



INTERVIEW OF BRYAN AND COMA.

SIMON KENTON:

OR,

THE SCOUT'S REVENGE.

An Historical Novel.

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CHAPTER I.

IN the north-western part of the State of North Carolina, upon the head-waters of the River Yadkin, a stream somewhat noted in our revolutionary annals for scenes of partisan warfare, and near the little town of Hillsborough, a place of no great note at the present day, but during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when our story commences, rendered quite famous (at least in the estimation of its inhabitants) as having been the head-quarters of General Cornwallis for a short period, just after the celebrated retreat of General Greene across the Dan into Virginia, was a small, unpretending farm-house; and around it, what would now be considered a very unthrifty and badly cultivated farm.

To this farm-house, a little after nightfall, on a raw, chilly day in the month of March, early in the last phase of the eighteenth century, and to a little party of five persons gathered around its ample fireside, we would now draw the attention of the reader.

But, before we enter into a more particular and minute description of this little company at the farm-house, that the reader may more readily comprehend the thread of our story

and the peculiar situation of our country, at the time of which we are speaking, it will be necessary to premise that the present narrative commences at a period only a few years subsequent to the War of the Revolution.

Neglected in their infancy by their mother country, and at a later day oppressed with unjust taxation, the colonies had, at length, been unwillingly forced into open rebellion. The result of this struggle, after many years of weary war, was a complete triumph on the part of our forefathers. It had been no *emeute*, or popular tumult flashing up, and passing away in an hour, but a fixed and steady resistance upon principle; and the end was the acknowledgment of our nationality by all the civilized nations of the earth!

No period in the history of the world has been more eventful than the last quarter of the eighteenth century; and no space of time, of the same duration, more fruitful of wars and revolutions. The Eastern and Western Continents had alike been the scene of violent popular agitation; but the results of the sanguinary conflicts upon the two hemispheres were vastly different. In the one, as we have already intimated, the result was a complete triumph on the part of the colonies, and that triumph had ushered into existence a Republic. The dream of the poet and philosopher had, at length, been realized. In the other, there had been the same ardent desire to throw off the galling yoke of tyranny, and the same anxious longing after freedom. Taking root in France, the spirit of liberty, after sweeping the son of St. Louis from his throne to the grave, had, with unequalled rapidity, spread thence throughout Europe; convulsing with war and revolutionary agitation all its nations, from the sunny shores of the Adriatic even to the wild steppes of Russia. But the end of this mighty political throe was defeat. The ancient and moss-covered institutions of feudalism and kingly prerogative had been violently shaken, it is true, but they were not destroyed. Those who would be free, were bondsmen still.

These were sad and bloody times, and times of startling

confusion throughout the kingdoms of the earth. The mind, when dwelling upon this age of the world, is ever peopled, like the misty songs of Ossian, with shadowy warriors, and shields, and banners, and broken spears; and, whilst lingering upon the tossing panorama, would fain turn away to contemplate the beneficial effects, if any, of so much blood and suffering, and of such unusual disorder in the affairs of men.

But, happily, our story commences just after the War of Independence, when the Western World rested from strife, and our Republic, fully established, and in successful operation, stood out before the astonished gaze of men the most memorable triumph of this memorable age.

Forgetting the dark days of the Revolution, and enjoying with increased zest, after so many years of tumult and danger, the quiet pleasures of peace, our fathers, with smiling faces, gathered around their warm hearthstones, and dreamed of a glorious future. But their dreams respecting the future greatness of their country, although bright, and beautiful, and flattering in their eyes, never for a moment reached that point of power and glory that we, their children of the present age, are permitted to enjoy and behold. The boundless valley of the Mississippi, and the great States now spread over the alluvial plains of the West, had no place in their pleasant fireside fancies. The thirteen old States, binding, upon the shores of the Atlantic, the common offspring of our Puritan and Catholic ancestors, and late the scene of war and desolation, alone filled their teeming minds, and were alone the subject of their future hopes and expectations.

At this pleasant epoch, then, in the history of our country, when America, or, rather, the eastern shores of our Republic, rested from war; and when the roll of artillery, the martial tones of trumpet and drum, the quaking tramp of galloping squadrons, and light tread of the eager partisan, were alike unknown and unheard, we commence our story.

The farm upon the Yadkin, as we have already stated, was an unpretending one, and greatly out of repair; and the farm-

house looked very time-worn and dilapidated, although it was still comfortable and pleasant enough, when compared with the ordinary run of houses met with at that day, so soon after the hurry and confusion of a revolution. Luxuries were not so cheap and abundant then as now, and order and cleanliness not so much expected as at an age of more ease and leisure. It had been the home of Sergeant Duffe, this house and farm, during the entire war, and, indeed, for many years previous; and to this fact might be ascribed, more than to carelessness, intentional neglect, or idleness, its present ruined condition. But although the Sergeant had been an active patriot from the very commencement of our colonial struggles, and Tory depredations had been nowhere more frequent than upon the waters of the Yadkin, his residence had had the good luck during the whole of this time to escape untouched, and almost unvisited by any of their roving bands. Whether he owed his good luck to chance, or the kindness of his marauding neighbors, or to the secret and retired situation of the homestead, is a question of doubt to this day; but the Sergeant himself was in the habit of ascribing precious little of goodness or charity to the Tories, and, we doubt not, would have much rather had it burned down than believe he owed its safety to any kindness of the enemy.

Then around the fireside of the Sergeant, on a cold, raw night in March, were assembled five persons, a female and four males, three of the latter white, and the remaining one an African. The female was the wife of Duffe, the owner of the mansion—and a hale, hearty dame, one of your buxom, stirring women was the good wife of the Sergeant—and comely, too, for one of her age, somewhere between thirty and thirty-five—and at that moment, when we introduce her to the reader, she was busily and faithfully engaged, and apparently with no small *understanding*, from the way she handled her foot, in doing what, in the times of Homer and Virgil, was considered very respectable and becoming (believe it, O modern belles!): to wit, twirling the reel, and making most excellent flax thread, such as is generally

used nowadays, if we are not mistaken (for we never speak positively in doubtful cases), in sewing tow linen galligaskins.

Such were the presence and figure of the good dame of the Sergeant, and such her employment; and, though surrounded by none of the luxuries and appliances of wealth—and there was neither piano, lute, nor harp to be seen anywhere in her neighborhood—yet there beat, beneath her coarse homespun dress, as kind, and gentle, and good a heart as ever throbbed or fluttered beneath the gaudy folds of the Persian loom.

The Sergeant, a tall, athletic, and rawboned man, was, in appearance, well worthy of the lassie he called his good lady, and seated, as he then was, bolt upright in his chair, as if upon dress-parade, looked even more gigantic than he really was; showing high above the back of his seat a pair of broad shoulders, and yet above these a stout determined neck, surmounted by a well-shaped head, profusely covered with a heavy shock of hair, auburn we'll call it, though, if speaking of a passing stranger, and not writing a novel, we should think it very nigh akin to what is vulgarly called a "sandy red." Duffe, or the Sergeant, as we shall indifferently call him throughout our story, although not very prepossessing externally—for he would have stood a very bad chance for preferment at the court of that beauty-loving virgin queen, Elizabeth—was, in every respect, a man, and as brave a one as ever buckled on harness to fight the enemies of his country; and, like all truly brave men, was as generous, and noble, and kind-hearted as the most chivalrous knight of the crusading age! In a word, it might be said of him, and we doubt not with as much, if not more truth, than was once said of a famous chevalier, "he was *sans peur et sans reproche*;" and, if his beauty would not have been a passport to the good graces of Queen Bess, his *length* would have raised him very *high* in the estimation of that lover of tall men, Frederick William, of Prussia!

By the side of the Sergeant sat a stout, powerfully framed, and wild-looking being, whose visage, though none of the

whitest (for it was very unfashionably sunburnt), betokened an Anglo-Saxon; whilst his dress and equipments went far to proclaim him a savage; and, had it not been for his language (though none of the purest), it would have been somewhat difficult to settle upon his race! In a court of justice, especially in the South, where color is considered *prima facie* evidence of slavery, we wouldn't have given much for his chance of freedom. Simon Kenton, or Sharp-Eye, for such were the titles given him by his parents, and by his border companions, and he answered readily to them both, in his dress and appearance, presented a striking picture of the daring half savage characters everywhere to be found at that day (and, indeed, at the present time) upon our extreme western frontier. A contemporary of Boone, and one of the most skilful and determined scouts of Kentucky, or the "Cane-Land," as it was then sometimes called, Kenton's dress, composed of a flowing hunting-shirt of tanned buckskin, with pants, or rather leggings, of the same material—a broad belt, buckled tight around his waist, supporting a tomahawk and hunting-knife—a gay pair of worked moccasins, with a capacious shot-pouch swung around his neck and ornamented with long tufts of black hair, resembling very much, as in truth they were, the scalp-locks of the western Indian, gave him a decidedly savage appearance, and declared at once his very recent return from a dangerous life upon the frontier. He had been a fellow-soldier of Duffe during the Revolution; but, after the war, being of an adventurous and daring disposition, had wandered out West, where he had already become famous in the many bloody border frays between the savage and early settler, and was considered second, in skill and cool bravery, to no scout of the "Dark and Bloody Ground." On a visit now to the Old States, as they were called at that period to distinguish them from the more recent settlements in the West, Kenton was sojourning, for the time, with his old friend and companion in arms, not without a hope that, by his glowing descriptions of the flowing savannas beyond the Blue Ridge, and of the wild freedom of a frontier life,

