expected to laugh much. I did not think there was so much smell of peppermint and allspice as I had noticed in other places; when the ladies moved about or stirred their handkerchiefs, the air appeared to be filled with a rose-water smell. I shall not describe the theatre; it was full of people when the picture on the stage rolled up. The name of the play was *Damon and Pythias*. I have been told there really were two such men, and that they were great friends. I was somewhat doubtful, you understand. I had never heard of them. I obtained some political ideas from this play. I do not intend to enumerate them. I wish I had heard this play when I was in the General Court.

The name of the actor who was representing *Damon*, as Mr. Warren represented me, I supposed without ever seeing the real *Damon*, was Mr. Edwin Forrest. He was in the Legislature of the town where he lived, — it appeared in the upper branch. Either his credentials were not right, or he was not going to vote right; they ordered him to leave; he declined to do so, and eventually they called the militia of the place to put him out. I shall never forget what Mr. Forrest said, and how he said it: "I stand a Senator, within the Senate house." He folded his arms, and looked at them with disdain and dignity.

I will relate at this time what occurred at a town-meeting. When some of the people wanted to put me out of the building, the image of Mr. Forrest came to mind then. I looked about, and spoke, not, perhaps, with his muscular attitude, nor his stentorian voice, but to the astonishment of

my former constituents. I said, "Mr. Moderator, I stand a citizen of Cranberry Centre, as I once stood a member of the General Court in Boston State House, and now, as then, I demand my rights." The people clapped their hands for me as they did for Mr. Forrest, and no one undertook to put me out. The "*County Gazette*" gave an account of the meeting, and, in reference to it, said as follows: "Our esteemed friend, the ex-member, Mr. *Batkins*, created a great sensation by this unexpected outbreak of concealed and suppressed indignation. It was a natural burst of original eloquence." I assure my friends I did not pay the "*County Gazette*" anything for its insertion in their impartial columns, nor did I ever give a hint to anybody where I got the idea, you understand.

Perhaps many of my readers have seen this play, and can call to mind how Mr. Forrest looked, and can form some idea of my appearance in the town meeting. The politics of the play was instructive to me, but something altogether different turned the current of my thought into a channel of classical learning.

I heard some of the performers say that Senator *Damon* was a "poor and talking pedant of the school of dull *Pythagoras*;" and I thought if Mr. *Pythagoras* could turn out of his school such men as *Damon* I would hunt up his history and have a talk over it with the school committee of our town. So, if I know anything about the transmigration of souls, this was the way I got on to the track of useful knowledge in that direction. If the doctrine he taught has made any impression on me it will be discovered in my description of men.

It does appear to me sometimes that some men's souls have had a course of instruction in the bodies of other animals; they partake so much of their characteristics. But for myself I am unable to recognize in my own case any prebodied life. My first recollections are of *Batkins*, and my thoughts continue in this affinity up to the present time. But I want to observe,

you understand, just at this time and place, that I began to consider that to get a certain amount of learning, if a good memory was in the case, was not a very difficult matter. It was no uncommon thing after a member had made a great speech founded upon a classic history, and introducing anecdotes of Julius Cæsar, Hannibal, Christopher Columbus, and Cicero, when I came to ask him some question as to the case in hand, he knew very little more than he had expressed in his speech. I will, in justice, say of some others, who seldom made any reference to these heroes, while discussing a question of Massachusetts policy, and who did not use any quotation from historical memoirs, that they would give me at once a satisfactory answer, and in language as easy to understand as the stories in the primer, or my favorite "Robinson Crusoe."

Now, I have read a good deal about Pythagoras, but I do not propose to give his history, as I assume that most of my readers know all about him; still, as a celebrated lecturer said in a speech, "for the benefit of the scholars of the Sunday school, who, perhaps, have not yet arrived at that state of learning which includes the lives of heathen philosophers," I will state that he was born about five hundred years before Cæsar's time as Pythagoras, though he remembered himself as somebody else a long time before. When and where he died is not known. In consequence of this omission of his biographer, I have no doubt, in accordance with the spirit of progress which "goeth about seeking whom it may devour," some one of these agents of progress will prove yet that no such person as Pythagoras ever lived.

It is not easy to explain how different events in the lives of great men will make impressions, more or less distinct, upon the different minds of different individuals; and, while I confess to great admiration for many of the propositions and teachings of the great ancient philosophers, one struck me as a singular illustration of the saying that "there is nothing

new under the sun," and that one I used on the occasion when a question of philosophy was being discussed as to which was better for health, a flesh or a vegetable diet. And I assure my readers I received credit on that occasion for my classical learning. I said, "Pythagoras forbade his disciples to eat flesh, and everybody knows who Pythagoras was." The applause bestowed upon me was convincing proof that they did all know who he was; and the vegetarian side of the house welcomed the new supporter of their doctrine. When the echoes of their approbation had died away, I continued: "Pythagoras also forbade his disciples to eat beans." This caused a sort of subdued expression of dissatisfaction by the bean-eaters, as may be supposed when I add the discussion was going on in the presence of a New England audience, who had listened to the production of ancient authority against the use of our almost national Sunday dinner.

I have been asked why Pythagoras denounced beans. Of course I do not know, but suppose it had something to do with the transmigration of souls, he thinking beans were formed of the same material out of which man was originally created, and, therefore, to encourage their use as food was truly to encourage cannibalism, and make of us all man-eaters. If so, what nonsense was it to send missionaries to the Feegee Islands! I referred all curious questioners to history itself to settle for themselves this question; and I do the same to my friendly reader.

My coadjutor, after reading this chapter, informed me that whether Pythagoras thought as I represent it, or not, he was correct. I repeat what he said, without being responsible for modern science, or the discovery of its facts. I give his words: "Mr. Batkins, vegetable and animal life proceed from the same cell-formation; and if the cell of a man, a woman, an elephant, a fish, a bird, a pea, or a bean, were placed in the field of a microscope of any known power, the

observer would be unable to distinguish one from the other." I commend the consideration of this matter to the lovers of baked beans, though I hardly believe we shall see the day when such a transformation will take place as this, — that the beans will eat the individual. Yet such is the astonishing progress of modern science that I should not dare to say it will not be discovered to have happened. My coadjutor says such changes actually do take place. I cannot follow the subject further at this time; but, as to the friendship part of the play, I think the race of Damons and Pythias are extinct; and here again I wish to remark that "there is nothing new under the sun."

I have thought of Mr. Forrest a great many times since, and I have seen him play several historical characters. I don't think, however, that his scene in the Senate House, where he was trying to talk the senators into not voting to make a king out of a general, will ever be obliterated from my mind. I thought to myself if we ever in this country get any such sneaking fellows for senators as they had in the town or kingdom where Damon and Pythias made it their home, they would do just about the same thing as they did there.

But I want to say this for Mr. Forrest. If I never see him again, and if he reads this life of mine, — I want him to read it, — first, I want to apologize to him for asking Mr. Warren if he made as much fun as he did. I think Mr. Warren is a master actor in his part of the trade, or art as some call it. I have seen him acting an old man, — I can't remember what his name was, — and I felt the tears coming down my cheeks when there was no wind or dust in them, just as if it was all real. Now, I hope Mr. Warren will not feel affronted if I give my opinion that I really do not think he could play Damon as Mr. Forrest did, if he was dressed up just like him, although, as far as size goes, he might make a good-looking senator of that period, whenever it was; and, on the other hand, I hope

Mr. Forrest will not be affronted if I give a like opinion to this effect, that I do not think he could play Mr. Warren's parts and create as much amusement, if I am a judge.

But I came to this conclusion, from what I have heard and what I have seen, — that these two gentleman, when they are on the stage, come nearer to my idea of brain-acting than any other performers I ever saw, no matter what country they came from. Of course I have laughed until I almost split my waistcoat at the clowns in the circus, and at a very comical set of Frenchmen, that did cut up amusing didos, without speaking a word. I have seen monkeys do that; but that is not exactly the kind of holding up the mirror to nature that I fancy, nor the kind that Mr. Warren holds up. If there are any young men that think of learning theatre work for a living, I advise them to see Mr. Forrest and Mr. Warren; they are masters at the trade. If any country in the world can furnish anything better than these two Americans, I say, send them along. I am under obligations to both of these gentlemen, — Mr. Warren for representing me; Mr. Forrest for giving me an idea of a patriotic senator a true friend, and making me acquainted with the history of the philosopher whose name heads this chapter.



## CHAPTER LVIII.

## FAMILY SECRETS.

BESIDES writing speeches I frequently enlarged with my pen upon matters I found against the dates in the "Farmer's Almanac." I used to do this in my study, or library, at the homestead. I remember once, after I had made an official visit to the poor-farm, I put down on paper my views on crazy people, growing out of conversations I had with a woman who had a notion that she was queen of England, and was always riding in a chariot with ten horses, and yet at the same time she was dressed in a most singular fashion for anybody with a pretty good idea of a queen's style. The town used to furnish good, respectable calico dresses for Martha, — that was the name she went by, — but she would never wear a dress as it was made for her. She would tear it up, and with her blanket or coverlid over her shoulders act the queen. Now, with her way of putting on these rags, not hardly sufficient to cover up anybody's nudity if it was any ways cold, she presented an appearance that I never saw before or since, except once, when I was in Boston at the theatre. I went to see a girl, — a lady, I suppose I should say. Her name was printed on the play-bills, Miss Charlotte Cushman. She seemed to be, however, quite an old lady, and had on something such a looking dress as Martha had on when she was acting out the queen of England. If any of my readers have seen Miss Cushman in this ragged woman's part, they can form an idea how Martha looked, and if they have not, they can ask somebody who has, for there were many people

in the theatre the night I saw the play, and I have been told that she has played in this play several times in the course of her career. I am bad at describing ladies' dresses, and this reference must suffice.

Martha had lived, when she was a girl, at our homestead, before the death of my mother, and although she had good offers of marriage from thrifty young farmers' sons, and well-to-do mechanics, she preferred a fellow who went round with a circus show, dressed out in spangles and feathers, which put out of her mind all her more reputable admirers. She went off with him to Canada, and was married; in a year or two she returned, said she was a widow, and associated with the people of Gypsy Village, and earned with them a precarious living, by basket-making, fortune-telling, and other less reputable practices. Some folks thought then that she was crazy. She was always talking about riding in chariots, and being queen, which the doctor said was a sort of delusion growing out of the circus business, in which she said she had been engaged. As she was harmless, for many years she was allowed to wander about in this way, refusing to go to the poor-farm until later in her life she was compelled to do so.

Martha had some knowledge of "Mrs. Simms' man," which she frequently mysteriously referred to, and said if she should tell what she knew, some folks in Cranberry Centre would not hold their heads so high; but as she never mentioned names, no clue had yet been discovered as to the truth or falsity of her assertions, and they were considered as the mere ravings of insanity and were little heeded. As I had talked with Dr. Slawter often about insanity, and hereditary diseases, I was much interested in Martha's case. There were at this time some curious stories afloat about Mr. Feathergilt when he lived in Leadenville. Some thought he was insane, and as I was to marry into the family I did not desire to have any mixture of this disease in the Batkins blood, in case the

marriage of Amanda and myself should result in offspring, — a thing so much desired by my father, who often said, you understand, that the name of Batkins had always been on the voting list of Cranberry Centre, and he hoped it would never be otherwise. These reports induced me to visit the poor-farm, and, if possible, ascertain the truth from Martha, who was said to be implicated in some scandalous stories in connection with Mr. Feathergilt, whether true or false. I had not arrived at the end of my investigation before other stories were circulated as to the soundness of mind of Mr. Feathergilt in relation to financial matters. Mr. Horace Feathergilt had returned from Washington, at the advice of Mr. Bean. Dr. Slawter had been consulted, who recommended that a distinguished physician of an asylum for the insane should, with him, visit Mr. Feathergilt, and determine what, in their judgment, was his condition of mind.

The visit was made. The result of the doctor's inspection was an opinion that, though Mr. Feathergilt was somewhat depressed in spirits, he was by no manner insane, nor, in their judgment, likely to be. The doctors advised, however, that he should not be disturbed by business matters, and it was decided that he and Amanda should go to the other side of the river to a friend's house, for a few days, and then it was thought a voyage to Europe would be beneficial. To consider these matters Mr. Bean had suggested that himself, Mr. Horace Feathergilt, and myself, should look over matters, and then decide upon future movements.

The library at Swansdown Terrace was selected as the place of meeting, and on the day and hour appointed I was there. Bean, as usual, did pretty much all the talking, and explained to us the situation of the firm as shown by the books, and other records of the business of the firm. Mr. Horace Feathergilt expressed himself as astounded at the result, and began at first quietly, and afterwards with some spirit, to

doubt Mr. Bean's statement of affairs, expressing also great surprise that his father should have allowed Bean thus to manage his business.

Bean, as placid as a picture of an angel, after listening to Mr. Horace Feathergilt, remarked, if Mr. Feathergilt, junior, had attended more to business and less to his personal enjoyments, he would have known more of his father's condition; and that, in fact, his neglect had more or less influence in producing the state of mind his father was now suffering from.

Mr. Horace Feathergilt thought Mr. Bean had better withdraw from the management, and let Mr. Batkins and himself, with the advice of Mr. Seth Spring, adjust the affairs of the concern, and in so many words communicated these ideas to Mr. Bean, and appealed to me as to my opinion upon the matter.

Bean laughed loudly. "A pretty trio! Mr. Horace Feathergilt, you are a member of Congress, — I made you so; Jefferson S. Batkins, ex-member of the Legislature; — I made him so; son-in-law expectant of Peter Feathergilt, — I made him so; and Seth Spring, a friend of the family, who will do as I say. And you would restore the credit of Feathergilt & Co., that I, Aristarchus Bean, have destroyed, and for a cause."

"You?" said Mr. Horace, — "you?"

I thought as I supposed Mr. Horace Feathergilt thought, and felt as I supposed he felt; but I was silent, as Bean held up his forefinger, shaking it at me, which action, together with a threatening glance, deprived me at the moment of the power of speech.