he might induce the latter to bear him company upon his return to Kentucky. Six feet two inches in his moccasins, with a well-knit sinewy frame to match his great height, and with a broad, full, and open face, tanned and swarthy, it is true, yet pleasant and bright, with a quiet, good-humored smile, and lighted up by a deep-blue eye, and with heavy masses of auburn hair, and whiskers sweeping carelessly around and about his countenance, Kenton exhibited in his person, as he sat before the fire of the Sergeant, a splendid specimen of the genuine borderer, and no wonder the Indian brave trembled at the redoubted name of Sharp-Eye, and instinctively shrank from a contest with so formidable a foe. Although, now surrounded by friends, and in the house of an old comrade, the Scout, as was natural with him from long custom, still held grasped in his ready hand the barrel of his trusty rifle, from which he never parted, not even when he slept, and, at the same time, kept his ears wide awake to all suspicious sounds, as if yet in the land of the enemy, and momentarily expecting the wild yell of his accustomed foe. Notwithstanding he was well skilled in every species of woodcraft, an adept at following the trail of the wild beasts of the forest, and familiar with all the cunning tricks of the wily savage; yet, strange as it may appear, he was the most credulous of men, and as simple as a child in what is generally termed the "ways of the world," or, in other words, the tortuous windings of policy and hypocrisy, so often met with under the garb of civilization. Indeed, it has been said of him "that his confidence in man, and his credulity were such that the same man might cheat him twenty times; and, if he professed friendship, he might cheat him still!" At the feet of the Scout lay the inseparable companion of all his journeyings, his dog; and Bang, for such was the name of this prime favorite, was as rough a specimen of the canine species as his master's countenance was of the face divine! But Bang was, nevertheless, a very knowing dog, and, ever and anon, now as his master became excited in his descriptions of western scenes and adventures, he would raise

his head and look intelligently at the narrator, and so wisely did he wag his shaggy tail, that more than once the warm-hearted hunter, breaking off suddenly in his narrative, would pat his trusty comrade upon the head, and swear, with a hearty emphasis, "that Bang knew all about it!"

Eyeing with a suspicious glance, and some degree of superstitious fear, this rough companion of the frontiersman, his uneasiness and private views respecting the genealogy of poor Bang by no means diminished by the Scout's frequent appeals to that worthy, the honest African, who rejoiced in the ancient and honorable title of Titus, was an earnest, and, to judge by the staring intensity of his starting orbs, a most curious and interested listener to the wild stories of the borderer. He was an Ethiopian of pure blood, if we take as evidence those very distinctive marks of color, nose, lips, and woolly head; and the latter, now slightly covered with gray, told that he was beyond the meridian of life; and his beauty (if ever blessed with that rare and much-coveted commodity) was now grievously disfigured by a deep scar, the effect of a sword-cut across his cheek! Titus was a character in his way, as much so as the borderer, and had witnessed many bloody scenes, and passed through many perils during the Revolution. He had been the body-servant of a colonel in the Continental line, and had stood boldly and fearlessly by the side of his master in many a hard-fought field! The ghastly scar across his cheek was received on the sad field of Camden, whilst gallantly warding off a blow intended for his already wounded master! The colonel was saved by the devotion of his slave, and Titus never had cause to regret the blow, for that livid scar upon his sable countenance not only insured him the protection and affection of his grateful master during life, but, since his death, was a certain passport to the hearts of Kenton, Duffe, and the only son of the colonel, whom we will presently introduce to the reader. Had the Scout been speaking now of regular warfare, the black, who prided himself upon his military knowledge, and the service he had seen, would have exhibited all the stoic

indifference of a veteran; but, as he was detailing hairbreadth escapes from the wily savage, and fierce border skirmishes in the "Dark and Bloody Ground," Titus, much to the delight of the borderer, had shown a proper degree of interest, and had, therefore (as all good listeners will), risen immeasurably in the estimation of the narrator, who promised himself to give the black an account of still more wonderful adventures, at some future day, when no one was present to keep him within the bounds of truth or reason.

Lolling negligently in an arm-chair, a little removed from the personages we have just described, with his head thrown carelessly back, and his cap drawn closely over his eyes, reclined a graceful youth of some two-and-twenty summers, and, from his dress and general appearance (the one being of much finer material, and the other exhibiting the ease and polish of education and an intimacy with refined society), bearing but little affinity to the rough beings with whom he was keeping company. This youth was Bryan Head, an orphan—the son of the Sergeant's and Scout's colonel during the Revolution, and of Titus's master!—but lately escaped from the control of his guardian, having received into his own hands the small patrimony left from the estate of his father, after defraying the expenses of his education. Bryan had been now for some months enjoying his liberty; during that time, hunting in the neighborhood, and lodging at the humble farm-house of his foster-father, Duffe! The latter regarded Bryan with all the affection of a real parent, and the young man fully returned his love, regarding him in the light of a second father! And the good dame, who had nursed him after the death of his own mother, was not forgotten by the grateful orphan, for she received from him all that love and reverence which would have been bestowed upon his own parent, had she been alive! But the young man seemed but little interested in the bold sketches of the Scout, or rather appeared to be under some stronger influence than that excited by the stirring narrative of the borderer; for, although Simon's voice was none of the softest, and

had that deep guttural intonation so common with the western savage, it apparently did not reach his ear, since he continued in the same listless, dreamy state, wrapped in silent reverie, totally careless and unconscious of the thrilling scenes painted by the rough, but graphic hand of the sturdy frontiersman, and which, seemingly, were of such deep interest to the Sergeant and Titus.

Such, then, was the occupation and appearance of the little group gathered around the fireside of Sergeant Duffe; but even whilst we have been making this hurried sketch, this hearthside assembly had been thrown into sudden commotion by the Scout abruptly breaking off in one of his narratives, and exclaiming, with an energetic gesture, as his watchful ear caught the hoot of an owl, and answer of its mate—

"Hello! thar they are, the pesky redskins! Blast my eternal buttons, if them sneakin' Shawanees ain't hootin' to one another; and thar'll be a liftin' of topknags afore mornin', or my name ain't Sharp-Eye!"

The Sergeant, Bryan, Madam Duffe, Titus, and even Bang (who should have known better), all sprang to their feet at this startling exclamation of the frontiersman; but the dog, after a low growl of surprise, and a knowing look at his master, as if ashamed of him, quietly resumed his place before the fire, and Duffe, recovering from his momentary alarm, with a laugh at the expense of himself, and the frightened countenances of his companions, said,

"Pshaw, Simon! we are not out in Kentucky that we should be alarmed at the hoot of a harmless owl. You've been talking so much of your Indian adventures, that you fancied yourself back in the forest, and surrounded by yelling redskins."

"Guess you're right!" said the Scout, with some confusion, resuming his seat; "but it ain't so bad for one to keep his eyes skinned even in this 'ere civilized country: for thar's no tellin', Sergeant, when you may run foul of an enemy."

"There's some truth in that; and you have one much nearer than you have any idea," muttered a dark figure, throwing himself

down, close under the shade of the house, and once more (for he, too, had been startled by the cry of Kenton) applying his ear to a crevice, very convenient for eavesdropping.

"We don't 'low animals of that ar' kind to be makin' a rumpus out in Kaintuck," said the Scout, apologetically—"do we, Bang?"

"Of course not!" growled Bang; and his master, satisfied that "he knew all about it," continued, turning to Duffe—

"I tell you what, Sergeant, when we hear strange noises 'round our cabins out West! sich as animals callin' animals, and birds speakin' to birds, like them cussed owls jist now, then we commence gettin' ready, uncommon smart, for the redskins; for we knows they'r 'bout, jist as well as if we'd see'd 'em, and ain't to be caught nappin', with tow in our ears, by a blasted sneakin' Ingen!—are we, Bang?"

Another sharp growl of assent satisfied the Scout of Bang's attention, and patting his dog kindly, the borderer, with a quizzical glance at the staring eyeballs of Titus, continued—

"Why, Sergeant, you used to think yourself a smart one 'bout the tricks of war, and may-be you wer'; but, blast my coonskins! if you wer' out in Kaintuck, if you wouldn't discover yourself particularly and distressingly green! When we fought the Britishers, it was all plain enough, and straight enough, too, for it was 'forward march! make ready! fire!' and, blaze away we went, altogether, and away run the red-coats, or away we run; for one or the tother had to do it, sartain; and then the thing wer' all over. But, bust my buckskins!" chuckled the Scout, slapping his leather pants sufficiently hard to show the strength of his oath, and at the same time laughing at the very idea, "if them ar' kind of tactics would begin to do with the redskins—would they, Bang?"

Thus appealed to, Bang said "no!" as plain as a dog could, and with far more politeness than we have known some men to growl that same little negative, when approached for a charity; but the Scout, who was in the habit of making such appeals to his dog, like a great many others we have met with

(who lay more claims to politeness), without waiting for, or noticing his reply, continued—

"I tell you what, Sargeant, skulk are the word with us, and 'taint wrong neither; for, blast them redskins, they won't stand out like gentlemen, and blaze away by columns, but they jist lay in the long grass, behind logs, and trees, and sich like, and the first you knows of thar whereabouts is a bullet in your gizzard, a tomahawk through your brain, and a cussed Ingen trottin' off to cover, with a nice bloody scalplock dangling from his belt. You see, Sargeant, 'taint no 'vantage to be an old soldier, for we jist have to forget all we knows 'bout trainin', and take to this 'ere murderin' way of doin' the business, jist like the 'tarnal savages themselves; and it comes darned natural, too, after you've been thar a little while, and the sport's elegant, much better than the old way, for thar's some fun in outdodging a Shawanee, and no mistake; Bang knows all 'bout it!"

And Bang would have given his usual assent, had not the Scout, without waiting to hear from him, or any one else, continued—

"Now, to show you, Sargeant, what audacious cunning devils them dratted redskins are, I'll jist relate you a slight sarcumstance that happened to this 'ere individual himself; and, darn me, if it didn't come in a grazer of losin' me my scalp!"

Here the dame stopped her wheel, Titus drew his stool a little nearer, and Bang, as if watching to catch his master tripping, raised his head and cocked his ear in expectation; but the Scout, by no means daunted, commenced his story by saying—

"It wer' a short time after I got out to Kaintuck, and, though I wer' new in the land, I guess I thought myself up to somethin'. I held myself tolerably high, Sargeant, becuse of the trainin' you'd gin me durin' the war; but I soon found, as you'll see, that kind of larnin' wouldn't do, and I wer' as green as a tree-frog in Spring-time. When this 'ere sarcum-

stance happened I am going to tell you consarnin, I wer' in one of them forts—not forts like our'n used to be, Sargeant, for they wer'n't nothin' but stakes drove in the ground, and sharpened—and I wer' jist sittin' 'long with Bang by a rousin' great big fire, and not in the all-firedest best humor in the world, I can tell you; for I'd been out huntin' all day, and killed nothin', and the boys had laughed at me. Well, I wer' jist sittin' thar, thinkin' what had 'come of all the buffalo, and deer, and bear I'd hearn tell on, when, what should I hear but a blasted turkey, for it wer' near daylight, gobblerin' away, outside the station! Without thinkin' twice, I up with old Betsy, and callin' Bang, went straight to the gate to get the sentinel to let me out; and it wer'n't hard to do, for they don't have any passwords and army rigulations out thar, but, to tell the truth, the feller at the gate, who wer' a knowin' one, and an old hunter, seein' I wer' a green chap, did stop me awhile, and jist cautioned me, sorter laughin' like, sayin' that the turkeys had a quare way of shootin' sometimes in that ar' country, and I'd better look out, or the old gobbler might take the first pop. But thinkin' as how he wer' only pokin' his fun at me, I passed out, never mindin' his caution, jist tellin' him I wer'n't as grassy as some folks I'd hearn tell on. Cuss me, Sargeant, if I didn't think, then, I wer' very sharp; and for knowin' all about war, and sich like, wouldn't have given back an inch to the best man in the fort, and this 'ere foolish notion of mine came blamed nigh, as you'll diskiver, bein' the death of me! Well, on we went, Bang and me, from the fort; the old gobbler all the time tryin' himself, as if he knew I wer' comin', and didn't care a cuss; and neither he didn't, for that wer' jist what he wer' after, as it turned out. I crept along more cautious-like, when I got near the woods, for I 'spicioned the gobbler wer'n't far off, and didn't want to scare him, which wer' a fact; for suddenly, by the light of the moon and the comin' day, as I wer' sightin' 'bout into the trees, with old Betsy all ready, what should I see but a rousin' old cock on his roost! Jist then, Bang, who wer' smellin'

'bout, gin a sort of low, angry growl, and I know'd, at once, all wer'n't right; so takin' another quick glance at the gobbler, cuss me! if my cap didn't jist riz, all natural-like, on my scalp-lock; and, by the 'tarnal Moses, Sargeant, it wer'n't no turkey, but a blasted Ingen!"

"Gorar-mighty!" muttered Titus.

"What, then?" said Duffe.

"I knew I wer' in for it," resumed the Scout, "but I wer'n't goin' to let the dratted rascal 'scape; so, raisin' old Betsy, I jist let the cunnin' thief have the contents; and down he dropped, while I made a rapid *devance*, as you soldiers have it, to the fort. And I wer'n't a minute too soon neikher, for as I turned about, a dozen bullets whistled around me, and one of them give me a dig in the shoulder. The screechin' devils give me a darned hot race to the fort, but I wer' a little too fast for 'em, though I did carry an ounce of lead in my shoulder; and the feller at the gate, who had been looking out for a scrimmage, 'ministered a pill to the foremost of 'em, that he received with a yell, and I guess didn't forgit in a hurry. It wer' a blasted tight race though, wer'n't it, Bang? and we didn't go a gobbler-ing agin for a smart sprinkle of time after that ar' sarcum-stance."

"I golly, Massa Simon!" exclaimed Titus, who had been listening with staring eyes to the narrow escape of the borderer, and could contain himself no longer, "dem Ingens are a dam sight worse dan de Britishers!"

"A very narrow escape indeed," muttered the Sergeant, carelessly, and as if but little surprised or interested. Duffe had a veteran's pride, and had determined to be in no way astonished at anything pertaining to war; or, in other words, at anything his old subordinate might say. Hence his drowsy carelessness and quiet remark at the conclusion of the Scout's story.

"Narrow escape!" growled Simon, a little ruffled at the cool manner the Sergeant had treated his dangerous adventure; "that 'pends altogether on what you call narrow. As for my-

self, I thought then, and think now, it wer' a particularly blamed narrow escape. Ten steps further towards the tree whar that cursed Shawanee wer' shammin' a turkey, and I'd got a bullet in my gizzard to a sartainty—a hairbreadth closer, and I'd had a dozen whizzing through my head; and had the fort been twenty steps more distant, a tomahawk would have tried the strength of my skull. It wer' only a small sarcumstance, to be sure, and nothin' strange out in Kaintuck, but blast my everlastin' buttons, Sargeant, if I don't think it wer' jist about as all-fired a narrow escape as we ginerally meet with in a hurry—don't you think it wer', Bang?"

The dog replied affirmatively, as plain as any dog could that had not made the English language his study; and Duffe, seeing that the Scout was not very well pleased with his indifferent manner, hastened to mollify him, by expressing a greater degree of surprise than he had seen proper at first to exhibit.

"It wer' darned ticklish times, and no mistake," replied Simon, apparently restored to his good-humor, "and I wouldn't have staked a big pile on winnin'. But that turkey sarcum-stance, Sargeant, wer'n't nothin' to what I've known them cunnin' varmints do. I tell you, it stands a feller, when he goes out to the 'Cane-Land,' to be wide awake and duly sober, if he don't want to lose his scalp."

"I should think so," said Duffe.

"You'd know it, Sargeant, afore you'd been thar a week. Why bless me, when we go into the woods, we go with our ears, mouth, and eyes all wide open; and even then, ten chances to one if we don't stumble upon some prowlin' redskin, and have to fight or run to save our bacon. Blast me, if I didn't once lay behind a log the better part of a long summer day, with the sun bakin' me like a johnnycake, tryin' all the time to git the first shot at an Ingen I thought wer' layin' behind a log 'bout twenty yards off."

"And what was the result?" asked Duffe.

"Well, my dander riz so high at last, I couldn't stand it any longer, so I jist bawled out to him, in good English (for I

didn't know his tribe, or I'd have hailed him in his own gibberish), to take his tree, and we'd fight it out like gentlemen."

"What did he say to this very fair proposition?" asked Duffe, with a smile.

"No sooner had I sung out than I hearn a laugh, and then the feller from the tother log hailed me in my own lingo; and what do you think, Sargeant?—cuss me, if it wer'n't one of the boys from the fort, who had taken me for a redskin; and thar he'd been, jist like myself, waitin' all day for a shot! It wer' a mutual mistake; but you may take my hide if it wer'n't considerable provokin', and I guess we wer'n't in no hurry to tell how we'd been fooled."

Duffe greeted this story of the borderer with a hearty laugh; old Titus, with a broad grin, keeping him company; and for a few moments the little group were silent.

"I say, Sargeant," said the Scout, again breaking silence, and once more raising his deep voice above the low mellow hum of Mrs. Duffe's twirling wheel, "it ar' 'bout time you wer' leavin' this 'ere old tumble-down consarn, for it's a plaguy shame for a man to stay here, when it's so easy to move out to the canebrakes, whar the lands are rich, and buffalo beef and venison as plenty as musquitoes here on the Yadkin. I'm jist out'r that country, and you know I wouldn't lie to an old comrade; and I tell you now, it ar', without any *bamboozling* 'bout the matter, the greatest place this side of sundown."

"I've been thinking of what you propose," replied Duffe, "and if you hav'n't scared my good lady with your bloody stories of the Indians, and Bryan and Titus are willing, then I, for one, am ready for the change."

"Scared the good lady!" laughed Simon, with a quizzical look at the stout person of Mrs. Duffe; "I'd like to see the feller, be he Tory or redskin, what would undertake that ar' operation. Why, darn me, if I don't 'spect to see the day when Sally will string Ingen scalps like pumpkin-rinds, and think no more of tomahawkin' a Shawanee than slicing the

jugular of a turkey. As for old Titus, thar, I knows without axin' him that he's in for it, right off; and it will be darned strange if some redskin don't git that woolly scalp of his'n. They've a great liking for nigger topknots, Titus, for they jist cover thar pouches with all sich beauties, and pass them off in thar big powwows for bear scalps. What say you, beauty?"

"Bless de Lord, Massa Simon!" exclaimed Titus, with a sympathetic move of his hand to his woolly pate, "don't talk so! Me ready to follow whareber Massa Bryan go!"

"I know'd it!" exclaimed the Scout in high glee, extending his broad hand to the black. "Thar's my hand, Titus, if you are a nigger, for we've fought the redcoats together; and may I be scalped by a bloody Shawanee, if Bang, and you, and me won't give the tarnal red devils particular goss when we git out to Kaintucky—won't we, Bang?"

The dog again gave an audible assent to this proposed bloody alliance, and the borderer, turning his weather-beaten face towards where Bryan still sat in unconscious reverie, good-humoredly exclaimed, "I say, Mister Bryan, if you ain't particularly interested in lookin' into that ar' cap of your'n, I'd like to know your views 'bout goin' West along with the Sargeant and Titus, not forgettin' Sally, and Bang, and me, for we've all agreed."

Startled from his reverie by this direct inquiry of the borderer, Bryan removed his cap, looking inquiringly at the speaker, as if not fully comprehending his question, exposing, as he did so, a strongly marked handsome face, beautified by a pair of dark flashing eyes, and shaded by heavy masses of long black hair. Without stopping for an answer, the Scout, seeing that he had aroused the attention of Head, went on to speak of his own, and the Sergeant's, and Mrs. Duffe's affection for him, and their determination to go West; pointing out the many inducements for the change, and winding up by promising him, if he would only go with them, to show him the richest lands upon which to locate, and in addition (he dwelt upon this point), steal him enough horses from the In-

dians to make him as rich as Duffe's nearest neighbor, the wealthy Squire De Lacy.