"Yes, I; and I have been a long while at it," was Bean's response. "I have told your father why, and I will tell you; perhaps to satisfy you I must say more to you than it was necessary to say to him."

"Well, sir, I will listen; but what my father could have

done to so injure you that you should retaliate by robbing him of his money and destroying the peace and happiness of his home, I am at a loss to surmise."

"There's bad blood in the family, Mr. Horace Feathergilt. Your father robbed my mother of her peace and happiness, and made me the inheritor of her name and shame. I am your half-brother, Horace Feathergilt, on the worst side; half your father's wealth, inherited and acquired, should be mine. I should have been your equal. Instead of being an independent gentleman, as you have been, I might have lived a bastard outcast, a hireling drudge; by my own efforts I have avoided this condition, and not from his sympathy, or sense of right."

"If this be true, which I do not believe, it is no excuse for treachery, robbery, and perhaps greater crime."

Mr. Horace was angry, and a proud, defiant look brought Mr. Bean speedily to his side. I feared there might be violence, yet I hesitated as to any interference.

Bean replied, "You may not believe me, sir, but when the time comes I will furnish proof."

"When did this devilish scheme enter your mind?"

"I will tell you." Bean appeared to be making great efforts to suppress his passions. "Long ago. Years have passed since your father's father — my grandfather — suddenly came to his death, thrown from his carriage at his own door. You and I were boys; perhaps you may not remember the funeral. I do. I followed into the church this train of mourners. I listened to a discourse about the patriotism, benevolence, and worth of the departed, and a prayer that these virtues might descend to the son. Did they so? Where was I then? Sneaking like a beggar into an obscure seat in the gallery, boarded off for the parish poor. Your father — with your honest mother, leading you by the hand — passed down the carpeted aisle, while the swell of the

organ echoed the funeral dirge from the roof above. The thought then came to me, where is my mother? Why does she not lead me to our grandfather's funeral with them? At the thought the hot tears burned my eyes; my teeth tightened like a vice; my hands clenched while the nails were piercing the skin of the wounded palms, filling them with blood. I swore an oath in whispered words, but with determined will, that if I lived I would be revenged on your father and on you. I have been in part; I will be in full."

Mr. Horace Feathergilt was endeavoring to subdue the passion excited by Mr. Bean's statement and concluding threats. He replied with firmness, evincing more manly qualities than I had thought he possessed: —

"Mr. Bean, I am not responsible for my father's frailty, even if what you insinuate be true; I do not perceive why my sister or myself should suffer for sins of which others are accused; but, sir, I deny your charge, and will resist your efforts to complete the revenge you threaten, and that you have succeeded in part in accomplishing."

Bean appealed to me: "Sir, unless you have something to advance, I think this conference better terminate here."

I signified that I had nothing to say. As yet Bean had not proposed to do me any harm, but after I had spoken he came to me. "Mr. Batkins, you are interested in this matter, in consequence of a proposed alliance with the family by marriage. You shall not suffer in any pecuniary way by the bankruptcy of the firm of which your prospective father-in-law was the principal. I would have married Miss Feathergilt myself, but a man may not marry his sister, as I was about to say to you upon an occasion which you may remember, when you asked me why I did not marry Amanda myself."

I said I did remember the occasion, and he did say "A man may not marry his grandmother," instead. He paid little attention to my reply, but advanced to Mr. Horace Feathergilt.

"You were pleased to say, sir, that, in your opinion, this conference had better terminate here. I agree with you."

"Leave my house then."

"Whose house?"

"My father's."

"Ah, for the present it is. I shall dispute the title to it before long, and may require you to leave it with as little ceremony as you consider necessary to use with me. When you know better who I am, you will regret this indignity, Mr. Horace Feathergilt. 'Pride will have a fall.' I wish you a good-evening, and peace of mind until we meet again. My services are yet unrequited that made you the Hon. Horace Feathergilt." This was spoken in that ironic tone, accompanied with a sneer, for which Bean had a peculiar delight, and which struck Mr. Horace with all the force the insult was intended to produce. I felt almost like doing something myself. Mr. Horace started forward, exclaiming, "You are a villain and liar!" then, restraining himself, said, "I cannot blame the men of fiery blood, who, when deceived and wronged as I have been, seek for justice with their own hands, nor wait the chances of retribution upon the guilty from the slow and doubtful action of courts of law. Leave my house, sir, or I may commit a murder."

Bean passed his hand lightly over his hat, as if displacing some obtrusive object, and put it upon his head, saying, "You will not commit a murder: you are too respectable for that. You are a full-blooded Feathergilt; I only a half-breed. I might commit a murder, and I would, if it were necessary to complete the task I have set myself. Mr. Batkins, you will accompany me, sir; I have some unsettled business yet with this family, in which you may be interested."

I was in an awkward position, but I decided to comply with Bean's request; so I followed him, saying, as I left the room, "I will call on you to-morrow, Mr. Feathergilt; in the mean time I will hear what Mr. Bean has to say."

## CHAPTER LIX.

### MYSTERIES.

ON my way home with Mr. Bean, he questioned me as to any conversation I might have had with Mrs. Kinderdeck, in respect of his agreement with her. At that time I had no knowledge of its nature. He inquired, also, if Martha, the lunatic of the poor-farm, was still alive, as it had been reported she was ill of some dangerous malady.

I gave him all the information in my power as to Martha's condition, and asked him why he was interested in her, as I had never heard him say anything about her since the time she used to visit the store, selling brimstone matches and baskets.

"Batkins, that woman Martha knows who were my parents, and if these Feathergilt's are troublesome, I shall have to prove what you heard me say as to my paternity."

"But," said I, "Bean, what sort of a witness would a crazy woman be in a court?"

"That depends upon circumstances," he said; "she might not be a legal witness, but if her story corroborated other testimony, and agreed circumstantially with other incidents in the case, morally it would have weight. Batkins, I have done it. I always told you I would do it. I am the greatest man in Cranberry Centre, and I have put down the Feathergilt's, all but your wife, that is to be. If she marries you, you shall lose nothing in a pecuniary way; but, Batkins, you must stick to me. I have trusted you; you must trust me."

I came to this town to do a work, — a slow job; but I have done it."

I said, "Bean, where did you come from? You were not born in Cranberry Centre."

"No, the first that I knew anything about myself I was in Canada; then I came to the town where old Feathergilt's father lived, and there I saw the funeral; then I went into another State; there I became acquainted with Aram Andriss. He brought me here, and placed me in Deacon Smoothe's store; there I was introduced to you, and from that time to now you know how things have been with me. But it is come; my work is almost finished. When it is, what will people say of Aristarchus Bean?"

He seemed to be in a good humor for talking; so I thought I would inquire a little further into his history. I continued, "Bean, where did you go to school?"

"In Canada. Don't ask me anything about what I did before I knew you. It gives me a headache to think of it."

I saw it would be useless to go on, so I changed my conversation. I asked him if he thought Mr. Feathergilt was deranged.

He said: "No. It is a tough family; the old man can stand a good deal of rough handling; but for a fall from his carriage his father might have been alive now;" and with a strong oath, which it is not necessary to repeat, "I will fix his flint. He goes driving about every day in that phaeton, that either you or I, or both of us, gave to Amanda; don't he?"

"He does," I replied.

"Alone over the bridge road?"

I told him he did not; usually Miss Feathergilt attended him.

"I will not take the phaeton from her, nor the ponies, but I will skin the old fellow and the member of Congress before

I am done, unless the old man acknowledges me as his son, and then I will divide equally with my brother and sister, and between us the old gentleman shall be well cared for. My mother shall have a monument over her grave, as well as the mother of the other two. Is not that fair, Batkins? You see you are one of the family."

I said I thought it was fair enough, if Mr. Feathergilt would agree to it.

"He must agree to it," said he; "and you must tell him so. Do you go where he is?"

I told him I did.

"Then you tell him he must come alone, and meet me in the evening of a day I will appoint, and bring with him the papers he talked about. He must meet me alone; you may be present, but he is not to be so informed. If we fail to come to terms, then I will strike, and when I strike Cranberry Centre will think an earthquake has visited it, Batkins. Vesuvius will be like the explosion of gunpowder in a cooking-stove to it."

We had now reached that part of the street where it divided; my way to the homestead was in a direction opposite to that which led to the residence of Mr. Bean. As we parted he said, "Batkins, where is the package I gave you for safe-keeping?"

I told him it was at the homestead, in the same place that I kept my valuable papers, — in an iron box.

"All right," he said; "if I do not arrange affairs with my father, Batkins, — I call him so to you; I have not said as much out of the family, — I shall want that package."

I said he could have it at any time. We separated; he said, "Good-night, Batkins," and went his way, whistling some merry tune.

I did not know what to think of affairs as they stood. Some of Martha's talk seemed as if she knew something about

this story; but when I tried to make her answer categorically, as the member wanted me to in the State House, her replies were vague and unsatisfactory, and that is precisely the condition I was in when I attempted to fathom Mr. Bean's sea of mysteries. Since the affair of the sea-captain's wife, he never invited me to his residence, and I could never discover that he had given an invitation to any other person. He had the reputation of being a queer old bach; this was given as a reason by persons discussing the question.

## CHAPTER LX.

## MY STUDIES.

I WAS in my library a few days after our meeting at Swansdown Terrace, which terminated so abruptly and with no very happy results. The business of the firm was going on as usual, under the direction of Mr. Bean, who had arranged matters at the bank. Mr. Horace Feathergilt submitted to this, under the advice of his father, as the only way to prevent the condition of affairs being made public.

I was preparing a speech, or lecture, I was invited to read at the lyceum of the town of Leadenville. My subject was free government, and the advantage it is to some people, and the disadvantage it is to others, as almost everything human is. I was to send this to Amanda, with some other compositions, to read to her father as a relaxation to his somewhat uneasy mind. Amanda was kept in ignorance of the true state of affairs, and did not guess the true cause for the change in domestic matters. I found much information and amusement in a book of mythology, by which I learned much about Jupiter, Hercules, Venus, Vulcan, Juno, and all the gods and goddesses of those times. A queer set they were, if their histories are true! I thought I would put some of them into my lecture on free government. I tried a little rhetorical flourish on my own account, which was corrected afterwards by Mr. Birch. I prefer to preserve this specimen as originally written. I had been talking about those patriotic people who are so willing to serve their country even when government pays small wages. I asked one woman one day, when I was

at a neighboring city, how her husband could live in such style upon the pay he received, which was nothing, as an alderman, and he had no other business. She said, it was the pay he got for his votes when any job was under way. I did not exactly understand it then, you understand; but I give my idea upon it generally in the following extract from my lecture: —

"There, Mr. Chairman, is the municipal government, like a great cow, with a hundred teats, and these slinky calves, with as many mouths in their heads as the hydra of old, and as many hands as the giant Briareus, to hold on to the teats, while the hundred mouths were sucking the government milk."

I was reading this over to myself when Mr. Bean came in. I was enjoying the figure, and asked Bean what he thought of it.

He said he did not care to express an opinion on any such stuff. He came on business; first, he wanted to meet Mr. Feathergilt, this evening, at nine o'clock, at the homestead; and I must see him and ensure his keeping the appointment.

I told him I would do as he requested.

"In the next place, Batkins, give me the package I handed to you."

I opened the iron box, in which I had placed it with my valuable papers, among which were my speeches, and handed to him the package. He gave me the receipt, and after saying, "Here, Batkins; at nine o'clock p. m.," hastily left my library. I continued engaged in my speech-writing. After a while Aunt Dolly entered the room, saying Miss Feathergilt was at the door in her phaeton, and desired the parcel I was to send to her father. I told Aunt Dolly to ask Miss Feathergilt to come in, and let one of the men watch the ponies. Aunt Dolly, pleased at my invitation, left the room with my message. I had spoken to Mr. Feathergilt about this meeting

with Mr. Bean, to which he made no objection. I concluded I would write him on the subject. I did so, in the following words: —

"Mr. Bean appoints this evening at nine o'clock for the meeting at my house. I have promised him that you will come alone.

"J. S. BATKINS.

"P. S. If anything occurs to prevent, send me word."

I had just finished when Amanda came in, dressed in — Well, I never could describe a dress, although I did see a lady once at the theatre who had on something like it, but cannot remember the name of the play, or the lady that wore the dress. It was very becoming, inasmuch as it did not conceal some parts of the "human form divine" which are considered attractive, and suggestive of the "ex pede Herculem" principle, which men are said to admire very much, and which, in some cases, I am told, are extended by artificial and artistic means. I have to apologize for the foreign language, used against my principle, you understand; but Mr. Birch thought I might use it once in my speech. I did not, and have put it in here. I think it fits just as well.

My coadjutor remarked, in relation to the dress referred to as displaying Miss Amanda's form, that there were many plays, in which ladies who had been riding or driving were represented, that in some degree were like that I described to him. He asked me if I could remember anything about the play, and where I saw it. I told him I thought it was at the theatre in Howard Street, and that there was an old gentleman, who was quite a beau; he looked fixed up, like a young man who had had the gout and lived high. He was trying to be on good terms with the lady, who had a very small husband. I remember one thing about him. She said when she wanted him, she always whistled, and he came. My coadjutor smiled. It was usually the men that whistled, he said, but the



women did not always come. "Mr. Batkins, the play you refer to was 'London Assurance,' and the lady was Mrs. Jane Barrett, who was representing an English type of womanhood called Lady Gay Spanker."