"I need no assurance of your affection," said the young man, with emotion, when Simon had finished; "and as for my foster-father and mother, theirs have ever been the love of a real parent's to me. The devotion of you all to the memory of my father has caused you to show many acts of kindness to his orphan son, and I can only show my gratitude in return by assuring you, one and all, that you have my strongest affection."

"We ain't done nothin'," said the Scout.

"Only our duty," remarked Duffe.

"You are my only child," murmured Mrs. Duffe, a tear dancing in her eye.

"And my young massa a chip ob de old block," grunted Titus.

"I thank you all," said Bryan, hastily brushing his moist eyes. "But you know, Simon, I am very poor; for a few dollars, and old Titus there, whom I consider more as a friend than a slave, are all that is left me from my father's estate."

"Jist the reason why you should go," insisted the borderer, "for you can locate a whole league of wild land if you wish, and of the richest sort, too, for I know jist whar to find it; and when you have done this, the Sargeant, and Titus, and me, not forgettin' Sally and Bang, will make an elegant colony; and blast my coonskin!" shouted the borderer, throwing down his cap, as he became excited with the prospect, "how we'll worry the redskins! Hoop! hurrah! 'tis settled! Remember, Mister Bryan, I'll furnish the hosses, for I know jist whar the thievin' Shawanees keep thar critters—don't we, Bang?"

Aroused by the hoop! hurrah! of the borderer, and his excited manner, Bang, instead of his usual low growl of assent, gave forth a loud and lively bark to this query of his master, and the Scout showed his satisfaction by giving his brute companion a hearty slap upon the back, sufficiently forcible to have sent a majority of the canine tribe howling into the corner.

"As I was going to remark," continued Bryan, with a smile at the enthusiasm of his semi-savage friend, "when you interrupted me, I am very poor, Simon, and am afraid I would only be a charge upon the colony, as I am totally unfit for the heavy labor of a backwoodsman."

"Thar you're out'r it," shouted Simon, again interrupting him. "We don't labor any out in Kaintuck; everything is furnished to order; and as for charging, there's nothin' of it 'cept charging a rifle and the redskins. Remember, I'll furnish the hosses, Mister Bryan; thar's no fear on that score; and I'll kill the buffalo and venison; Titus will raise all the corn we want; and thar'll be nothin' for you to do but be colonel of the militia, and the Sargeant will do the drillin', for he's up to all such cussed stuff. Hoop! hurrah! the thing ar' settled; give me your hand on it, Mister Bryan."

Seeing that Kenton would take no refusal, Bryan grasped the extended hand of the borderer, saying, "I'll think about it, Simon, but am not yet certain, for I have a matter of deep interest to me first to settle, before I can determine upon any fixed plan to govern my future motions. But, let my determination be what it may," he added, in a shaking voice, as if deeply affected, "you shall know it in a few days, and I will ever remember your affection for me, and ever grasp with love, as I now do, your honest hand."

"Cuss the water," grumbled the Scout, brushing with brawny hand his misty eye; "I couldn't now draw bead on a buffalo. No more of your kind words, Mister Bryan, or old Simon will lose his eyesight, and no longer be called Sharp-Eye. But what's the great matter on hand? May-be I can be of sarvice?"

"I don't think it's in your line, Simon," laughed Duffe, glancing merrily at his wife, who nodded her head significantly in return.

"O!" exclaimed the Scout, "if Sally's got any winkin' in this 'ere matter, the thing's explained, and a gal must be at the bottom of it. 'Taint that ar' nice little chick, the daughter of

Squire Lacy, I met the tother day? Don't be squeamish, Mister Bryan," added the borderer; "you are good enough for any of 'em, I don't care how high they fly. If the gal says yes," continued the Scout, sententiously, and with all the gravity of a philosopher, "take her; if you say yes, and she says no, let her go; but if you say yes, and she says yes, and the old 'squire (a pesky old 'ristocrat, though he did fight for liberty, I guess he's at some of his tantrums) says no, then take her anyhow. That's the way we do up the thing out in Kaintuck—ain't it, Bang?"

Not liking, perhaps, to be present when a dog was to be consulted on love-matters, Bryan took advantage of Bang's usual growl of assent to blushing beat a hasty retreat.

"He has fled the charge, Simon," said Duffe, laughing; "and I guess you were pretty near right, and that the 'squire's daughter has something to do in delaying our journey West. But come, we must break up; Sally has put back her wheel, and that, you know, is as strong a hint to retire to quarters, as the tattoo during the wars."

"May I be *teetotolaciously* used up," soliloquized the Scout, the Sergeant and his wife having retired, "if these gals ain't born devils, and no mistake; and they can't help it neither; for it ar' jist natural for them to do what they please with us men. But blame me," he added, with a knowing smile, "if she ain't a pretty one, and no wonder Mr. Bryan is agin leavin' her. We'll just have to take her along, too; I see that without spec-tickles. Hello, Bang," he continued, turning to his dog, who seemed to be somewhat uneasy, and had more than once made known his uneasiness by a low growl of rage, "stop your rumpus and let's to bed, we've made a fool of ourselves once to-night 'bout them blasted owls, and it ar' no use, I tell you, to notice either sounds or smells in this 'ere civilized country."

Wrapping himself in a blanket, for he declared the feather-beds made his bones ache, Simon threw himself down before the fire, with his rifle by his side, motioning Bang to take his

place close by him; but the dog still continuing uneasy and restless, he enforced his command by exclaiming, angrily, "Down with you, I say; it ain't nothin' but Titus snorin', and that's the way with niggers. But darn me," he added, with a low laugh, as Bang crept to his side, "if he only had a brick-bat laid on his nose, if he wouldn't jist blow his brains out, and be committin' a suicide in his sleep."

A minute later, and the Scout himself, from the way he snored, was even in more danger than Titus of becoming a *felo de se* in his sleep, dying, if not by his own hand, his own nose.

"The young cock flies high, and would mate with the eagle," muttered the eavesdropper, as he stole cautiously away; "but he'll be disappointed. My young master will never marry Miss Coma, for I'll away now to one who, I guess, will not only pay me well for my news, but soon clip the goshawk's wing. Ha! ha!" laughed the spy, pushing his way through the forest, and speaking with an unpleasant chuckle of satisfaction, coupled with an oath: "It was lucky I came over to see what brought Simon Kenton into these parts. The great Scout little dreams that his old enemy, Simon Girty, the renegade and bloody destroyer of the settlements, has been so near him to-night. But I must be cautious," he continued, in a less confident tone, "for that infernal dog of his was not so unsuspicious as his master, and the neighborhood of Sharp-Eye is not the safest place in the world for me that would not be known. But I won't give up the game because I've started an enemy," thought the renegade. "Let me first squeeze a little money out of my old captain, and have my revenge upon this young fledgling, the son of my old enemy, and then, Simon Kenton, you may have a clear field of it, for I'll soon put the Blue Ridge between you and me."

CHAPTER II.

A FEW miles distant from the unpretending home of Sergeant Duffe, and on the same evening of which we have been speaking, were assembled in the stately parlor of General De Lacy three persons—the general, his fair daughter Coma, and Captain Jean Montlack.

The rough, unornamented, and unfurnished room in the humble farm-house of the Sergeant was not more unlike the grand and richly decorated drawing-room of the general, than were the persons now gathered within the precincts of the latter unlike those discovered around the comfortable but lowly fireside of the former. In the one was found, if not poverty, barely a remove above it, simplicity, and we might add, with an exception, man unpolished and uneducated; but, as a set-off, there was kindness of heart, unanimity of feeling, bravery, and honesty. In the other was wealth, polish, and beauty, and along with them, as is nearly always the case, pride, hauteur, coldness, and deceit. One was a living, unadorned picture of honest, unsophisticated nature; the other, a striking representation of nature, remodelled and retouched by the polishing hand of man, aided by the gilding power of wealth. One, like a fair old picture of Titian or Raphael, was deathless, and ever affording pleasure, because drawn from life, and without spangle or gloss; the other, a flashy, gaudy child of more modern times, admired and sought after by many, on account of its fresh and brilliant coloring, but without nature. Yet those three persons, assembled within the sumptuous hall of De Lacy, are destined to mingle long and intimately with the more humble guests of the Sergeant; and the younger and fairer of the three, the beautiful Coma, as may have already been discovered by the reader,

holds under her control the fate and future destiny of the orphan Bryan, the foster-child of Duffe.

General De Lacy, the proprietor of the splendid mansion we have just been describing, and of the broad acres stretching out for many miles around, was a descendant of a noble Huguenot family, driven from France by religious persecution during the days of the De Medici, and, when we introduce him to the reader, was about five-and-fifty years of age, and had been a widower for many years. Much to his secret chagrin, the general had been blessed with only one child, his beautiful daughter Coma; and although he treated her with the utmost kindness, and was, as much as his common pride would permit, a most devoted father, still, he could not but regret, and sometimes complainingly lament, the want of a son, to transmit his ancient and time-honored name down to posterity! His greatest care, now, was to watch over his daughter, and guard her against any unworthy alliance; and, as he was very proud, and very punctilious, and very fearful of her making an unequal match, we might add that this was the greatest fear and annoyance of his life; and that poor Coma, if she waited for his consent and approbation, had the very smallest of numbers out of which to choose a husband; and, notwithstanding her beauty and golden charms, bid fair to become an old maid. Yet the general, notwithstanding his pride of wealth and family, had cut quite a conspicuous figure during the War of the Revolution, not sparing either his blood or money, and was very highly esteemed and honored by Washington and his compeers of that stormy period. Whether he was induced to take the active part he did in the War for Independence, by his love of freedom and equality, or by the national hatred he bore to all things English, inherited from his fathers, we are unable to say; but are disposed to be charitable, and will, therefore, ascribe his course to patriotism alone! But this much we do know; that, although the general had subscribed to the Declaration of Independence, declaring all men free and equal, he did so with a proviso, meaning thereby that all men, politically

speaking, were free and equal; but personally, it was quite a different matter, and he considered very few persons and very few families equal to himself, or his own. Yet the general, barring his aristocratic notions, was a very worthy man, noble and hospitable, kind to his inferiors, urbane to his equals, and only haughty and forbidding to the presumptuous, or when he believed the fate of his daughter, Coma, was in any way involved.

Captain Jean Montlack was also a son of sunny France, only a little more direct, and a little more recent than the general, to whom he was related, not very near, to be sure, but still the nearest blood-relation known to De Lacy; and, therefore, though very unworthily, standing very high in his affection and estimation.

Montlack, before he had reached the age of thirty, had dissipated a large fortune, and transferred to his urgent creditors his entire estate; but, about this time, when on the verge of utter ruin, hearing of his rich relation in America, and of his devotion to the cause of the struggling colonies, he cunningly offered his services to the patriotic and chivalrous young Lafayette, and was, in a moment, and by this act alone, for he had done nothing meritorious before, forever fixed in the affection of De Lacy. Upon his arrival in the States, Captain Jean immediately made himself known to the general; and, notwithstanding his former extravagances and irregularities of life, became, at once, by his cunning and plausible manner, a prime favorite of his old relation, and, by his apparent devotion to the cause of the colonies, during the remaining years of the Revolution, insured to himself the protection and support of De Lacy. Montlack, with the polite, fashionable air of a well-bred Frenchman, was quite a passable personage, and a very pleasant companion; yet, notwithstanding his polished and gentlemanly exterior, and well-acted sincerity and honorable bearing, he was in reality nothing more than a plausible, flattering scoundrel, devoid of all principle, utterly selfish and treacherous, and withal, as near as a Frenchman could be, a

coward! After the Revolution, by the invitation of his deceived relative, he became an inmate of his house, and a part of his family; and, from that time onward, bent every energy of his cunning head and corrupt heart to transfer into his own pockets the splendid estate of the unsuspecting De Lacy! At the period of his introduction to the reader, the captain was somewhere between thirty and thirty-five years of age; tall and graceful, with the dark skin and eyes and hair of his native land; but his countenance and appearance still showed evident traces of excess and dissipation; for, notwithstanding his apparent reformation, he was yet, in private, and when beyond the vision of the general and his daughter, as much devoted as ever to drink, and gaming, and other low vices. But the cunning captain had dotted down in his own mind his plans for accumulating wealth, and thereby satisfying his extravagant follies, and was now surely, but cautiously, developing his scheme, so as not to startle the general, or alarm the sensitive fears of his trusting cousin, the destined victim of his plot. Captain Jean was well skilled in the secret workings of the heart, and knew right fairly what chords to touch, to move the proud soul of his noble relative to his will, and the captain thought himself equally well versed in "woman lore;" but that fact is yet to be proved, and future chapters will make known his success or failure.

Coma De Lacy, the only daughter of the general, and future heiress of all his broad lands, was a fit subject for a villain's wiles, for she had seen and known but little of the world, and, secluded in her father's mansion, with no companions but her governess and teachers, knew but little of the treachery and deceit of mankind; and what little she did know was obtained from the light romances, in her father's ample library, and which her truthful, unsuspecting heart, and the assurances of her simple-minded governess (poor woman!) taught her to believe were altogether ideal and false.

Seeing but few persons at her father's house, and constantly dependent upon Montlack for amusement and entertainment,

accomplished as he was, and devoted as he pretended to be, Coma was in a very fair way to surrender up her trusting young heart to her unfeeling and treacherous cousin; and the general was not displeased at all at the evident advance Montlack was making in the affections of his daughter; for the captain, by his flattery and zeal, had become almost absolutely necessary to the happiness of his relative; and De Lacy, on account of his relationship and noble family, deemed the plausible captain a very fit person to assume his name and fortune.

But the fair Coma, inheriting all the warm passions of her fatherland, had of late met with one who had suddenly changed all of her preconceived opinions of the perfectibility of Monsieur Jean, and taught her the difference not only between genuine and feigned nobility of heart, but the very vast difference between cousinly, unimpassioned affection and impassioned love. Of late, she had been somewhat indifferent and listless to the usual ceremonious kindness of Montlack; and, without knowing, herself, what had caused this very great change in her feelings towards him, continued to dream in secret of one she had met at a small party at H——, and frequently, since that time, in her daily walks through the grounds of her father.

Montlack, with the quick instinct of a suspicious heart, had already discovered the change in her feelings toward himself; and, without knowing, or even suspecting the cause—for who could be his rival?—had become vastly uneasy; and, while racking his very brain to unravel the mystery, redoubled his exertions to please, and redraw, under his ancient sway, the truant heart now fluttering to break the silken, but strong meshes he had thrown around it.

"Coma, dear," said the captain, in a sweet, low tone, such as women love, with fraternal affection drawing his chair still nearer his cousin, and glancing his eye at the general, who seemed buried in the book he was reading, "have I offended you in anything, of late?"

"Why do you think so?" replied Coma, listlessly, as she

stooped to examine closely some maiden trifle she was engaged in ornamenting.

"Why, you seem cold and indifferent to my efforts at pleasing, and, not knowing that I have done anything to deserve your displeasure, I have fancied, dear Coma, and have been much pained at the fancy, that I must have unwittingly done something to incur your disfavor?"

"I know of nothing that you have done, Jean, worthy of my displeasure; and am not conscious of any coldness, on my part, towards you," she replied, without intending it, in the same careless, listless manner.

"There now, Cousin Coma," continued Montlack, with an effort at gayety, "what offended queen or displeased beauty ever answered a suppliant courtier or lover with more frigid politeness than you have just done your afflicted cousin?"

"Psha! Jean!" replied Coma, in a manner throwing off her listlessness, "why do you make such a bugaboo of nothing?"

"And do you think it nothing, Coma," answered Montlack, skilfully taking advantage of the opportunity offered him, and throwing all of his soul into his low trembling voice, whilst he gazed sadly and sorrowfully into her face, "to be treated thus by one we love?—to feel and know that we are treated coldly, and, when we would learn the cause, so that we might try and remove it, if possible, to have our inquiries answered carelessly and indifferently, and our sorrow almost mocked at? It was not always thus, Coma; and I can but feel it!"

"Why, my dear Jean, what in the world is the matter?" said Coma, quickly, and looking kindly into his face, for she had been touched by the sorrowful tones of Montlack. "Your little Coma feels no coldness towards her kind cousin; and, next to her father, loves him before all others."

Coma thought, at the time, she was speaking the truth, and sincerely; but, at the next moment, the memory of another flitted across her vision, and she unconsciously blushed.

"Would that I could believe what you have just said was true, and that your love was more than a cousinly affection!"

murmured Montlack, sadly; and bending still nearer his cousin, he continued: "But even now, Coma, it seems to me that your thoughts are wandering away from him that would fain call them all his own."

Coma blushed, but said nothing, for this was the first time that Montlack had ever been so bold in urging his suit, and the distinction he had made between love and cousinly affection had thrown a brand into her heart, and set her thoughts agoing; and she now began to feel that he was right, and that the love he would fain have was not his, but another's.

"I see it, I see it all, Coma! Your telltale face declares what my trembling heart has long feared. You do not think of your cousin Jean as you once did; and some other, more fortunate than I, has stolen the heart of my little pet."

The captain, although his heart was raging with suspicious jealousy, and he was scarce able to restrain his fury, spoke in a sad and melancholy tone, as if conscious of his doom, but ready to submit to his unhappy fate; and so greatly was the warm-hearted Coma affected by his feigned sorrow, that she burst into tears, exclaiming,

"O Jean, you do me wrong! 'pon my soul, you wrong me! Your Coma thinks of you now, as she has ever done, as the kindest, and dearest, and most affectionate of cousins."

"There!" exclaimed Montlack, no longer able to restrain his anger. "It is ever cousin, cousin, cousin! Tell me, Coma," he added, bitterly, and with the smile of a baffled fiend, "who is it that has stolen your heart, and made me wretched?"

"You forget yourself, Jean!" replied Coma, with a flash of anger at his bold request and peremptory tone; and, rising hastily from her seat, haughtily added, "I do not permit such language, not even from a dear cousin."

The captain ground his teeth with rage; but, discovering, when too late to remedy what he had spoken, that passion had got the better of his discretion and politeness, hesitated a moment how to reply; but the general, aroused by the angry

voice of his daughter, saved him the trouble of an explanation, by exclaiming—

"Hollo, children! What the deuce has got into you? Are you quarrelling there in downright earnest, or are you only playing tragedy for the benefit of puss on the hearth-rug?"

"Only playing tragedy, sir!" and Coma was rehearsing her part," replied Montlack, with a light laugh; all appearance of anger or mortification having fled from his countenance.

"Better that than a quarrel, and better folly than anger," said the general, sententiously.

"I was just trying to find out whether my fair cousin inherited any of our old French passion," continued Montlack, in the same light tone, "and discover she has no lack of it, but is off like a flash, and woe be to him in reach of the explosion!"

"*La belle France* forever! The old blood will never be washed out, but continue the same through a hundred generations," replied the general, good-humoredly.

Coma regarded the specious and treacherous captain, whilst he made this explanation, in utter and silent astonishment; for she was really at a loss to know, when she beheld his smooth and smiling face, whether what had just happened was real or imaginary; and, if real, whether Monsieur Jean had been in earnest, or merely trifling with her.

But the general, put in a good humor by the captain's jocose manner, and well pleased with his own terse replies, did not allow her much time for thought; for, throwing down his book, and advancing towards them, he exclaimed—

"Monsieur Jean does not know my little jade as well as her father, or he would have saved himself this experiment. But come, Coma," he added, with a smiling face, turning towards his daughter, "we will have no more tragedy to-night; and if you will only sing us our usual evening song, we'll away to bed."