I take his word for it, and those who have seen Mrs. Gay Spanker will get some idea how Amanda was dressed on this occasion. I know this, after the usual compliments of the day had passed between us, I looked first at her reflection in an old-fashioned mirror that was hanging against the wall, which I was told my mother used to take great delight in viewing herself in, — as Aunt Dolly had it, — before and behind, and both sides. I judged from this that my mother, whom I have not referred to often, had in this regard the same idea that other women have had since calico, satin, and velvet have put aside the original fig-leaf costume of the first dress-makers. This reflection of Amanda pleased me much, and the thought did actually come to my mind that she was created probably purposely for me. In fact, as she grew in stature, or rather in plumpity, I thought I was more fond of contemplating our union. Now, on my part, mine was not a love at first sight, if it was any love at all; but time and circumstances had changed my first indifference into such a sort of respectable affection for Amanda that I could not resist telling her so on this occasion. I shall not, however, pretend to recollect the language used. I dare say it would seem silly to my readers, and perhaps to Amanda and myself, if repeated at this day. Amanda, at this time, wore large yellow leather gloves, and I thought to kiss her hand at this time would be a ridiculous affectation, and so I told her. Amanda laughed, said I was improving, and with a sort of curious expression in her eye, as nearly as I could see it, she said it would be more difficult to take off her gloves than to remove her veil. This she did; the expression of her eyes was more distinct, and now implicated, I thought, her lips; so that I felt a sort of emotional

twitter around my mouth. I was about to decide as to my translation of the mute language of Amanda's eyes and lips, and was approaching her for the purpose of a closer study, when Aunt Dolly came in, without knocking, as she usually did, and my decision was deferred for another "session," — the old idea coming up again, — for another meeting. Amanda dropped her veil, and appeared to be doing something with the end of the long whip she had in her hand, upon the ceiling. I do not know exactly what I did. I suppose I whistled, — an accomplishment I was not expert in, but generally relied on when I was in a quandary, or did not know exactly what else to do.

Aunt Dolly, though not naturally suspicious of me, and changed in regard of Amanda's artful advances, appeared as if she thought she had interrupted something confidential, and, after a pause, said, "Jefferson, am I in the way?"

I said, "Certainly not, Aunt Dolly; only we did not hear you come in, and I was a little surprised."

Aunt Dolly said she wanted to know if Miss Feathergilt would stay long, as the ponies had better be put into the stable.

Amanda said no; she had some calls to make, and if Mr. Batkins would be good enough to give her the parcel for her father, she would not remain any longer. I said I had not quite finished one of the pieces I was to speak, but I would bring it with me when I came over. I handed to her the packet, the note I had written, and some loose sheets, and requested Amanda not to open the packet until I arrived, as I wished to read my old speech to her father myself.

Aunt Dolly asked Amanda if she would have a lunch, or anything. She declined. I attended Amanda to the phaeton, saw her safely seated therein, and with the papers by her side she started the ponies, and at a handsome trot she drove them down the road, and was soon out of sight. I returned to my

study, and was engaged busily upon my lecture on free government. My table was covered with books, from which I obtained the information I was to give my listeners at the lyceum, — and, after all, that is the way most people write books, histories, speeches, and lectures, and I suppose that is the reason why so many of all kinds are like to some others. The pith of the thing comes from the same source, whether the writer is a learned man from a college, or a self-made man, on his own hook, that is, in his education.

In an hour or two after, Amanda left, and while I was in a most perplexed condition about one of the heathen gods who, it appeared, did not pay much attention to the prohibitory law, if there was one at Olympus, — I believe that is the name of the place where Bacchus, the ancient gentleman I refer to resided, — Mr. Bean entered my study. I never before saw him so excited; he held in his hand the packet I had given him, with the seals broken. "Batkins," said he, "you have not given me the right packet." He passed it into my hand.

"No," said I, "Mr. Bean;" and upon examining the contents, I discovered I had given him my original speeches, that I had not spoken at the State House, with several others. I said, "This is a mistake, Mr. Bean; if I had known this I should have felt exceedingly troubled, for I set a high value on those productions."

"I don't know, Batkins, as you are in the family, but you intended a fraud. Where is the packet I gave you?"

"Well, Bean, now the speeches are safe I feel like laughing. I was to have sent the speeches to Mr. Feathergilt, and of course Amanda, who was here this morning, has taken your package instead. The old gentleman will be surprised, if he should open it, when he sees the mistake. He will not, however, until I come, as he cannot, without difficulty, read my writing."

He threw my speeches down upon the floor. "Do you know what that packet contains you sent by Miss Feathergilt?"

"I do not."

"Bring it to me, with the seals unbroken. Where is the receipt I gave you for it?" The receipt was lying upon the table where I had left it. I pointed it out to him. He seized it, saying, "Batkins, bring that packet to me before nine o'clock, with the seals unbroken, or there may be a murder for you to answer for." He rushed from the room.

I wrote a few sentences of my lecture; but I found my ideas on free government were stagnated, and I thought I had better follow Amanda and rectify the mistake I had made. While preparing to do this, Mrs. Kinderdeck entered my study, shown in by Aunt Dolly, who complacently left the room with the brief remark, "Yes, he is at home, and there he is." I could scarcely believe my own vision. Mrs. Kinderdeck at the homestead! and this time I felt no fear at the interview, whatever might prove to be the cause of it.

"Mr. Batkins, I do not know what has come over Mr. Bean; but I think he intends to do some mischief, and I must see some of the family and warn them. I have done with him. He has defied me to do my worst. I will not do that, but I will do my best to defeat his schemes, whatever they may be."

I said, "Mrs. Kinderdeck what has happened?"

"He says unless he regains something that he has lost he will kill old Mr. Feathergilt."

I did not dare to trust to anything Mrs. Kinderdeck said. My first acquaintance with her and the yellow nankin suit, the bill, and the recollections of early days were not wholly eradicated, and as she had grown older her looks indicated more than ever that she preserved the characteristics foreshadowed by her physiognomical portrait when young. Her

face would remind you of a pickerel, if the head of the fish were placed at a right angle with her neck, and the shoulders of the fish were increased in breadth. She was slender at that time, and it was on that category of likeness to fish, flesh, or fowl, that I rather fancied as illustrative of human peculiarities, that I had classed the sea-captain's wife. Now, after years of activity and opportunity I think if the upper fins of the fish were enlarged to the capacity of human arms, and draperies of appropriate character were properly arranged upon the fish, placed in a perpendicular attitude, with a head-dress of modern style to cover the dome surmounting the structure, I think a shark, not of the man-eating species, however, would give a tolerable idea of Mr. Kinderdeck's present appearance. I do not pretend to believe that there was any resemblance between Mrs. Kinderdeck and the costumed shark below the shoulders, of course, and therefore do not ask my reader, you understand, to extend his imagination any further than this anatomical line would suggest. I do not have faith in mermaids, and as far as Mrs. Kinderdeck was concerned, her proportion and outline below the waist were discernible upon ordinary and casual inspection. As to mermaids, the only specimen of that family of semi-humans that I have ever seen was at Mr. Kimball's Museum, and I am not sure of what sex that specimen is, as I have misplaced the description of it in an advertisement. I had thought of inquiring of Mr. Agassiz, as I understand he knows more about fishes and animals than anybody else; but as my happiness does not depend upon the acquiring any knowledge upon this point more than I now possess, I have deferred the inquiry to some future occasion. To save long stories, I will simply inform my reader why I had looked into this department of natural history, and refer him back some pages, where it will be brought to his mind, that I was appointed by Mr. Speaker Banks upon the com-

mittee on the fisheries and flats. Hence my interest in the mermaid question.

I had listened to Mrs. Kinderdeck, who also informed me that she had spoken to the Hon. Seth Spring as to the agreement made with her and Bean, to which agreement I was a witness, with a view to carry it into court, and was then going to see that gentleman, who, as she understood, was on friendly terms with the Feathergills, notwithstanding political differences. She said she was going to Rosewood Villa for instructions from Miss Amanda, and desired to know what she had better do. As Mr. Bean had always spoken very highly of Mr. Batkins, she thought she would ask his advice before her interview with Mr. Spring.

I said to Mrs. Kinderdeck, "It is true, Mr. Bean has spoken favorably of me; but, as you are aware, I am to be more closely connected with Mr. Feathergilt's family, and should feel their interests to be substantially my own, provided they did not interfere with the Batkins' interests, which have certain claims upon me, in virtue of their priority." I asked Mrs. Kinderdeck what she would have me do, and whether she thought Mr. Bean really meant to kill Mr. Feathergilt, senior.

In regard to the killing she thought he might do it if the provocation was great enough, as Mr. Bean had a violent temper, which usually was kept under control; and she thought, if I should advise him against violence, he would listen to me.

I asked Mrs. Kinderdeck what effect it would have, in her judgment, to advise the wind not to blow. She thought not much. I said that was my idea of advice to Mr. Bean, unless there was something more than advice behind this moderate way of attempting to change strong action.

Mrs. Kinderdeck said she thought she had something behind, but did not know exactly how to use it, and that was the reason for her making this call upon me.

I replied, rather cautiously, that, as I did not know what that something was that she kept in the rear, I could not enlighten her upon the proper method as to its use.

She said, for the present she must keep her power a secret, as she knew from experience she must be cautious in any dealings with Mr. Bean, as perhaps Mr. Batkins would coincide with her when he questioned his memory as to his meeting with Mr. Bean at her house on the evening he was thrown from the wagon.

This nettled me. I was chagrined at the reference at this late day to that incident of my comparatively juvenile experience. I said, "Mrs. Kinderdeck, it is not necessary to go back so far as that in order to decide what shall best be done in the present emergency. As to your personal relations with Mr. Bean I have no curiosity to inquire, and as to your power behind, you will use it as you please. I can only say, you and Mr. Bean must skin your own skunks."

She said she had no skunks to skin, and did not understand my allusion. I thought she seemed offended, and I told her I was only using a rhetorical figure of speech, natural enough in the mouth of a farmer. I did not suppose, literally, she had any skunks to skin, and I supposed a fisherman might, under the same circumstances, be justified in saying let every one skin their own eels; and if she had no objection, I would withdraw the word skunks and substitute eels.

She said eels were less offensive in idea than skunks, but as she had none, either of the quadrupeds or the finny tribes, to flay, she would prefer plain English, which she supposed simply meant that Mr. Batkins had no interest in any affair between herself and Mr. Bean; but, as her business related to Mr. Bean in connection with Miss Amanda's father's well-fare, she had supposed Mr. Batkins would be interested. "However, Mr. Batkins, I will not disturb you; I will give my

views to the Hon. Seth Spring, and act in accordance with his directions."

I said I thought it might be the part of wisdom in her to do so.

"Good-morning, sir," said Mrs. Kinderdeck, and departed, looking more like a shark than ever, paying but little attention to my gentle repetition of the adieu she somewhat tartly tendered to me.

The fact is, I was afraid to have any connection with her in this matter, though I was in a degree excited and alarmed at the object of her visit to me, as she communicated it. I regretted the interruption to my literary labors, as a great deal was expected from me as to my lecture on free government from my stand-point. I thought my allegory of the cow and the calves a good kind of rhetoric, coming from the developing mind of an agriculturalist. I desired, before I lost the idea, to complete the picture, and had made a note of it before the first interruption by Mr. Bean. I subjoin the finish:—

"And we find in a free government, where the people shall by their voices say who shall serve, that is, rule the rest,—that is, who shall apply his official mouth to the public udder, that is, the treasury, and thus provide himself and his relations with the nutritive principle, that is, the money,—there is this provision made, that every one, in his turn, has a right to a chance, for in rotation we find the principle which is to sustain and preserve liberty and its institutions. Hence politics, hence party."

I put by my writing materials, and hastened to be informed upon matters of interest to the family of the Feathergills, being constantly reminded by something that I was soon to be one of them.

## CHAPTER LXI.

## THE PLOT.

It was late in the day before I arrived at the villa to be informed of what had occurred; it is necessary to the proper understanding of this extraordinary episode of my life, that my reader should have at least a part of the information imparted to him as it had been to me. It is not necessary to state the manner in which I alleviated Amanda's distress at the condition of things, although she did not know what the principal points of confusion were; that is, the ticklish financial basis of the firm, and the assumed right of Bean morally to be called Feathergilt, with a division of the property, at a proper time, so as to leave her in possession of a third instead of a half. Legally he had no right to either, and this part of the case had been entrusted confidentially to the Hon. Seth Spring, who was prepared to meet this claim, when made, in a proper way.

Mrs. Kinderdeck had also seen Mr. Spring, and that gentleman appeared to be particularly pleased with the revelations she had made, and assured all parties that everything would come out right, and develop a most extraordinary phase of human intellect not to understand nor comprehend what was an every-day incident of human life.

I listened to this lawyer's statement, and, not in any way comprehending its meaning, was about to ask him for some explanations; but recollecting his address to me on my reception, as given in the newspaper, I concluded I would not give him any opportunity before the family, and particularly in the

presence of Amanda, to show up my inferiority in the way of learned speeches. So, after a little what we call "beating about the bush," I said, "Mr. Spring, I understand Mrs. Kinderdeck has communicated something to you of great importance."

He looked at me a moment, and said, "Mr. Batkins, that depends upon how it is used. Evidence is evidence; when properly introduced, we shall see."

I said, "Yes, Mr. Spring. She proposed to communicate it to me; but I told her I thought she had better see you."

"A wise conclusion, Mr. Batkins."

I asked him if there would be any objection to his informing me what Mrs. Kinderdeck had revealed.

He said he did not know who would make the objection, and asked me if I would.

I said, "Certainly not."

"Very well," he said; "no other person has made any."

"Then," I said, "Mr. Spring, you can inform me."

Mr. Spring said he could, but at present he thought it not advisable. "You know, Mr. Batkins, what persons may say, without explanations, might involve the person repeating in an action for slander. We are to deal with an astute rogue, Mr. Batkins, and we must weigh carefully the value of words."

I wondered if Mrs. Kinderdeck had told Spring of my encounter with Bean in her house. Spring and his cautious manner frightened me from asking further questions about Mrs. Kinderdeck's testimony; so I inquired for the packet, and explained the mistake of the exchange. Mr. Spring said it was decided not to open the packet, as it had upon the wrapper the name of J. S. Batkins, and therefore should not be opened by any other person, and perhaps, under the circumstances, not by that person, except in presence of witnesses; and further, as a matter of law and right, which here go together it ought not to be opened except in the presence of Mr. Bean, without his permission, as he had understood whatever were

the contents of the envelope it was admitted to be his property.

I agreed that he was correct in that assertion, but that Bean had opened the packet containing my speeches.

Mr. Spring said, "Yes, upon the presumption that he was handling his own property. Upon a question of damage, however, in either case it would be necessary to prove the value of the papers enclosed. In your case we are presumed to know the value, being merely a quantity of political speeches, usually of not much account even to the owner; but in the case of the packet now in the possession of Mr. Feathergilt we are in ignorance of its contents."

I said, "Mr. Spring, I have agreed to return the packet to Mr. Bean, and he very forcibly added to his request to do it, this evening, a demand that the seals should be unbroken. Now, if you will return the packet to me I will fulfil my agreement with Mr. Bean."

"Mr. Batkins, I feel that I should be pleased to comply with your request, first, from the relation between us as fellow-townsmen and neighbors, and, secondly, from your proposed relations to Mr. Feathergilt, my client's family; but as I now view the matter, and as the legal adviser of Mr. Feathergilt, I should recommend that Mr. Feathergilt retain the packet at present, and therefore I must decline to advise him to hand it to you."

"But, Mr. Spring, I should not dare to go to Mr. Bean without the packet."

"Why not?" said Mr. Spring.

"Because I promised to rectify the mistake."

"It is in our hands by mistake, Mr. Batkins; but possession is something, and we shall retain it as long as we can. There are legal ways to dispute our right of possession, and means, if we have no right, to dispossess us."

"And what are those ways?" I asked, for I felt nervous

as to what Bean would do when I informed him of Mr. Spring's statement.

Mr. Spring said, "Mr. Bean's lawyer will inform Mr. Bean how to proceed."

I said, "Mr. Bean does not employ lawyers. He is his own lawyer."

"Very well; let him try then. I have only to say to you, Mr. Batkins, when a man is his own lawyer, he is apt to have a fool for his client. This is an old proverb; I do not know that it will apply in this case."

I said, "No, Mr. Bean is no fool. I have thought sometimes he might be a rogue; but, Mr. Spring, he is a deep one, and I do not want his enmity."

"Mr. Batkins, I do not know upon what Mr. Bean relies to carry out his plans. As you say, he may be a deep one; he appears to have well-laid and partly concealed plans; but the accident which has placed that packet in Mr. Feathergilt's hands, although we are ignorant of its contents, gives us a clue by which I think, legally, we may defeat him, if we fail to come to a compromise. The packet in our hands is an advantage; so, indirectly, your speeches have thrown light upon the subject of Mr. Bean's plans, and have done more good than would have been accomplished by their legitimate use in the direction intended."

I told Mr. Spring I did not think he was complimentary to my efforts, but if by accident they had contributed to any good, I was delighted to know it.

"In this case they have had that effect, and you had better return to Mr. Bean, and say that by your advice Mr. Feathergilt will keep the appointment this evening, and bring with him the packet unopened. As I understand, you are to be permitted to be present at the interview, Mr. Batkins, and this condition will ensure that no harm shall come to Mr. Feathergilt, as the interview is to be in your house."

I coincided with Mr. Spring, but told him I must see the packet with the seals unbroken to satisfy Mr. Bean until the time of the interview.

Mr. Spring said he saw no objection, and together we entered the parlor where Mr. Spring had left Mr. Feathergilt and his son and daughter. A consultation in general on subjects connected with the family was going on, which we joined. After a few words of private talk with Amanda in the hall, I left the villa, and found Bean waiting for me on my arrival at the homestead.

I acquainted Bean with the decision of the family, through Mr. Spring. He seemed thoughtful a moment, then said, "Batkins, bring Feathergilt yourself as far as the turn before you cross the bridge; then let him drive over the bridge alone until you have seen me. You can then get into the carriage again and drive to the homestead. Will you do it?"

I said I would.

"And be sure he has the packet unbroken."

I said I would.

"They are playing their game; I will play mine."

Bean left me. I began writing on my lecture, and after dinner went back to the villa and remained there until the evening.

## CHAPTER LXII.

### THE DANGEROUS WAY.

As things were understood at the villa, Mr. Spring had advised Mr. Feathergilt to comply with Mr. Bean's request. He said I might do as I pleased about driving the ponies in the phaeton, or being at the east side of the bridge with Mr. Bean at the time Mr. Feathergilt would arrive there. He thought that would be the better way; but was not sure that he might not change both his strategy and tactics by sundown; that depended upon the discovered movements of the enemy. "At any rate," he said, "Mr. Batkins, you may be sure of this, that Mr. Feathergilt will be at the place appointed, and the ponies and the phaeton will be in readiness to convey you back to the villa when the interview is over."

Mrs. Kinderdeck had been instructed by Mr. Spring to carefully watch the movements of Mr. Bean, and follow him, if she could do it undetected, to the bridge where the meeting was to take place. Of this I was not informed by Mr. Spring, who either did not have such an exalted opinion of my competency to work in the dark as he had of Mrs. Kinderdeck's, or chose rather to trust to my willingness to obey his directions; and I will say, as the event proved, Seth Spring's judgment was good.

Bean had been at the homestead in the afternoon, and I thought he was rather more irritable than usual, and talked considerably about the mistake of the change of the papers; said he felt uneasy about the packet until it was again in his hand. He said he had no doubt, if Mr. Feathergilt kept the



appointment, after to-night there would be no trouble between them. He said to me, "Batkins, I have begun to think your old friend, the sea-captain's wife, carries two faces. If she deceives me, I'll have her locked up. Nine o'clock, Batkins, will settle all things." He then left the homestead.

As soon as it was dark, Bean, with two men in a wagon, left his residence carrying with them two lanterns and two signs. Upon the signs was painted, "No passage." "Dangerous way." In a few minutes they arrived unnoticed, by the lower road, at the Indian Cascade. Here, by Bean's direction, the men placed the signs at either extremity of the bridge, a few rods from the wooden part of the structure, which rested upon stone embankments. One of the lanterns, lighted, was placed upon the posts that supported the signs. The bridge was not of a character for heavy travel; it was usually used as a carriage-way. Timbers of sufficient size for the purpose completed the span; in the centre an upright timber, resting upon a rock, gave additional support. Some light planks covered the timbers, a railing of sufficient height rendered the bridge safe enough for all the purposes intended, and even to permit the passage of a farm wagon, with an ordinary load, in safety. The distance from the bridge floor to the water was about twenty feet, and at some seasons the flow of water over the stones was so large as to make the falls a picturesque object, particularly on a moonlight night, as was the case upon this one referred to. Mr. Bean gave directions to the men to saw the timbers close to the embankment, which, after an hour of labor, was accomplished. He then directed the central support to be loosened and detached, but not to be removed. He said, "I do not desire to let the bridge fall until daylight, when I will call for your services again. Perhaps, parties may come to my terms, and then I will open the way, and shore up the bridge, but if they do not I will let people see that I am

to be deprived of my rights by no Peter Feathergilt, Seth Spring, or J. S. Batkins."

This discourse was with the men who, knowing the contests that had been had about this right of way, attached no especial importance to this night arrangement for what they supposed a morning demonstration.

The men laid some planks upon the rocks, and Bean walked upon them to the centre support, to examine the condition in which it had been left, and being satisfied, returned, and dismissed them, telling them to come to his office in the morning, and after assisting him in demolishing the bridge he would pay them for their labor, in the mean time cautioning them not to say anything of his intentions. The men disappeared, leaving Bean to complete his designs himself. He opened the door of the shanty, from which he took a rope, and recrossing the plank attached it to the centre support of the bridge; the other end was attached to the door of the shanty. He then ascended the embankment, extinguished the lanterns, and removed the signs.

While engaged thus he was watched by a person concealed in the shrubbery, who had witnessed all his actions and listened to his conversation with the men while at their work. It was clear to the mind of the concealed witness what Bean intended to do, when Feathergilt was on the bridge. He would pull the rope, the centre support would give way, and bridge and carriage would be precipitated upon the rocks beneath. How was it to be prevented? To escape and give the alarm was the natural suggestion of a first impulse; but while gone for that purpose the carriage might arrive, and the mischief be done.

Bean, after a survey of the bridge, looked at his watch, and retired to the shanty to await the arrival of his victim and accomplish his design. The person concealed, Mrs. Kinderdeck, left her place of ambush, and was moving on the lower

thus passing the shanty, to ascend the embankment without being observed by Bean, his object being to stop any person approaching in the direction from which Mr. Feathergilt was expected to arrive. As she was moving slowly off, Mr. Feathergilt, enveloped in a cloak, came along the path. When Mrs. Kinderdeck discovered him he was about to speak; she restrained him. At this moment I arrived, somewhat flurried, and asked Mr. Feathergilt what he had done with the phaeton. He said he had changed his mind, and rode down with Dr. Slawter. Amanda was coming with the phaeton. At this moment the crack of a whip was heard. Mrs. Kinderdeck exclaimed, "Stop her, or she will be killed. Bean has destroyed the supports of the bridge, — sawed off the timbers. He meant to kill you in that way. Look!"

I saw the rope fastened to the supporting timber, jerked it from Bean's hand, crossed the plank, and steadied the centre-piece. Amanda drove over the bridge in safety; the bridge yielded a little to the motion of the carriage, but did not fall.

Bean came from his place of concealment, walked up to Mr. Feathergilt, with the utmost composure, asked him the state of his health, congratulated him upon his escape from an accident, and said he would be very happy to attend him and his family to Swansdown Terrace, and spend the evening in considering matters for the benefit of the family. He told Mr. Feathergilt it was a little singular, considering that his father died from the consequence of an accident to a carriage, that he should have had such a narrow escape; at the same time he said to Feathergilt in a sort of whisper, "Keep my secret, or I will not keep yours."

## CHAPTER LXIII.

### GETTING AT THE TRUTH.

THE attempt made by Bean to destroy Mr. Feathergilt rendered some decisive action necessary. The delicate matter of arranging the affair was entrusted to the Hon. Seth Spring, who for a time advised that no public attention should be attracted to his plans. He had several interviews with Bean, who was carefully watched. On the last interview, arranged with a view to settlement, Bean threatened that, unless the packet was returned to him, he would shoot Mr. Feathergilt in his own house.

Upon this threat Bean was arrested; not, however, until Mr. Spring had received some information from Mrs. Kinderdeck. He was taken before a magistrate; Bean asked the cause of his arrest. The complaint was read to him, charging him with being a dangerous person, and with threatening the life of a citizen, causing him bodily fear.

Bean laughed. "I cause Peter Feathergilt bodily fear — nonsense!" The magistrate asked him if he wished to consult counsel. Bean replied, "No; I will defend myself against all the Feathergilts and Seth Springs in the United States."

There were no persons in the room except the witnesses, it being desirable that the examination should be conducted as privately as possible. The men who had assisted him at the bridge were called to testify as to their knowledge of Bean's action.

When asked if he had any questions to ask of the witnesses, he said, "No; I have a right to cut down my bridge, and if people will ride over a dangerous way, where they have no

right, they must look out for breakers, eh, judge? I do not dispute the fact of the bridge. Is that the way I am to be proved to be a dangerous man? I am dangerous, judge, if my rights are not respected."

Mrs. Kinderdeck was called, who, until this time, had been kept in another room. When she took her place, in answer to her name, to be sworn, Bean roused himself. Mrs. Kinderdeck smiled, looking at him. "Mr. Magistrate, I object to that woman's testifying. I ask for a postponement of this case until I am prepared with objections, — legal objections."

The magistrate, as was supposed, partly in consequence of the position of the parties, and partly perhaps as a matter of justice, postponed the hearing until the next day. Bean was satisfied; Seth Spring, on the part of the Feathergills, not objecting. The magistrate said he should require security for Bean's appearance.

"Certainly, judge, that's right; that's law; half Cranberry Centre for bail, if you require it."

I had kept out of sight, as I thought, but Bean's keen eye lit upon me. "Batkins, judge, has always been my friend, as I have been his; will he be satisfactory as my surety?"

The judge said, "Certainly." The necessary papers were arranged. "Now, Batkins, as you are surety for my appearance, I consent to be your prisoner at the homestead until to-morrow."

We started for the homestead. My reader can judge how I felt at this turn of affairs. On my way home, Bean said he had a little matter of business to transact with the town-clerk, and wished to see Mr. Fairtax. At his request I accompanied him to the office. Whatever his business, it was soon settled, and he came out of the town-clerk's office in great glee, saying, "Batkins, it is all right; stick to me, and I will stick to you." I did not dare to say otherwise, so I said, "Bean, so long as all is right, I will."

"I knew you would. The sea-captain's wife grows handsome, don't she?"

I said she was good-looking. It is of little consequence to refer to what happened, or what Bean said to me after we arrived at the homestead. The next day, at the hour assigned, all parties were in the magistrate's room. Mrs. Kinderdeck was asked to state what she knew about the case. She hesitated.

Bean rose up. "I-objected, your honor, to that woman, as a witness yesterday. I repeat my objections to-day."

"On what ground?" inquired the magistrate.

"She is my wife."

"Is this true, madam?" asked the magistrate, evincing some surprise.

"It is true, sir."

"When were you married?"

"This morning."

"Am I right, judge, in my objection?" said Bean.

"Where is the proof of the marriage?"

Bean quietly removed from the pocket of his vest a paper, which he handed to the magistrate. "There is the certificate, judge."

The magistrate examined the paper, said it was correct, adding, "The court cannot receive the testimony of a wife against her husband. Under the circumstances of this case, Mr. Spring, what do you propose?"

Spring said, "Nothing." The magistrate dismissed the case. Bean exulted in a loud voice, saying to Mrs. Kinderdeck, or Mrs. Bean, "Come home with me. Spring — my wife — Mrs. Bean; thank you, judge." They left the court-room together, and a more bewildered set of people than those left in the court-room I had never seen before, myself included. The magistrate and Mr. Spring had some conversation together, after which our party went home.