Without another thought respecting the falsehood and hypocrisy of the captain, at this request of her father, Coma seated herself by her harp, and sang a sweet, but sad song, for her

heart was heavy; and Montlack, now that the burning fire of jealousy had been excited in his bosom, quickly noticed, and with a bitter smile, that it was a new song—not one of those they had often sung together and a song of love.

Kissing her father, and bowing more coldly than was her wont to the captain, Coma glided from the room; and, notwithstanding the little storm that had just ruffled the quiet of her heart, was soon buried in sweet memories of the new passion she had so lately discovered.

Montlack's pillow that night was not one of roses, and, if he slept at all, it was like the stormy Petrel, rocked and dashed about upon furious waves. His cunning plans were tottering, and that, to one of his temperament, was sufficient to turn hell loose in his bosom. "Eh! Master Jean, you have made many conquests in your time, but you are now conning the first lesson in love; and, as strange as it may appear to your rebellious heart, are in a fair way of becoming the victimized, instead of the victimizer."

CHAPTER III.

BREAKFAST was over at the mansion of De Lacy, and without the usual pleasant morning chat, for there was a constraint upon Montlack and Coma; the first busy with his secret determination to discover the cause of the recent change in the feelings of his cousin towards himself; and the latter equally busy with the pleasant imaginings of her teeming brain.

The general had retired to his study, and Montlack, ordering his horse, had galloped furiously away, when Coma, gliding from the house, tripped gayly along the path leading to that part of the grounds where, for the last two or three weeks, she had more than once met the young hunter, and held sweet con-

verse with him concerning the birds, and flowers, and beautiful scenes around.

It was a bright morning, and Coma, although more happy than she had ever been before, felt that she did not go forth to the meeting with the young stranger with the same feeling that she had done even the day previous. Then it was with a free bounding tread, and a free, gay, unsuspecting heart, glad to converse with one so gentle, and so eloquent in his descriptions of birds, and flowers, and gurgling waters; but now it was with a heart burning with a new passion, one lately discovered, but so bright and glowing as to thrill and dance through her throbbing heart, like the sweet, low tones of distant music to the almost slumbering ear, or like the gurgling sound of glad leaping waters in summer-time, when, weary, you throw yourself down upon the bank of some murmuring stream. In a word, it was a strange, but most pleasing timidity, and one never before experienced by Coma. For the first time, she did not go straight to the rendezvous, but often stopped in a musing attitude, as if to dream awhile; or as if fearful the wild, unusual emotion she then enjoyed might be destroyed by the meeting. And, then, most strange to her inexperienced heart, she felt a hesitation and doubt respecting the propriety of the move she was now making, that had never before crossed her artless mind in any of her former meetings with Bryan. She was fully aware now that she had lost her heart, and unconsciously given her affections to the young stranger, and at once all her maiden delicacy and reserve came forth to increase her fast gathering fears and hesitation.

But her fears, and her doubts, and her coyness were alike soon dispelled by a full, rich voice, carolling an old ditty but a short distance off, and the next moment, having passed a small cluster of trees, Bryan stood in full view, and, bounding forward, soon knelt gracefully at her feet, presenting a tiny bouquet of early spring flowers.

"I have gathered these little jewels of sunshine dew," he exclaimed, "hoping that, as they are the first smiles of coming

spring, Miss Coma would deign to accept them from the hand of one that would willingly gather all the jewels of earth, and bind them around her fair brow."

"Most willingly, Monsieur Bryan," replied Coma, a bright smile of pleasure mantling over her blushing face; "but I fear me your friendship would burden my poor brow with quite too heavy a crown, if I am to believe that your will would be in consonance with your present flattering wish."

"Believe me, fair lady," said Bryan, gallantly, as he led Coma to a moss-covered seat near the bluff bank of the Yadkin, "my will would only be to give you pleasure; and could 'gems, or pearls, or flowers add one charm to that pure brow of yours, then would I dare all the monsters of the deep and the hot sun of the tropics to gather and place them there."

"Alas, poor me!" said Coma, with a mock sigh; "now that you have commenced with flattery, I can believe you no more. I had thought that my kind teacher of 'wood lore' was all truth; but, alas! poor deceived maiden that I am, I will now have to forget all that I have learned; and even that pretty story you told me of the wounded bird I must believe with many doubts. Ah me, ah me!"

Had Montlack witnessed the tragic air with which his cousin made known her feigned sorrow, he would have considered her anything but a tyro at dramatic representation; but Bryan was too much in love to fully enjoy her histrionic powers, or look upon anything she said or did either as comic or burlesque; and when she had concluded, placing his hand upon his heart, said, "Whenever you find me guilty of flattery, Miss Coma, then will I willingly submit to be branded as a traitor and deceiver; but as yet, I plead 'not guilty' to the charge, and contend that sentence cannot justly be passed upon me."

"Worse and worse, Monsieur Bryan," said Coma, attempting to conceal her blushes under a merry voice and gay badi-nage; "for, after what you have just said, I consider this last speech of yours the grossest flattery. Down upon your knees,

fair sir, and let's hear what you have to say why sentence shall not be rendered at once."

"And now, Coma—let me call you by that endearing title," murmured the lover, dropping upon his knees at her laughing command, and speaking in a low, agitated voice—"as I am arraigned before you, and you are my judge, listen to me kindly for a moment, and if you think me rash and presumptuous, have mercy, and ascribe all to my love; for even here now, as I kneel before you at your own command, and gaze upon that fair face of yours that I may lose by my rashness forever, I cannot restrain my bursting heart, but must say that I love you!"

The fair judge could not be unkind to so eloquent a pleader, and could not look coldly upon the beaming face of the gallant youth bending so gracefully at her feet; but, whilst blushing roses, and with one tiny hand vainly striving to still her throbbing heart, she extended the other to Bryan, murmuring, "You are forgiven; your judge is a partial one; and the love you bear me is——"

"Returned!" exclaimed Bryan, folding her yielding form in his arms. "Bless you, Coma, for now I will ever call you by that sweet name. Your decision has made me the happiest of mortals! But, oh! had it been against me, would I not have been the most wretched of men!"

"Take care," said Coma, smiling amid her tears; "remember I have not yet decided as to your first offence; and if you are not more careful, sentence may yet go against you."

"You may do with me as you please now, dear Coma; call me traitor, deceiver, flatterer, or anything else, so that you believe me always true to you, and never reverse the decision you have now given, making me so supremely happy."

"O, you are incorrigible!" murmured Coma, looking kindly up into the eyes of her lover, "and to make you easy on that score, now that I am yours, I might as well tell you at once, so that you may not be too vain of your eloquence, that the decision I have just given was rendered last night, before you

were summoned to the dread tribunal, and before you had so feelingly pleaded your prejudged cause."

"How so, dear Coma? My heart has long been yours; but, oh! had I known last night that you had one thought of returning my burning love, it would have saved me many, very many fears and doubts. But tell me, dear, how last night, rather than any other time, did you discover that this precious boon, so coveted and sought by me, was already mine."

Sitting upon the moss-covered seat to which her lover had led her, close to the overhanging bank of the bright Yadkin, Coma gave an artless account of the occurrence of the night previous, showing that, by Montlack pressing his suit, and drawing the distinction between love and cousinly affection, she herself had been led to think, and had discovered that her heart belonged to another.

"And think you," said Bryan, by no means satisfied with Montlack's admiration of Coma, for he was already a victim of the green-eyed monster, "that this cousin of yours will surrender up your hand without a struggle? I fear he has the good-will of your father, and, having it, he will yet strive to tear from my grasp the rich prize I have wooed and won."

"Fear not for my heart and my love, Bryan, for they are yours, and yours only," murmured Coma, confidently; "and as for Cousin Jean, he has ever been kind and good, and I doubt not, when he discovers that the happiness of his little Coma, as he calls me, is at stake, that he will submit, and submit bravely to his loss, if he considers my poor hand worthy of a thought; and, moreover, for my sake will love you almost as much as I do."

"And your father," muttered the lover, still desponding, "will he so readily give up his long-cherished plan of continuing his name and estate in the family by uniting yourself and cousin?"

"Ah, my father!" sighed Coma, almost as desponding as Bryan, whilst her face, but a moment since blooming with blushes, lost all its roses; "in my joy I had forgotten him.

But he loves me," she continued, after a minute of agitated thought, "and he loves his ancient name, too, as much if not more than his Coma; and I fear we shall meet with opposition from him. If, perchance, his promise has been given to Jean, then will all hope of his consent to our union be desperate. He is proud of his name, very proud, Bryan; and the thought of my marriage is the principal care of his life. But why fear or tremble?" she added in a more confident tone, looking proudly upon the elegant person of her lover, "for I am sure you are worthy to bear the honors of the proudest family that ever bore banner under the lilies of France, and can boast, perhaps, of ancestors as noble as our own."

"I am an orphan, Coma," said Bryan, sadly but proudly, "and know nothing of my ancestry beyond my father."

"Sure he was noble and good."

"A colonel in the American army; he was killed at Guilford, battling gloriously for liberty; and for honor, bravery, and patriotism," said the son feelingly, "I will acknowledge no man, I care not how ancient his name or family, his superior. The memory of his glorious death is the only legacy he was able to leave his orphan son, and I treasure it more than if he had transmitted me boundless wealth."

"And I, too!" exclaimed Coma, a tear of sympathy dancing in her bright eye. "The proudest of the proud, Bryan, cannot boast of ancestors more noble than thine; and I feel that my father, proud though he be, will feel honored to grasp by the hand the son of one of his old companions in arms."

"But I am poor, very poor," said Bryan, still desponding, though greatly cheered by the rich encomium lavished upon the memory of his dead father by the sympathizing Coma.

"Poverty is not considered by my father," replied Coma, encouragingly. "Remember that Montlack has no estate, and yet my father seemed pleased with his attention to me."