It was not long after this event before an outbreak of Bean's

in consequence of some disagreement with his wife, placed him in a position which rendered the interference of the law imperative in his case.

Upon a proper examination, the following facts were proved: that Martha was Bean's mother; that he was left in a foundling institution in Canada; that, subsequently, he was brought to the place where Mr. Feathergilt's father resided. There he attended school for some time, and here, either as an act of insanity or of mischief, he was told that Mr. Peter Feathergilt was his father by Martha. After the funeral was over he had shown such evidences of derangement as to cause the authorities of the town to place him in an asylum for the insane; he had lucid intervals, and while in this state read a great many books; but generally was brooding over his imaginary wrongs and those of his mother, and talking frequently of what he would do when he came to his right mind. A great desire for money and revenge was the result of the delusion. A man visited the asylum occasionally, who had a wife under treatment. He asserted that Bean, who was there known as James Ropez, was not insane, and threatened to complain of the officers, who kept him confined against his will. Rather than be subjected to annoyance by this man and his threats, and believing Bean not to be a dangerous person, they discharged him as better, but not cured. Upon this evidence as to his early history, and his conduct in relation to his attempt to kill Mr. Feathergilt, Bean was adjudged to be a lunatic, and was sent to an asylum as an incurable case. This decision, made in accordance with medical certificates, opened a variety of questions. Bean was wealthy, and the question came up who should inherit his property. Was the marriage of Matilda Glimp a legal one? It was not difficult to believe that Martha was Bean's mother, but as to the father, — always an uncertain matter, — none had been named. Martha's husband, the circus performer, was

known as Signor Ropez. It was thought the individual, known as "Mrs. Simms' man," might claim the rights of paternity, from certain circumstances; but as he was not present, nor were his whereabouts known, this was left among the doubtful things for a hereafter to settle. It was certain that this individual placed him in Deacon Smoothe's store; from that time he assisted him, and partly by his influence he became my partner, and eventually, the whole firm of Batkins & Co. From that time he more or less influenced my whole career, as I have related, and my reader will perceive how much I owe to the acts of a lunatic, of whose unsoundness of mind, until this attempt to murder was made, no one had the slightest suspicion.

As usual, when the fact was proved, many people remembered certain sayings or doings of Bean, that caused them to think he was a little out of his mind. Dr. Slawter analyzed the case, and said it was not an uncommon one; but in view of all things it was probable the lawyers would find more occupation from the results of Bean's delusion than the physicians. Mrs. Bean said she should defend her position as his wife. Among the papers in the packet was a will, in which "Mrs. Kinderdeck, or Miss Matilda Glimp, or by whatever name she may be known at my death," in the words of the instrument, was handsomely remembered. I and my children, if I had any, were also on the list of devisees. A large sum was left in trust, if any person or persons would furnish a similar amount, for the purpose of making a continuous communication across the Atlantic Ocean, by bridge, or otherwise, from continent to continent, in order, as the will had it, "to prove there was nothing impossible with an adequate amount of brains and money."

Bean's books and accounts were accurately kept, and no difficulty was experienced in finding the exact condition of his business affairs. Many securities were the property of Mr. Feathergilt, and they were all marked as such. He had

anticipated the possible necessity of leaving America, and had written a letter explanatory of his motives to me. I suppose the probable contingency was the death of Feathergilt, if his plan had succeeded. I have only to say that this strange case of financial mania, founded on a delusion caused by a fortune-teller's story, told to a lad inheriting insanity from one or both parents, is not without precedent, though the manifestations were not the same.

That a crazy man should control a town as he did, may seem strange now that the story is told. But for the fear of the failure of his long-cherished scheme, which led him to the homicidal attempt, under the bad impulses of his nature, it is difficult to say by what exploits in politics, finance, or speculation, he might have become nationally famous, to be classed with other bold operators, who, perhaps, are, or were, as "mad as he."

## CHAPTER LXIV.

### I AM READY TO BE MARRIED.

MR. BEAN'S mental catastrophe at first caused some consternation in Cranberry Centre; all those who had had business transactions with him, finding no pecuniary loss likely to fall upon them, joined in lamenting, with his friends and the friends of improvement, his sudden disappearance from the scenes of his former activity.

I am not of the mood of those persons who are given over to melancholy reflections and future speculations when any such development concludes the mental career of a genius, either in science or art. I do not understand how the material out of which the body is composed, on the molecular theory of seven-year changes, can continue in good working order while the mind, so called, shall proceed to partial or complete destruction. Upon inquiry as to Bean's condition, in the hospital, the doctor informed me that he was in good health, and was pursuing a theory to prevent men, who spent more than they earned, from getting into bankruptcy, and also to prove how persons living in countries that were taxed the heaviest were the happiest people, because the majority of them could not accumulate riches, which is the bane of human happiness, and should be suffered by only a few, the true end of government being to ensure the greatest good to the greatest number; and in a free government this policy may be always carried out, as the majority can, properly educated up to this idea, by their votes determine that they will not submit to this infliction upon them of wealth, and the comforts and luxuries

which are at its disposal. This financial idea, to be sure, has been carried out in part, without the promulgation of the theory upon which the practice is based. I commend it to future legislators, with such commentaries as may be furnished by lunatic financiers.

Bean's practice had made money for others. My twenty house-lots had turned out well, and added to my means to enable me, if it should come to such an issue, to endure the pangs of competence, and not to envy my poorer neighbors, who were not cursed with too much of this world's goods.

While other people's affairs throughout the world, and in Cranberry Centre, were progressing bringing to them nearer the time that their existence upon the planet's surface would cease, mine were pursuing the same course, until the day fixed for my marriage with Amanda had arrived. The preliminaries gave me very little concern. I was to have a new suit, a wedding suit; the style I left to the taste and judgment of a Boston tailor. I will not mention his name. He kept his shop near the old State House. My outfit included, of course, a new hat, new gloves, and other less expensive articles. Amanda visited Boston, and was having prepared for her an outfit not to be despised by any belle of New York. There was a great deal of talk about the matter in Cranberry Centre, and the occasion was to be attended with such ceremonies, so the gossips had it, that it would be long remembered.

It is strange that there are some public necessities which interfere so frequently with private comforts, and there appears to be always at work some active brain to invent machinery to produce these unpleasant inroads upon private arrangements in social life. If my reader's memory is of average retentive quality, I need not remind him what I have related as a peculiarity in the Batkins family, and perhaps it may have been the same with some other families, that is, a determination that, if possible, no clue should be given as to

the age of any member thereof. With the Batkinsees this arises from no desire to appear any younger than we are, — for it is my theory, that it is not a question of years, an artificial division of time, but a question of power, that decides the stamina, or enduring quality, — but from a reserved right we would like to enjoy, to know something of ourselves that our neighbors do not, and keep our own reckonings accordingly.

Every person who has had much to do with horse-trading knows that the age of the animals is made one great question, and they also know that it is the usage and the work that make young horses old, and old horses as good as young, if not so salable. I have seen old horses, that had the "tough" in them, — if it was never there, age will not make it, — that would show more speed and endurance than young ones. Dr. Slawter's idea was that there was but little difference in this respect between human beings and other domesticated animals. There's a good deal, of course, in feeding and driving, whether it is mankind or beast. In mankind there is not much judging by their teeth; in colts and horses they "tell."

These thoughts were naturally enough eliminated, you understand, in consequence of the necessity of a certificate from the town-clerk, of our purpose of marriage, in accordance with the statute, in which, among other things, the age of the parties must be given. In consultation with Amanda as to what her opinion was of this law, she said it was immaterial to her, as she was not exactly sure how old she was, and had not given herself the trouble to ascertain, since coming to her legal age.

I said: "Amanda, it does seem odd for me to be talking about such things, but we must have a certificate, or the minister will not marry us, and we must have the years put on the record to prove that we are both of lawful age, and have right to do such a thing."

Amanda said, "If that is all, there can be no need of it. Anybody can see that we are old enough to be married."

I said: "That will not do; it is not a question of seeing. We must tell the town-clerk, and get the document. I really should not feel like telling a wrong story to friend Fairtax, who has known me ever since I was born."

Amanda said I might do as I pleased. She was sure she was thirty.

I suggested to her that the law had a penalty of two hundred dollars' fine, if any person wilfully gave a wrong age; and as I had been a legislator I did not want to break the law.

She said: "Two hundred dollars is no great sum; but I rather think this law was made not to be enforced. I never heard of anybody being prosecuted, for breaking it, in Cranberry Centre. I know when Almira Jenks was married, she told me she was just thirty-nine. About half an hour afterwards, I asked ma to ask her how long her father had been dead, and she said, forty-four years. Now, I don't believe that she ever paid any two hundred dollars."

I told Amanda I would inquire around a little, and fix it some way; and I did so. I told her I would send one of our men from the farm, with a request to the town-clerk to send me the certificate. Amanda said, "Do what you think best, Mr. Batkins. We had a cute sort of old fellow from Vermont, who used to say, when matters were sometimes left to his discretion, 'A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse.'" After a little banter about the ages of horses and cattle. I asked the man if he could guess about what my age was. He said he thought he could set it within a year or two. I told him to try, and he did; he made a very good guess. I handed a slip of paper to him, with the name Amanda Feathergilt written on it. Says I, "You know Miss Feathergilt?"

"Well," he said, "squire, I do. That's the lady you expect to marry?"

I told him it was, and asked him how old he thought she was.

"Well," he said, "I have seen her about some time; but some girls begin to go about amongst folks so young, there's no knowing for certain; but I should think she was a little rising thirty, say thirty-one, or two, or three, or thereaway."

"You are pretty good at guessing, although I don't know her age. If the town-clerk asks you for our ages, I think you might say Miss Feathergilt was thirty, and my age about as you said, forty years."

He said he would do it, and he did, — and in less than an hour I had the certificate, which I showed to Amanda, who smiled, said she guessed she was thirty, and certainly did not care who knew it; still, she thought such a law was a temptation to some people not to be too exact in telling their age.

We were now "equipped, as the law directs," as it used to be on the notice for May training, in the old militia-days. I have never mentioned anything about my military experience, and I do not think I shall, at this period of my life, when I am about to enter into the bonds of wedlock.

Amanda and I joked one another about this marriage, and what we said was well enough between us two; but if I could recollect the identical words, I do not think it would be proper to repeat them, and have Amanda read them in my book.



## CHAPTER LXV.

## MY MARRIAGE.

I AM now approaching delicate ground, and do not propose to be particular in the description of the ceremonies of this great event of my life and subsequent transactions. I will just observe, I grew less observant of my bachelor practice of keeping a journal. As to the noting of ordinary matters, I will say this, when the day appointed for our marriage arrived, I was dressed as a bridegroom, and when I gazed at myself in the looking-glass, I was a little nervous. I had seen prize-oxen dressed up with ribbons at cattle-fairs. I queried then whether the cattle were thinking of what was to follow. I had not made up my mind exactly that I was to be a victim for slaughter even in a rhetorical sense. My nervousness was rather a pleasant kind of sensation, and being encouraged by Aunt Dolly, who had no experience in such matters, I was prepared for the worst, and that was whether I should behave in a becoming manner.

I had commenced erecting a new house, and until it was finished we were to reside at the homestead. The ceremony was to be private, with the exception of the members of both families. Aunt Dolly and my father rode over to Swansdown Terrace in an old chaise. I followed alone in a carriage. My wedding suit was a little more in the fashion than was comfortable. I am not going to describe it; I only mean to state that the straps that held the trousers over my boots rather fretted me, when I was in a sitting posture.

When I arrived at Swansdown Terrace I was received joy-

fully, found Amanda dressed in her bridal robes, and, as she appeared to me then, not a vestige of the rat-like look was left in her face; but she did not display any sort of nervousness. As I entered the apartment where she was waiting with her bridesmaids, she said, in a pleasant way, "Good-evening, Mr. Batkins."

"Good-evening, Mrs. Batkins," said I, "that is —"

"Not yet," she said.

All present laughed, supposing I had thus addressed her as a sort of joke, allowable at weddings. I did not intend it as such, but smiled, after my old fashion, and let it pass.

There was some stir in the hall where the small party was assembled. I had no friend to stand up with me, much to the disappointment of the bridesmaids; if Bean had not been in the lunatic asylum, I suppose he would have insisted upon doing the honors in that way. At last somebody asked if we were ready. Amanda said yes before I had an opportunity to reply. She took me by the arm, and we passed to the great parlor, where the minister was waiting for us. In the usual way we were married. The minister said, "I pronounce you man and wife." It sounded odd. I looked at her, and said, "Amanda, it is Mrs. Batkins now?"

"Yes," she said, "Jefferson, forever — and ever."

We had wine and cake, kissing among the girls, and jokes among the old folks. Horace had to stand a little guessing as to its being his turn next. Father and Aunt Dolly were among the first to depart. The minister followed, taking his share of cake. Amanda retired with her bridesmaids, leaving me for the present with her father and brother. We were not to go on any bridal tour. She was to go to the homestead to spend the honeymoon, as my mother did, when she left off the name of Withaspoon.

I suppose the honeymoon is a rhetorical figure, and therefore may not always be a full moon. I suppose ours was passed in

pretty much the same way as other people's that stay at home and do not go off to hide themselves from their friends, as if they had been doing something they were ashamed of. Everybody seemed pleased at Mrs. Batkins' way of getting along, and it did tickle Aunt Dolly amazingly to have my wife inquire the ways of housekeeping.

"It is astonishing to me," said Aunt Dolly, "that any person can be so innocent of every-day work; but I will say this for your wife, that she is willing to learn, and before the year is out, if nothing happens to prevent, she will be a considerably good house-keeper. Why, Jefferson, she made a plum-pudding yesterday, with a little of my help, and it is not everybody that can make a pudding with plums in it, and have it properly done. If she had begun a little earlier, I think she would have made as good a dairywoman as any of them. But, Jefferson, there is no need of that; with so much money as will come to her, what is the need of working? But then I stick to my old notion, that no one can keep house and have hired help do right, unless they know how to do things themselves."