"True!" exclaimed Bryan, his face once more brightening, and speaking now in a cheerful, hopeful voice; "and if it was, you know, Coma, that we are both young; and with such a

prize held up before me, I could soon hew out a fortune in the rich valleys of the West, and come back to lay it at your feet, and claim you as my own. Even now I have some thousand dollars, the remnant of my father's estate after furnishing me with an education; and no later than last night, Sergeant Duffe, my foster-father, and Sharp-Eye, an old follower of my father and experienced borderer, but lately returned from Kentucky, were pressing me to go with them West; and I only delayed my answer until I had had this meeting with you."

"If you love me, Bryan!" exclaimed Coma, with frightened earnestness, the rich blood deserting her countenance, and flowing back upon her trembling heart, "do not think of going to that horrid land! Why, it is already called the 'Dark and Bloody Ground,' and not without reason, for we hear of nothing from there but of blood, and massacre, and Indian depredations! Oh! if you should only go there, then would I put on my widow weeds at once, and mourn you as dead, for I would never expect to see you again, and would ever remain in agony and doubt."

"Calm your fears, dear Coma," murmured the lover, caressing tenderly the weeping girl by his side; "the daughter of a soldier and son of one should not tremble at danger, or grow alarmed at imaginary perils. Sharp-Eye praises the country as the most lovely one on earth, and speaks of fortunes to be made there without trouble or labor, and of the Indian depredations as only frequent enough to keep up a proper spirit of chivalry."

"But promise me, Bryan," said Coma, soothed by his caresses and cheering words, "that you will not go West until you have seen my father, and heard from his own lips our fate."

"Most willingly; for I intend soon to lay my claim to your hand before your father. I would know my doom at once, be it to make me the happiest or most miserable of mortals."

"Fear not, Bryan," murmured Coma, with a cheerful smile of assurance, "for I am confident that wealth is no object with

my father, and that the honorable station and noble death of your parent"——

"Will be of d—n little avail in this case," muttered a hoarse voice from underneath the overhanging bank upon which they were sitting, interrupting her in the very midst of her hopeful anticipations.

A low scream of terror from Coma followed this unexpected and, in her mind, ominous interruption; but Bryan, gently removing the hand that in alarm had seized upon his arm, dashed forward to the extreme verge of the bank, but only in time to see the burly form of the eavesdropper as he rounded a point some distance down the river.

His first thought was to pursue the bold spy; but noticing the extreme terror of Coma, he gave up this design and returned to her side, attempting to calm her agitation by laughingly saying that it was some passing fisherman who had fallen upon this plan to let them know they had a listener.

But Coma had been too much alarmed by this inauspicious interruption of her hopeful imaginings, seemingly in answer to her own thoughts, to be thus soothed. She insisted upon returning home at once, and the lover, after receiving her promise to meet him again, escorted her beyond all fear of danger, and took his leave.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTAIN JEAN had spent a miserable day. In vain had been all his endeavors to discover the name and abode (for he was confident he had one) of his rival. Although he had ridden over to H——, and in a quiet way made many inquiries, he had as yet met with but poor success; so much so that he began to grow encouraged, and thought that perhaps he had

been too hasty in his suspicions, and, after all, that Coma's coldness was nothing more than a maidenly whim. Consoled no little by this conclusion, the sage captain was now on his return home, and with his mind fully made up to press his suit vigorously, and know, without delay, the position he held in the heart of his cousin. He was fully determined on one thing, and that was not to give up without a desperate struggle his brilliant scheme of transferring the immense estate of De Lacy to himself; and now, as he rode leisurely along the bank of the Yadkin, filled with this pleasant fancy, he ever and anon would stop, and, with a smile of secret satisfaction, survey the broad lands stretching out around him, imagining them, no doubt, as already his own, and along with them the pretty person of his beautiful cousin. As if cheered by his imaginary honors and wealth, the captain touched his horse lightly, and, galloping forward, forgot, for the time, his jealous fears and troubles, whilst he hummed, with artistic skill, a sprightly French air.

But suddenly the pleasant reveries of Captain Jean were interrupted by a low, meaning hiss, and turning his head quickly to know the cause of challenge, he found himself, and apparently to his no small surprise, confronted by the burly form of the spy, the same that had watched at the house of Duffe, and, concealed under the overhanging bank of the Yadkin, had listened to and interrupted the conversation of the lovers.

"*Sacré!*" exclaimed Montlack, drawing in his horse with a sudden jerk, and with evident marks of trepidation about his face, "Is that you, Girty? Why, I thought the devil had you long ago!"

"May-be you only hoped so?" muttered the renegade with a meaning laugh.

"But what brought you back into this neighborhood, Girty?"

"Call me Brant, for the present," said Girty in a surly tone, although with an evident attempt at pleasantry, "for there is one about here, if he does not know my face, has heard the name of Simon Girty very often of late years, and not always



SIMON GIRTY.

mentioned in the most honorable manner. As for the devil having me, Captain Jean," he added, with a harsh chuckle, "he has had many pretty fair chances of calling me his own; but thanks to my good luck, as yet I have slipped through his fingers, and am here now, as you see, and without any ghostly signs about me, standing in the presence of your honor."

With this speech, Girty, or Brant, raising his ragged, weather-beaten hat, with a grim, insolent smile, made a low, half mocking bow to the captain.

Montlack's countenance showed very plainly that he was by no means delighted at this renewal of acquaintance with the renegade; but putting on a bold front, he exclaimed, "Hollo, Simon! that rascally countenance of yours does not add much to the beauty of the landscape, and if I am not greatly mistaken, there was once a contract between us (and for a valuable consideration, which you have received) that I should never again be troubled with your honest company?"

"With Mr. Girty, it is true, there was some such contract," replied the renegade with a sneer; "but you must remember, captain, that you are now honored with the presence of Mr. Joseph Brant, quite a different person altogether, a poor, hard-working fisherman, but a very honest, respectable man, and one that can boast many heavy scars received in the defence of his country."

As Mr. Brant made this defence of his respectability, and proved in so conclusive a manner the difference between the party referred to by Montlack and himself, he once more raised his ragged hat, and, stepping a few paces nearer the captain, pointed significantly to a broad scar across his face, saying, "This will go a long way, captain, in making an honest face of one that you have heretofore been in the habit of considering quite the contrary. Eh! do you take?"

"True," said Montlack with more ease, now that he had caught the drift of the outlaw's remark, and felt the improbability of his being recognized as Simon Girty, "that scar does make a change in the outlines of your lovely face; and

now that I examine it more closely, I can see that the sun has been looking down very freely upon your fair countenance since last we met, and has given it rather a more dusky hue. I ask pardon, Mr. Brant," he continued, with a forced laugh, dismounting from his horse, and extending his hand to the renegade, "for taking you for my old friend Simon Girty."

"Good!" replied the outlaw, with a coarse laugh and oath, grasping the extended hand of Montlack. "I find, captain, you can take a hint as readily as ever. But sit down and let's have a little chat about old times."

At first, Montlack had been somewhat startled, and no little annoyed at the unexpected appearance of the outlaw, for on account of Girty's knowledge of certain events that the captain would fain have buried, the latter, at the expense of a large sum, had purchased the departure of that worthy from the country, and as several years had elapsed since this contract, he had hoped that he was forever clear of him. But now that Girty had again turned up, the captain considered it most politic not to show any great uneasiness or anger, and indeed began to think that the meeting, after all, was rather opportune than otherwise; for, in his present difficulties, he, the captain, might need the services of so ready and unscrupulous an ally. Without more ado, then, the cunning Jean, all traces of vexation having vanished from his face, at once obeyed the outlaw's request to be seated, good-humoredly remarking: "Never mind the past, Monsieur Brant; we have had enough of it; and so let it, along with all our ancient troubles and rascalities, go to the devil. From report, Simon—I ask pardon, Mr. Brant—I was led to believe that you were a great chief among the redskins; but suppose, from your appearance here to-day, that this report, like most rumors, was false, and that you are the same reckless, careless devil that you ever were, always wanting money, and never having a cent. Eh, Simon!" continued the captain inquiringly, and with some little alarm, for he had been a sufferer, "is it money that you are after now? or what has brought you back into this, for you, most dangerous country?"

"Not more dangerous than the one I have left," said the outlaw, dryly; "but you were not so far wrong, after all, about my being a leader of the redskins; nor were you so vastly mistaken," he added, with a cunning leer at Montlack, "about my being in want of money; but it was not the want of money alone that induced me to make this dangerous journey."

"Then what was it?" asked the captain, not in the most pleasant mood, for he had lost his good-humor under the now certain belief that Girty intended to make another draw upon his purse, and that too upon a past consideration, already, as he thought, most amply satisfied.

"What would you think," replied Brant, "if I were to say that it was a desire to see my old home and the familiar scenes of my youth?"

"I would think it a d—d lie!" retorted the captain, surlily.

"Yet it is so," replied the renegade gloomily; "I am a dark-souled villain, I admit—steeped in every crime of the blackest dye; and have stooped to the lowest and darkest of sins to satisfy my longing after gold, or glut my ever-burning and ever-increasing desire for revenge upon my race. Still, captain, notwithstanding your sneer, with all my crimes and all my sins, though a chieftain of the bloodthirsty savage, and covered with the warm gore of the white settler of the West, I have had my hour of remorse, and my moments, too, of ardent longing to behold the home of my innocent youth, and mingle once more with those of my own color and tongue. It is the only pleasant memory I have," continued Girty, with some show of emotion, "the memory of my innocent childhood—when, with father, and mother, and brother, I sported in these very woods, and fished in the bright waters of yonder shining river! Although you believe it not, captain, and are now laughing in your sleeve at the very thought of my having any feeling in common with other men, I tell you that this same memory of the past, and longing to see my home, more than

any desire or hope of gain, has induced me to make this perilous journey."

"I see no reason to doubt your word," said Montlack, half mockingly; "but, from my past intercourse with you, I had thought you were not much troubled with love for the white race."