I used to feel pleasant to listen to Aunt Dolly's discourses, and it did me good, when folks inquired after the health of my wife, to be able to answer the question according to circumstances, you understand.

It was something true, as Aunt Dolly said, she did not talk so much about "Charlotte Temple" and such like books; but there was more dictionary and history about her than I thought of, and she took pride and pleasure, as she termed it, in assisting her husband in his literary labors. She was very fond, I thought, of calling me husband before folks, and I would state more as to her good qualities, but as she looks over the page as I write sometimes, I am fearful she would object to any flattering notice of her domestic qualities, beyond what I have stated, being printed in this book.

What with my wife's modesty on one side and the pertinacity of my coadjutor on the other, I am restrained very much in my flow of words, and restricted in the complete development of my thoughts, therefore to the imagination of the reader must be left much that I would gladly discourse upon, with a view to influence as many of my readers as possible to enter into matrimonial engagements, thus doing something to equalize the disproportion in the census between marriageable males and females.

Example, it is said, is better than precept. I have married late in life; but better late than never. Bachelor, go thou and do likewise; maiden, when you see an inclination on the part of some friend of the opposite sex, do not let the chance go by, by reason of no encouragement on your part. I think one of the first steps towards equalizing the rights of women is to permit them, without detriment to their modesty, to ask a man to marry, as well as to wait to be asked. No one need die because of a refusal. Aunt Dolly used to say "There are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught."

My experience, so far, rather corroborates these views for ameliorating the condition of unmarried females. As to unmarried men, their opportunities and privileges in this respect being ample, I have no sympathies to throw away upon their sufferings, whatever they may be, or from whatever source derived.

I have only to add, I was more engaged in the raising of sheep than formerly; but employed a reasonable amount of time in increasing my store of useful knowledge.

## CHAPTER LXVI.

## THE COMING MAN.

A YEAR had passed since our marriage. I had been a great part of my time occupied in superintending the new house. I voted at the election, but took no part in the canvass. I was not so much in the house as formerly, and on one or two occasions visited Boston, and remained over night, accepting the hospitality of my friend Wilson. My wife went with me, and made a good impression on such of my friends as became acquainted with her. Now and then she was a little indisposed, and our old friend and physician, Dr. Slawter, thought she had not better disturb herself about the furniture and other matters for the new house. At one time I began to feel serious misgivings that I should lose Amanda, as she really did appear to me to be quite unwell, and I went to the doctor to inquire if she was in any danger. He said, "Keep at work on your house, Batkins. I should not be in a hurry about moving in, until everything is dry — paint, plaster, and all." At the time I had some hard thoughts in relation to the deception the doctor practised upon me; but when I came to understand his reason, I properly appreciated his consideration, and the delicate way he managed to keep me in the dark as to what was soon to transpire.

It is among the irreconcilable occurrences of my life, that in view of what was passing before my eyes daily, I should have been so stupidly ignorant and undiscerning. I saw —

One day, when I had just returned from the new house,

thinking it was about ready for occupancy, I found the house in great commotion. Aunt Dolly was unusually mysterious and silent. I inquired for my wife, and was going to her room, when Aunt Dolly stopped me, saying, "Jefferson, your father wants to see you."

"I will go to him. Where's Richard?" that was our hired man, who stated our ages to Mr. Fairtax.

"He has gone after the doctor and Mrs. Green."

"The doctor, Aunt Dolly? Has anything happened to my wife?"

"No."

"Who is Mrs. Green?"

"The nurse."

"Doctor! nurse! Aunt Dolly?"

At this moment Dr. Slawter came in. He was smiling, said, "Good-day, Mr. Batkins. I do not suppose I am needed; but better too soon than too late;" and passed along, without waiting to reply to my question as to . . .

At this moment I was attracted by the entrance of Mrs. Green, — a chubby, fat-faced lady, — who was followed by Richard, carrying in his hands a bandbox, a carpet-bag, and bunch of herbs, as I thought, partly sticking out from the paper that was rolled about them.

I confess I did begin to surmise something, and began to scold Aunt Dolly for not telling me all about it. Mrs. Green had followed the doctor, when my father entered the house, saying, "Jeff, I have the smartest-looking colt in the stable I have seen for many a day. I want you to come and look at it; handsome as a picture. I never laid eyes on his beat for his age." I was about to decline the visit to the stable, when the old gentleman said, "Jeff, I know how you feel; but at such times as this, it is best to keep out of the way, and leave matters to the doctor and the women folks."

I said yes, but — I went to the barn; I saw the colt; but my mind was in no condition to estimate on the good points in this juvenile specimen of horse-flesh. I agreed to everything the old gentleman said, and as soon as possible returned to the house. Aunt Dolly had prepared my dinner. I sat down and tried to eat. I was listening, and every time the door opened, I expected to hear something.

After what seemed to me a month of time, though in reality not more than an hour of anxiety, the doctor came into the room. He was smiling. I assumed almost an air of indifference in my endeavor to appear calm, and I said, "Doctor, how is the —" hiding my face with a towel which I was pretending to use about my lips.

"As well as could be expected, and —"

"What is it, doctor?"

"A boy."

I am — a . . . . . \*

\* If my reader can make out all that is necessary for him to know from this chapter, I am satisfied. My coadjutor says my detail of feelings and expressions can be omitted. According to his idea, the subject is so commonplace it did not deserve a chapter, he said. The reader's power of anticipation used at the beginning, would enable him to know what was coming, and when the announcement was made, it has come, that would cover all the ground.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### CONDENSATION.

FOUR elaborate chapters, covering the actions of as many years, are to be condensed into one by the advice of my merciless coadjutor. First, my wife did well, so did the young Atkins, who was named Jefferson F. Atkins, — F. for Feathergilt, for family reasons. He was suckled, weaned; some said looked like his father, some like his mother; had the measles, and was vaccinated. His grandfather, on the maternal side, gave him a silver cup, spoon, and other articles. It was getting to be the fashion to have coats-of-arms on teaspoons, chairs, and back doors, as well as on the pannels of carriages. Atkins, jr., must be made thus distinguished. My old heirloom, as represented, was sent to the artist to copy, who discovered that it was a deception, the work of some waggish itinerant, who thus imposed upon my great-grandfather. If my reader will turn back to the "fac-simile," carefully read the artist's name, and the day of the month, he will perceive wherein the joke is, if he did not discover it at the first reading. Put another o in place of the u, add an e between the l and d, and the story is told. I wonder if the heraldic devices on some American noblemen's carriage-doors are not founded upon similar impositions. I still keep the picture; but it is not honored with a conspicuous place at the homestead.

I had omitted to state, in its proper order, that we moved into the new house. Although suggested by friends that we ought to have a girl, and not objected to by myself and wife, none appeared; and though it is not anticipating anything origi-

nally mentioned in the four condensed chapters, I will say we never did have another addition to our family, and Jefferson Feathergilt Batkins reigned supreme.

Very few of our friends died during this time. I was engaged as usual in literary pursuits. The subject of making Cranberry Centre a city was in agitation. Being now a married man, I was eligible for the office of mayor. I encouraged the idea, but I had political enemies among the shoemakers. I missed Bean much, as to advice in politics. He was in a State lunatic hospital. I visited him once. He did not care to be liberated, and was engaged in financial problems.

Mrs. Bean was living in, retirement, on a handsome allowance. A guardian had been appointed for Bean, in order to settle matters in a legal way. It was anticipated, at his death, heirs in abundance would appear. It will be remembered my son was interested in the validity of this will. Lawyers, in several States, had been furnished with copies, in order to look up authorities. Medical experts in psychological science had been consulted also as to precedents.

Seth Spring, Bean's guardian, sagaciously suggested this shrewd forecast and cautious action, Bean having but recently recovered from a sudden attack of brain disease, which the medical faculty thought, if recurrent, would kill him.

I had introduced here my own views upon insanity, particularly that of Bean's, what I called common-sense ideas upon the transmission theory. My coadjutor, for reasons best known to himself, discarded them, and as his pen marked out the passages, he almost inaudibly said, "Pooh!" nonsense — there are no common-sense views of insanity; of what use is guessing in the calculation of eclipses?"

I remarked, "I am to understand you do not attach much importance to the use of common sense in the affairs of life."

"I do; and wish there were more persons influenced by it

What has that to do with the solution of the problems of science? Common sense may appreciate and apply them, but not work them out."

He gave examples which I would have introduced.

The points are the answer, the language expunged.

I desired to have my son commence his education early, to obviate the short-comings in my own case, and proposed to place him under the tutelage of Mr. Birch.

Dr. Slawter dissented. "Let him pick up his alphabet as a matter of amusement; educate him in things, not books, while his brain is developing. His mother is his best instructress while his teeth are coming." Here was added some idea of the folly of putting too much work on the brain, the doctor showing that thought was a blood product, as well as muscular strength; and a hard day's work for the brain was more exhaustive than a hard day's work of ploughing or digging.

Mrs. Batkins' ideas were discussed from her new experiences as to these matters.

But my coadjutor says my autobiography should not be made a vehicle of medical opinion nor nursery literature, though he does not disagree with Dr. Slawter's opinion on the whole.

More points. These represent quite an account of Mr. Horace Feathergilt's political progress, and some gossip as to his intended marriage with one of the minister's daughters, with some anecdotes of the minister.

Without reference to chronological unities, I am advised to terminate this chapter with the statement that after an exciting presidential contest, in which I took no active part, a war of seceded States, against those known as the United States, succeeded this change of administration, and while this war was progressing my son had arrived at his seventh birthday anniversary, finishing his first age of

development in the molecular way. I had endeavored to compare his state with my own at the same period, making proper allowance, of course. I do not know that I care to note the result. It is my intention to educate him well, at any rate, and as soon as the doctor agrees to it, Mr. Birch is to take him in hand. An odd coincidence, father and son being educated by the same teacher! It has not come to that yet, but stranger things have happened, and may again.

## CHAPTER LXVII.

### AN INTERREGNUM.

I HOPE my reader may not be frightened at the word at the head of this chapter; it is taken for granted that he understands that it is a foreign word, and knows its definition. I had undertaken in a few chapters the task of proving to my readers how rapid had been my advancement in the acquirement of learning. With the history of Rome as my chief authentic source, I proposed, while I recorded the doings of politicians in our republic, to show the tendencies in the policy directing our actions to destroy this home of freedom, as Imperial Rome was destroyed by such practices. I proposed, also, to compare the Ciceros, Catilines, and Cæsars with similar-conditioned individuals of our own times. I proposed to show how easy it was to become a great statesman, a historian, or any other professor of any high calling, — formerly supposed to require experience, observation, and study for a long time, — in a short period of working at it, if you are allowed to decide the matter for yourself, or if your friends and relations are to do it for you.

I had written a somewhat abridged history of our Civil War, to show how we copied the doings of the Romans in rewarding the generals who lost battles, if they were useful on political grounds, and punished those who won them, if it interfered with other ulterior plans; with many other useful reflections and inferences from my stand-point, important, of course.

I also interspersed here and there my domestic experiences, and how I was affected by the consequences of the war; how

suddenly some of my neighbors grew rich, and how our minister, now somewhat advanced in years, had changed his lamb-like views. My readers, perhaps, will not forget his accident at Simms' Folly, and how quietly he retired to his home, that the needle and thread of his wife might be used in repairing the damages his garments had sustained. During the war, though in sheep's clothing, he became a wolfish and sanguinary parson. Mr. Dovedrake would not have minded that rent in his trousers, if he had been preaching a war sermon, nor stopped until he had finished if the rent had been double the size of that referred to above.

I had also introduced my wife's views on the war, and the growing propensity on the part of the junior Batkins of our household to decorate himself in military apparel, and flourish swords and pistols, much to the discomfort of the female portion of the family.

I was endeavoring to prove in this part of my history how this young scion inherited warlike elements. According to Dr. Slawter's theory of transmission, bellicose molecules were not in my composition. Mrs. Batkins, during her visit to the homestead, may have seen my grandfather's military coat, as I described it, hanging on a peg in our best room; but I declare I am faithless in the supposition that warlike qualities can be engendered in that way in a time of peace.

The following opinion, sent to me in writing, will account for the absence in the printed pages of what occurred during the years thus transferred, so far as my readers are concerned, to that state called oblivion, rhetorically used frequently, not always correctly, for my reader cannot forget what he never knew.

"I think chapters . . . objectionable. I am not assisting you in writing a history of the civil war, as you term it; our views are not in accord either as to the so-called facts or the conclusions drawn from them. I do not believe a strictly impartial history of the military and political events of the past ten years can be written by any person en-

listed on either side of the great contest, even if possessed of your well-known conservative qualities, Mr. Batkins; in your written life these grave matters are out of place.

"As to your wife's views on the war, I think they had better not appear. Domestic belligerent powers and rights are accorded to women, but as there is no international code to define these rights accurately, I do not feel like being a party in opening the question as to what is the duty of neutrals in a given case. I think this had better be deferred until woman's political condition is constitutionally determined.

"As to young Batkins and his military propensities, it is unlikely that, outside of his immediate family circle, they would be regarded with much interest. If it is desirable to have the offspring of the present generation inherit military qualities, and the force of imagination is to assist in this consummation, there are abundance of military uniforms, in the homes of retired generals and other officers, to serve the purpose of the striped rods recorded in sacred writ, as to the lambs to be allotted to Jacob's share. Mr. Batkins, junior, may desire some day to write his life. I do not think it fair for you to compile a history of his early days, and introduce it in the last days of your own.

"As to your making your life instructive as well as amusing, that, to be sure, is your affair. Amusing books please both public and publisher; books of instruction are for schools, not for parlor tables. Your fondness, as you term it, for Roman history, is evidence that you are of the past; and the idea of studying history to avoid the mistakes, blunders, and errors of friends, governments, and peoples, is an absurdity never once thought of by modern statesmen, although sometimes referred to in speeches as evidence of former reading.

"When a disagreeable accident has occurred, either on a railroad or on the ocean, it is not the accepted policy to discover or to publish the cause as a basis of preventive treatment. It is more quieting to travellers if it remains unknown. Trains and ships can be run on the chances that lightning



and cannon-shot rarely strike twice in the same place. Increased knowledge of atmospheric phenomena and improvement in gunnery have somewhat damaged this aphorism since the colored gentleman's day, who originally had credit for this conservative opinion.

"Once more to refer to your friend the doctor's theory of transmission. It appears to me that the present race of those who are to undertake the duties of fathers and mothers, for the most part, have absorbed so much of the new idea of things, that, if their children do inherit the progressive qualities of the period, schools will not be required for instruction in either art or science, nor books need be written except to amuse the new race.

"The future infantile Cicero, Alexander, Aristotle, Homer, Galen, Hippocrates, and their after-types, of whatever name and profession, will develop their mental qualities by natural forces, as well as any other natural organization its peculiarities.

"What education is required to cause a mustard-seed to develop through all the processes of growth until a new crop of seeds is ready to produce a new set of plants?

"No method of education can change the mustard-stalk to a rose-tree, or give to its pungent spherical formation the aroma or appearance of a rose. Artificial culture might lessen the pungency of this famous condiment and rubifier, and in so much deprive it of its characteristic usefulness.

"To create a 'new atmosphere' involves hazardous experiments upon all natural living organizations, animal and vegetable. There is still among us a great desire for a new mission in all the attributes of life. A cannon may be cast from old and worn-out stewpans, if the metallic combination and composition are equivalent to the duty involved in a new construction; explosive power being introduced and properly fired, the new form will eject shot and shell as effectually as the brazier's old patterns did dumplings, when properly served by that domestic gunner, the cook.

"Is it not on this principle of recasting old metal, giving it new form, that so many original 'geniuses' are present in the world pushing their claims to wealth and notoriety? No personal reflection intended, Mr. Batkins.

"If the processes of old book changes into new were performed by fusion, as in the case of the metals, the inherent value would be preserved, with only a proper discount for dross in the melting process. In literary alchemy chemical action is necessary to the transmutation of thought, — a mental process. As in metals the old and new are mixed, without affinity in some combinations; instead of fusion, it is patchwork — a word-mosaic; modern cement and gilding conceal the badly matched joinings; a peculiar varnish being applied, the counterfeit passes often for the true.

"To conclude, I have only to say I do not think it advisable for you to write a history of the war. Many like occurrences of your life have been the lot of other men. You tell your story in your way; it may appear to others like other stories; it is resemblance, not copy. No two persons are exactly alike, yet there is similarity, and similarity includes many shades of difference. I am free to express my belief that there are incidents in your written life not in any other, hitherto published, that has come to my knowledge.

"It is not for me to say how much instruction blended with amusement there is contained in your pages. I do not think I can be any further useful to you in carrying your life to its conclusion, — I mean the biography. I hope the 'question' of your death, if not 'enrolled in the capitol,' will be an open question for many years to come."

I am inclined to abide by this advice of my coadjutor. "That the rude scene may close" with decency and in order, I will contrive briefly to make some parting prospective and retrospective remarks, in my own language in part, and upon my own responsibility. With many thanks to my coadjutor for his assistance, I close this chapter.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

## PROSPECTIVE AND RETROSPECTIVE.

AN artist in Cranberry Centre, whose skill in representing animal life was not equal to the French painter's, — whose name I have forgotten, or if I could recall it to my mind I should not dare to write or speak, lest I should display my ignorance of the fashionable language used by that steady-minded nation, the French people, — was hired to paint a sign for the new temperance tavern in Cranberry Centre, with the request that he should make a man driving a flock of sheep, and they to appear to be in motion. When it was finished and hung up on the post, the landlord gave a treat of lemonade, spruce beer, and crackers and cheese in his great hall. Some said that in another room, upstairs, ardent and inspiring beverages could be obtained. I have no knowledge of this, participating myself only in such libations as came from the pitcher of lemonade.

There was much talk over the picture on the sign; a dispute arose as to whether the animals were hogs or sheep. Some could see the wool, some could see the bristles; the artist was recommended, however, to paint, on the bottom of the sign, "This is a flock of sheep," which he declined to do. I suppose this critic had read or heard the anecdote of the cow on a picture, under similar circumstances of ambiguity.

I do not intend to give all the remarks of those connoisseurs, — I think that is the word, — either in the art of painting or sheep-driving. One said the tails showed they were sheep; another that they were all going one way, — a style of trav-

elling not considered proper by swine in their migratory journeys.

There was considerable merriment at the expense of the American artist, as there usually is, if he or his work are brought into competition with foreigners.

I am not critic enough to say, of my own judgment, who was right; but I think if the artist had painted "These are sheep," under the animals, I should have concluded they were sheep, if they had been hogs instead. I should have taken it for granted the painter knew best; though I think the explanation given as to the manner of the animals when travelling would have had weight in my mind and led me to doubt. My impression is, from what I have heard of picture shows, that more people are better judges of the frames than the pictures. But why I allude to this subject is to show how some people will laugh at and ridicule things they do not know more of than others.

On a visit to a city, — I leave out the name, and then nobody will be offended, — I observed something which led me to infer that some official persons had a not very high estimate of the general intelligence of its citizens. I had supposed that, however difficult it might be to remember, or even to know, the difference between different patterns of pleasure-carriages under so many different names, everybody understood what was a cart and what was a wagon; yet I saw painted on a sign, and nailed on to this species of city property, "city cart," "city wagon." Brass letters on the blinders showed the city's claim to the harness by the word "city" alone. I queried over this state of things, and came to the conclusion that perhaps it was the painter's doing, as that would just about double the price of the job; but as that did not seem to be patriotic on the part of the painter, I relapsed into the uncertainty surrounding many municipal arrangements. All I have to say is, whoever did it, in relation to the intelligence of the people as to their knowledge of the

machines, should not laugh at our Cranberry Centre painter as to the sheep.

My reader may ask, what has this to do with the title of this chapter, or the past and the future? Nothing; only it was an omitted incident of my life, which should have been recorded earlier in my history, and illustrates the fact of my habit of superfluous use of words.

I am more forcibly struck with the changes in the fifty or more years since my remembrance of matters recorded in the earlier chapters of my life, and I ask myself at this moment if I have so far fulfilled my mission. I am free to say I do not think I have injured any person intentionally. I do not believe I have ever spoken ill of my neighbor, or cheated him in any way, unless, perhaps, in politics, when I have allowed, on some occasions, men to give me credit for knowledge I did not possess. I think Dr. Slawter did not flatter me when he said I had some mother-wit and common-sense, if it was cultivated; and at this late day, from what I know of colleges, where there are teachers and professors of all kinds of sciences, it would be better for many of the students and pupils, if, in addition to the present faculty, there should be established a professorship of common sense, to add this practical quality to the Latin and Greek; and, if I am not mistaken, I heard a professor of a college say something like this himself, which is an evidence of progress and improvement that learned men, in my youthful days, would have believed to be impossible, and scouted the idea.

As I look back upon my speeches, it does not seem possible that I should have seriously thus expressed my ideas; in fact, they were not my ideas. I thought making speeches was evidence of knowledge. I spoke for the sake of speaking. I hope I shall not be accused of self-conceit, if I state I think I could make much better speeches now than then. I have seen my name in newspapers with such reference to me and

my doings, as caused me to query to myself whether the Batkins of then is the Batkins of now.

Though out of politics, I have not been unmindful of the events of the times. There is one question, woman's rights, that I wish had been as far advanced in my day as now, although, at that time being a bachelor, I was less calculated than now to expatiate upon. Woman suffrage has been introduced into politics; it is discussed in my house by both sexes in a friendly way; my opinion has been asked in a speech, and I will give it out at this time in a characteristic way. I hope no offence will be taken either by the ladies or their friends, because, if you want to come into politics, you understand, ladies, men will not talk so much honey to you as now, particularly if you claim the privilege to take the stump, though, when election is over, you will be only women again, and all your fine arts and fascinations will be used and appreciated as before.

In the first place, as to the right to vote as citizens, or as inhabitants, I should say, logically and constitutionally, as things stand, if the women want to vote, they should be allowed to do so. I do not think there is anything to say in regard of some of the flimsy objections, such as that it will "lower the women in the social scale," or that women will "want all the offices," and in legislation would talk too much; or that if they demand the privileges of voting citizens they should accept the cumbersome duties which their male fellow-inhabitants are compelled to perform. An opponent asks if they would do militia duty, and how, when on many occasions paramount duties would render training under arms incompatible with their comfort and usefulness in a maternal way. Many other whimsical objections are made. I dismiss them without noticing them, being willing to leave all such matters to the good sense of female citizen majorities when the time comes.

But there is one objection prominent in my mind: if the ladies are as tenacious as they are said to be in retaining secret one important fact in their lives, namely, their birthday, that is, as to being registered to vote at the age of twenty-one years, their ages will thus become a matter of public record, and curious people will be able to date from that time, and keep the run of years ever after. However, this is a question for the women to decide, and perhaps, if they are allowed to have equal rights with men, their ages will be considered a less important matter hereafter, and they will not object to be called veterans when superior wisdom and knowledge are attached to the rightful use of this term.

Woman's suffrage is no subject for ridicule, and in fact has risen above it. History is a "knocker" of idols, as my old young friend Joseph of the State House had it. Women have worn crowns as queens and empresses, and do wear them, if they behave themselves, to this day. One notable instance exists at this time, and republican dignitaries have found no difficulty in bending their spinal columns, as Dr. Slawter calls the backbones, and crooking their knees, when opportunity occurs to pay political homage to a female "sovereign queen." This being so, and as we are a nation of sovereigns, I do not see any impropriety from this standpoint, of giving American women a voice, you understand, in making laws, and female officers to execute them. I dare say at first there may be some joking and fun-poking about petticoat government. Well, there is now; but no more, perhaps, than when some men go to working in new places, as in my own case and others that might be mentioned.

I have in advance joked Mrs. Batkins about it, and referred her to my speeches, which she might use, if she should be elected member from Cranberry Centre. I do not at first suppose the ladies would consider it a compliment to be called "old war-horses," and perhaps my wife would not try to "win spurs;" but I am serious when I declare I think she could

make the "eagle scream" as well as a male representative; for I have heard it hinted at, in pretty positive language, that in the use of the tongue the women of all countries excel the men in an eminent degree. I observe some politicians who have opposed this step of progress, or been a little shaky on the question, now come out easy and moderately for woman suffrage; it is a change either from conviction, or for votes. Now my opinion is this, that it would not be fair to have a man and his wife on opposition tickets, nor have two of the same family represent a district, rural or otherwise. I think, however, these objections had better be left for time to settle, in presence of the actual facts. If,—and I am not making a bid at my age for votes,—if, I say, I was to represent Cranberry Centre in the next Legislature, and it was proposed to alter the constitution in favor of woman's suffrage, if it appeared to me that the time had come,—for I favor it at some time or another,—I think I should be inclined to give the matter a favorable, impartial consideration, and vote in accordance with the dictates of my conscience, which is usually of flexible character and of elastic tendency, for the public good.

I think I have fully expressed myself on the marriage question; my views are unaltered and undisguised.

The changes of half a century throughout the globe, as well as at Cranberry Centre, are many; notwithstanding the number of revolutions made by our planet, the earth, our abiding-place, around the sun, with all the obstacles of resistance in its path, whether of storm or pestilential atmospheres, but few of those persons with whom my narrative commenced have been shaken from its surface. My father, a venerable man, survives to prove cider-drinking in his case is no bar to longevity; Aunt Dolly, not yet in dotage, to prove that marriage in women is not necessary to long life. Seth Spring walks erect; law and politics have sent him to no early grave.

I do not believe, from a retrospective glance, that I have

given to Dr. Slawter sufficient acknowledgment for the insight he gave me into natural philosophy, and enlarging its domain so as to be perceptible to the eyes of common sense. I did not always quite comprehend his applications, and sometimes, in a sort of oblique rhetoric, he beat the school-master, also one of my great props. The idea I caught, however, from the doctor's language as to the preservation of life is about like this: "To be cheerful and contented, to waste no energy in struggles for wealth, fame, or station, is to ensure longevity to the human organization, properly constructed, according to original design. The human passions are great destroyers. Of these mysterious yet tyrannical powers, Joy should be king; Mirth, his prime minister; Laughter, his prophylactic — a hard word, but I put it in — agent. Apart from State affairs, let this monarch rule over the kingdoms, empires, and republics of the earth, and war would be heard no more, diseases decrease, disorders be, with less difficulty, removed, and physicians and undertakers — useful and necessary evils, if you please — would be less busy in their day and generation, and their services be only required to take charge of worn-out machines, instead of filling the soil with the abortions and imperfections of a noble race."

The doctor still lives, retired from the practice of his art, after counting more than fourscore years.

My respected father-in-law, at an advanced age, — over three-score and ten, — is an example that dealing in leather does not necessarily shorten man's life.

Mr. Dovedrake, the youngest of all my early acquaintances referred to as living at this day, exists in feeble health. As his daughter is the wife of Mr. Horace Feathergilt, — a man in his youngest prime, — the prospect is that he may endure. By comparison, however, it would appear that divinity is not so conducive to health and long life as the other professions called liberal, or the farmer's

calling, the most ancient of all, the first from Adam down. Many others, of different ages, are living still. Bean, my mentor in trade, in politics, is dead; he died as he lived, a lunatic. My customer of the nankin suit, the sea-captain's wife, survives, and is in the hands of the doctors, lawyers, and disputants of the madman's will. I wish her no harm, as, after all, she did me none; I hope she will settle that old account, now outlawed for many years.

Seth Spring insists that Bean's will will stand. The clause with reference to the ocean bridge is no proof that he was insane. The cable laid upon the Atlantic bed makes a communication from continent to continent, as he stated could be done with money and brains; the word "otherwise" in relation to the communication covers the ground. When the telegraph line was proposed, those who believed in its practicability were not considered, by many, sound of mind. My son is mentioned in Bean's will; when the case is settled, if it be so in his lifetime, and, if he follows my example in the autobiographic line, I leave to him to make the communication to the public in that or any other form it may suit him best.

Mr. Birch is still alive. Myself or my son will record his demise if we survive the sturdy old school-master, who has done so much for me. My written life to this date is about to close. I may write more, to be called my last days, and the record may perhaps be finished by my son. Among my State House friends who still exist are Mr. Boutwell, Mr. Banks, Mr. Wilson, and Joseph, the page. Col. Silk, with my sixty dollars, went to the war, not to fight, but, like some other political generals and colonels, to prove that they knew more of appropriations than field duties and dangers. Silk was not killed, and as for the rest I have nothing evil to say of the dead.

Of Mrs. Swamscott I can say nothing but that she married a German prince, and disappeared from her native soil. My wife corresponded with her for a time. She may be alive, to yet read this unfinished account of her fate.

I perhaps need not add that my friend, and, as Mr. Birch called him in the Latin tongue, my "alter ego," Mr. Warren, is still a living proof that play-acting is not an "idle trade," nor injurious to morals, health, or life. I have not forgotten his parting words after our first interview, nearly a score of years gone by; I shall use them at a proper time.

To my enemies, if I have any, I apologize for my shortcomings, and with due respect to my family and relatives would say, if I have acted perhaps not wisely, yet too well for everybody's good, let them remember that

"Men are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep,"

and so forget and forgive.

To my friends, who may have said that the torch of my genius, to use a common phrase, would "never set the river on fire," I may admit that I have not

"Bedimmed"  
The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,  
And, 'twixt the green sea and the liquid vault  
Set roaring war,"—

which I suppose means about the same thing in better words.

If my speeches, my opinions, or aught else that is written here with no bad intent, should give offence, I will write no more, and as to my pen, I will

"Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And, deeper than did ever plummet sound,  
I'll drown my book."

"Au revoir," my friends.

JEFFERSON S. BATKINS.

*Cranberry Centre, June, 1871.*

## TWO COLLEGE FRIENDS.

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## MARION BERKLEY.

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MARION BERKLEY, an only daughter, tenderly brought up under the loving influences of a happy and luxurious Boston home, is returning after the summer vacation, to a boarding-school where she has already been a pupil for three years. Her life-long friend, Florence, is her companion and fellow-pupil. The book is principally devoted to a history of her boarding-school life, and abounds in stirring and comic incidents.

Marion is the central figure of the group of thirty scholars, who form the little community. A charming heroine she makes with her lovely dark eyes, wavy and abundant blonde tresses, and the air of regal dignity she knows so well how to assume. The action of the book hinges on the arrival of a new scholar, and Marion's unworthy jealousy of the love of Florence for its new comer. Some of the scenes are brimful of fun, abounding in a true perception of the comic, and excellently well drawn. Such is the one portraying the advent of the French teacher, and the quick-witted and disrespectful answer which Marion makes to the stern and uncompromising principal of the school. Her apology, before the assembled school, challenges our admiration for its ability, even while it merits our disapproval for its boldness. "The Thanksgiving Supper" is an admirable pen-picture. We think all readers will heartily join in drinking a foaming glass of the contraband champagne to the health of the generous giver and getter up of the feast.

Neither is the book all fun. Its charm is in the healthful spirit it displays. There is manifest spiritual growth among the little flock. Miss Christine's gentle influence develops the moral nature of her pupils in the right way. Marion's struggles with the pride, jealousy, and waywardness of her impulsive nature, result in slow victory, and reveal the real integrity and high principle of her character. The picture of the girls emancipated from school restraints, and undergoing the ordeal of fashionable life in Boston, is also an interesting one.

We like the book. It is a good one to put into the hands of young persons, for its characters are human, and erring like those we meet in every-day life. But the author knows how to weave her materials into scenes full of comic incident, earnest experience, with right-doing, and wrong-interspersed in the right proportions. We shall not spoil the story by telling any more of it, but recommend the book as just the one for pleasant summer reading, fresh and sparkling as the green fields and gurgling brooks of country homes.

E. M. C.

## DAISY WARD'S WORK,

By MARY W. McLAIN,

Handsome Cloth—Illustrated—Price, \$1.25.

Is the title of a fresh, pure story, interesting to all who possess a love for the ideal and its embodiment in Art. It gives many good hints on the subject of moulding in clay and casting, and awakens a lively sympathy with the heroine's enthusiasm for her life-work. It calls out the quality of disinterestedness, and incites to work, for its own sake; it teaches us that *results* are to be left with destiny, while it only lies with us to *work*,—to work steadily in the direction which life or genius points out.

The author has entered upon the field with flying colors; and, while making a welcome addition to literature, has enhanced the glory of the fine arts, by her discriminating analysis of their intimate connection with each other, and by her characterization of Art's devotees, with their enthusiasms, their hopes, and their grand despairs.

Her diction is easy, her style graceful, her purpose whole. She has given us, in "DAISY WARD'S WORK," not only a few hours' pleasant reading, but many earnest thoughts and encouragement to work in the future, for the sake of the Ideal within us.

In saying this, we feel that we award the praise most pleasing to her, as proof that she has accomplished her purpose in writing, which was evidently to inspire others with an earnest and disinterested effort to realize the Ideal, in whatever direction their speciality may lead them.

E. M.



# THE MILLS OF TUXBURY.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

*Four Elegant Illustrations by Merrill. Handsome Cloth. Price \$1.25.*

It is a book of great power and pathos, and one which if you begin to read at nightfall will be likely to make you very late to bed, as you cannot possibly lay it down till it is finished. Read the book by all means. — *Western Rural.*

Miss Townsend has created precedents for herself which will make the public exacting toward her. But even measuring this book by the standard of her best previous efforts, it seems excellent. We abstain on principle from telling the story of a novel, for it seems to us very like "stealing geraniums from your friend's flower-pot to put in your own button-hole." But we can assure novel-readers that they may buy this one without fear of disappointment. — *Henry Ward Beecher's Christian Union.*

We have seldom seen a pleasanter combination of the lights and shades of life in a New England factory village than Miss Townsend places before us in "THE MILLS OF TUXBURY." The higher and lower impulses of humanity are interwoven by a hand evidently familiar with the secret springs of human action, and skilfully it touches a responsive chord, making us, under the influence of the author's fancy, and under the power of her will, now pay our tribute to the noble strength and resolution of Marjorie, now to the rustic grace of Berry, now to the manly love of Whitmarsh, and now with throbbing hearts and streaming eyes stand around the death-bed of Handy, listen to his confession, and accord to him the pardon which his true repentance deserved. — *Boston Transcript.*

The book is not as painful, neither does it go so deeply into the subject, as Miss Phelps' "SILENT PARTNER," but it touches on the dark side of factory life, and shows how dreadful evils may closely follow on the short day and sudden dismissal of the hands.

# THE HOLLANDS.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

*Four Spirited Illustrations by Merrill. Handsome Cloth. Price \$1.25.*

Miss Townsend certainly writes better than many women who have much more reputation than she; the atmosphere of her stories is simple and wholesome, and that is, in these days, cause of gratitude. — *Scribner's Monthly.*

Miss Townsend's *Hollands* is a charmingly natural story. The brother and sister, who were all the world to each other, fought manfully with their hard fate, though friendless, poor, and proud; and at last, by patient endurance through manifold struggles, won appreciation and love with happiness. The story is pleasantly told, the characters graphically sketched, and we are in love ourselves with the true woman's heart and bewitching grace of Jessamine, and the manly, heroic spirit of Ross. The subordinate characters cluster around the principal one like shining stars of lesser magnitude. — *Boston Transcript.*

A very pure, sweet book, — a violet among the passion-flowers of modern romance. It cannot fail to have a healthful, bracing effect in every household where it should enter.

We are glad to be able to say that an American Woman has produced a novel so strictly local in color, and quite equalling the best productions of modern English lady-writers. — *N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*

Jessamine and Ross Holland, the two central figures of this charming novel, are characters that will win the admiration of every reader. — *Tribune.*

A book for girls, worthy to stand next to "Faith Gartney's Girlhood" — on the book-shelf, and in their thoughts. It is for them a safeguard against worldly and frivolous influences. This simple, pure story holds up to criticism and contempt that slipshod, passive virtue which is the result of habit only, and falls before the power of a great temptation. Young and old will read "The *Hollands*" with lively sympathy, and ponder its truths with earnest thought. — E. M.

## ZERUB THROOP'S EXPERIMENT.

By MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY.

Handsome Cloth. Price, \$1.

This story is written in the author's quaintest vein, and pictures New England life with her usual felicity. It abounds with her unique and delightful ideas, one of which,—Caroline's way of teaching Astronomy,—is at once tersely and charmingly set forth. It is more than graceful, it is pathetic. Also, the scene between Dimmy and the Doctor, is inimitable. Nothing could be more graphically drawn, and the Doctor's mode of treatment at least affords food for thought. New England gossip is also hit off with racy strokes. The ghostly way in which the story turns, is capital both in conception and writing, and is particularly suggestive to those disposed to discuss special Providences.

The "Experiment" seems to have been eminently successful. The only fault we can find with it is, that it is too short, and just tantalizes us with a taste of "richness." However, it makes up by being spicy, and its pungency will leave a lasting impression on its readers.

Mrs. Whitney has counted on an amount of the organ of marvellousness in the American mind, which we feel sure will not fail her, as we read with gusto all the doings of the black cat, who is perhaps as prominent as any of the characters, and we find ourselves so far carried away as to study profoundly the question as to whether or no she was "possessed" or "influenced"! At any rate, Mrs. Whitney has at least dreamed, in her philosophy, of some of the strange things in heaven and earth.—E. M.

## The Portent.

A story of the Inner Vision of the Highlanders, commonly called the Second Sight.

BY GEORGE MAC DONALD.

Handsome Cloth. Price, \$1.75.

MAC DONALD is always good, and always great with a greatness of his own, but in "The Portent" there is a quaint charm that has touched us more nearly than anything else he has written. There is an intensity, a rapid plunging into mysterious situations, a vivid portraiture of scenes and persons, that entrances the attention and charms the fancy. The dedication itself deserves praise as a specimen of most delicate and graceful writing. The opening chapters form a model of the descriptive style, photographing on the mind the picture of the craggy mountains upon which the boy looked forth from his hill-side retreat. Weird, romantic, and vividly imaginative, we see in this story the germs which in the fertile soil of his rare and peculiar mind grew and developed into the rich fancies and quaint conceits of "Phantastes," and the profound metaphysics which form the basis of his other works. In all, he impresses the reader as a singularly broad mind, and as possessing a poet's soul. At one time you feel that it is George Herbert writing prose, again it is Spencer, and again it is a writer of the day, imbued with all the speculative thought of our time. His style is pure and elevated, and the occasional breaking out into the rude, forcible speech of the Scotch, affords a delightful variety.

The character which gives "The Portent" its title is old Margaret, a clairvoyant; but she is not so profound a study as Lady Alice. That a mind could become so subjected to almost idiocy by a merely congenial, social atmosphere seems almost impossible, but Mac Donald is too deep a student for us to dispute his data, and has doubtless found facts in his researches stranger than the fictions he builds upon them. Mac Donald never crowds his narratives with multiplicity of character or incident. Every situation *tells*, and every character illustrates something in the aim of the whole story. Few writers preserve so well the unity of their works, and are betrayed into so few by-paths, from the main course of their story. He stands at the head of the school of literature he contributes to, and indeed has no competitors.

E. M.

# Adela Cathcart.

BY GEORGE MAC DONALD.

Handsome Cloth. Price, \$1.75.

After the transcendentalism of "David Elginbrod" and the earnest questionings which are stirred in the soul by reading "Robert Falconer," and the strange dance through Fairyland which "Phantastes" led us, encompassed by all its weird scenery and subtle meanings, the mind settles down to a more tranquil enjoyment in the perusal of "Adela Cathcart." Thoroughly English in tone and deeply religious, it is varied by a genial humor, and is not without a vein of sarcasm at the expense of the commonplace, as typified in Mrs. Cathcart.

Each successive publication of Mac Donald's reveals some new side of a mind which is possessed of a wonderful breadth and varied imagination. In the midst of rare social qualities he preserves his consciousness of the earnestness of life. Gay, appreciative of fun, there is still always a grave undercurrent which is in sympathy with the spiritual element in all things, and recognizes the struggles and tears, the perplexities and heart-aches which are everywhere agitating the inner life of humanity.

The tales which compose the greater part of "Adela Cathcart" cover a wide ground of moral teaching and metaphysical knowledge. He has not repeated himself, though he loves best to speak of lives purified by disappointment, of souls made rich and strong by perpetual high endeavor. It seems to us he has reached very far down into the true value of things when he says, "Perhaps the highest moral height which a man can reach, and at the same time the most difficult of attainment, is the willingness to be *nothing* relatively, so that he attain that *positive* excellence which the original conditions of his being render not merely possible, but imperative. It is nothing to a man to be greater or less than another; to be esteemed or otherwise by the public or private world in which he moves. Does he, or does he not, behold, and love, and live, the unchangeable, the essential, the Divine?" What a blow to false ambition, and to all envy and strife, and uncharitableness! How it strikes away superficials, and sets up a standard of true greatness! Mac Donald's nature is positive, vital, life-giving, like his conception of the Armstrong brothers in the book before us. There is in "Adela Cathcart," as in his other stories, a painstaking spirit, an endeavor to utter such truths as will help others to realize their best aspirations. His stories recommend themselves to all lovers of a pure style of literature, to all those of cultivated mind and taste, and are deeply suggestive to those fond of discussing abstract truths. "Adela Cathcart" is not so great a book in scope as "Phantastes," but for this very reason will be more widely read, and will possess a great power. Both have come at a good time for our summer reading, for which they are peculiarly adapted.

E. M.