"Nor am I," growled the outlaw between his clenched teeth. "Did not one of my accursed race, that stern Colonel Head, have me publicly whipped, in full view of my regiment, for a theft, of which I was guilty only under the influence of liquor? But I had my revenge! And did not that blood-thirsty band of wild partisans murder my father and brothers, even down there, in that very cottage, where I am now hiding my disgraced head? Ay! ay! they did it, captain; but Simon Girty has had his revenge, if not upon the guilty, upon their accursed race."

"Surely, Simon," said Montlack, shuddering at the fiendish scowl upon the countenance of his companion, "you are not staying in that deserted cottage where your kindred were slain?"

"Why not?" asked the outlaw coldly. "Can I not fold myself in my blanket, and fancy them all there, as they used to be, and have the pleasure of fancying myself back home again with my kindred? And when my mood changes, can I not behold again their gory, bullet-pierced bodies, and dream of sweet and terrible revenge? Oh ho! captain," laughed the dark-browed murderer, with hellish glee, "you don't know the luxury of one night's sleep in that ruined cottage! I have strange fancies and curious dreams as I lay there, all alone, by the desolate hearth-stone of my father! But that's neither here nor there," added Girty, his mood and tone changing suddenly; "and you have no interest in it; so we will pass on to something that, I doubt not, will excite your honor's attention."

"What is it?" said the captain, and, his mind still running upon the expected demand of the renegade for money, he

added, "Do you want more money, notwithstanding your contract to let me alone and leave the country forever?"

"I want money; that's it, captain," replied the outlaw, smiling at Montlack's quick divination of his wishes; "but, remember, I am no longer Simon Girty, but Joseph Brant, and will, therefore, release now and forever all claims for past services, making my demands only in proportion to services now rendered, and to be rendered."

"That's fair!" exclaimed Montlack, at once regaining his good-humor, "and here's my hand on all future contracts."

"Have I not always dealt fairly with you?" said the renegade, sulkily.

"I must say, Simon, that I have never found you otherwise; though, to tell the truth, I feared a little, just now, that you were going to press me on the old score."

His first fears removed by the generous proposal of the renegade to drop all claims for past services, the captain's mind reverted at once to the subject of his thoughts when interrupted by the "hist" of Girty, and, without thinking of the advantage he would give his shrewd companion by thus showing his interest in the matter of inquiry, he exclaimed:—

"Come, Girty! tell me what's on hand, now? Is it anything respecting the daughter of General De Lacy?"

"Exactly!" said Brant (for we will call him by this name, for the present), a radiant smile gleaming across his swart countenance, for he saw, and seized at once upon the advantage given him by the captain's impetuosity, "and a good deal, too, more than you think, provided my pay is in proportion to the value of my information."

"Let's have it, then," said Montlack, eagerly; "for you know I am a good paymaster."

"Better than those we had during the Revolution, when you can't help yourself!" growled the outlaw. "But we must come to some understanding, captain, before you get one word from me."

"How much do you demand?" inquired Montlack, endea-

voring to put on a careless look, and thus, if possible, do away with the advantage he had given his cunning companion; "I only feel interested about this cousin of mine, you know, on account of my uncle, who is anxious to save her from any unequal match."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Brant, "it won't do, captain! I'm too cunning for any such a trick as that! I tell you that you will have to come down on the heavy figures, or this cousin of yours, in whom you take so little interest, may marry the devil, for aught I care."

"Then, in the devil's name," exclaimed the irritated captain, finding that he was fairly caught, "let me hear what you demand!"

"In the name of the devil, then, as you will lug him into our agreement," said Brant, with a laugh, "I ask for, and in consideration of my information, \$500, and not one cent less will I take, and would not receive even that amount, if I could not, at the same time, revenge myself."

"Ten thousand furies! Simon, you must be mad, stark, raving mad!" exclaimed Montlack, "or you would never think of such a sum as that! I can't think of paying any such a price for a little trifling information about the maudlin love of a puling child!"

"Mad or not," growled Brant, "that is the very lowest cent I will take; and if you don't see proper to give it, then there's no harm done, and we might as well part company at once. But you will rue your mistimed economy, captain; for this determination of yours will lose you the amount demanded a hundredfold over."

"Then out with it," snarled Montlack; "for, if I must, I must, and the sooner you tell me all you know, the better. But, remember, Mr. Simon, I'll have no trifling; for, if I pay you well, I must get value received."

"So be it," said Brant, carelessly; "I know the importance of my information, and, for this reason, have claimed the

reward you are pleased to consider so exorbitant. Do you remember Colonel Head, captain?"

"D—n Colonel Head!" shouted Montlack, in a furious tone, at this inquiry of the renegade; "let bygones be bygones, and don't be troubling me with these old matters. You have been paid for them."

"You recollect, captain," continued the outlaw, with provoking coolness, "how you used to carry on a nice little correspondence with the English general in the name of our colonel, and the lots of good English gold we received in return; and how, after that disgraceful punishment of mine, I managed to let one of your sweet epistles fall into the hands of General Greene; and how my brave colonel was, if not disgraced, very greatly suspected, and, to save his honor, committed suicide, by rushing madly upon the bayonets of the enemy at Guilford Court-House? Eh! captain, you hav'n't forgotten it?"

During this provoking retrospect of the renegade, the captain stood trembling with rage, and, when he had finished, no longer able to restrain his anger, exclaimed:—

"H—ll and fury, Simon! you are pushing your impudence beyond endurance. What has all this rigmarole concerning Colonel Head to do with my cousin Coma, and the matter now on hand?"

"A good deal, as you will soon learn," replied Brant, with annoying calmness.

Montlack made a gesture of impatience, and the outlaw added—

"A son of that same Colonel Head is in love with your fair cousin."

"Damnation!" hissed the captain.

"And what is still better," growled Brant, enjoying his evident discomfiture, "your cousin is in love with him."

Montlack stared with amazement.

"And what is better still," added Brant, with marked emphasis, "they have plighted to each other their vows of love."

Montlack made no reply, merely motioning him to go on.

"And what is a great-deal better," laughed Brant, with fiendish glee, "this sweet cousin of yours told her lover that she knew her kind cousin Jean was in love with her, but that he was a good, clever fellow, and when he discovered that her happiness was at stake—remember that, captain—that he would resign all claim to her hand, and aid them, like a dear, kind soul that he was, in gaining the consent of her father! Ha! ha! how like you that, my dear captain?"

"*Sacré!* You will run me mad," howled the outraged captain, clasping his brow in agony, and dancing around in the excess of his fury.

"Come, captain, don't be in a pet," urged the renegade, badgeringly. "Just walk up, like a good, kind cousin that you are, and say: 'My much loved and much esteemed uncle, the happiness of dear Coma is at stake; don't hesitate a moment, but give her over at once to this agreeable Mr. Head, and along with her just transfer her these broad lands, for he has noble blood, and is directly descended (don't forget that) from the honorable and unimpeachable Colonel Head, so unjustly suspected of being a spy.'"

"The \$500 is yours, Simon," said Montlack, the cloud rolling back from his cunning countenance; "and I thank you for that hint respecting the *noble* colonel, for with the general his being the son of Head is enough, and more than enough, of itself to play the devil with this young fellow and his high-wrought hopes. But come, Simon, my fury needs no encouragement; so out with how you obtained all this information, and then, if you will aid me in taking my revenge, and in putting a stop to the romantic love of these young fools, I will make the \$500 a \$1000."

"Just what I expected," said Brant; and then, without delay, he gave the astonished captain a minute account of all that he had overheard at the house of Duffe, and under the bank of the river, not forgetting, in the conclusion of his narrative, poor Coma's eulogy of Montlack, and her expressed hope

that he would become the friend of her lover, and aid them to overcome the opposition of her father.

"O yes!" grinned the furious captain, "I will be his very dear friend, and aid him in his suit with a vengeance. This cousin of mine was not mistaken in her estimation of my heart. Eh, Simon?"

The renegade laughed, adding, with a sneer—

"To be sure you will; for I was thinking myself, while listening to their pleasant arrangements to strip you of your uncle's estate, how much you would be delighted, and how well your cousin knew Captain Jean Montlack. But, joking aside, what are you going to do?"

"I hav'n't made up my mind yet," said Montlack, doubtfully; "but suppose the best thing I can do will be to inform the general at once of the name and family of his intended son-in-law."

"Not at all," replied Brant, "for I've been thinking over this matter, and came to the conclusion that it would be fine fun for you to humor them awhile, and pretend that you are the kind, good cousin they believe you; and then, when they suppose everything arranged, just give the old general a sly inkling of the honorable parentage of this fine youth, and have him kicked out of doors, or dragged in the horsepond, for his presumption."

"Good!" exclaimed Montlack, with undisguised satisfaction. "Can you give me any further advice, my dear Mentor?"

"Of course I can," said the renegade, in the same pleasant vein; "for I hav'n't thought over this matter for nothing, and think I know a fine plan to settle this good youth for some time to come."

"Let's have it. I know in advance that it will do, for you were always good at scheming, Simon."

"Suppose, then, that, during these loving days, when you are playing the kind cousin, you manage to borrow from this open-hearted, unsuspecting lover—no very difficult business, I should think—a thousand dollars; and then, when the general

has driven him away in disgrace, this sweet youth, the son of my old enemy, will have the additional comfort of knowing that he has not only lost his sweetheart, but for a time his money, and is a beggar; for I heard him say that this sum and the proud name of his father," added the renegade, with a mocking laugh, "was his only heritage."

"Better and better," responded the cunning captain, catching at once his companion's fiendish plan. "But when he receives his dismissal, and calls on me for payment," he added, looking inquiringly into the eyes of Brant, "what then?"

"O," replied the outlaw, with a devilish and knowing leer at Montlack, "we can manage that. I guessed it wouldn't be convenient for you to pay over, for I intend to take this thousand myself, and have arranged it, therefore, that you shall never suffer."

"But how, my wise Simon? Have you learned some Indian trick to avoid the payment of a just debt? for, if you have, I will add another thousand for the grand discovery, and make my own fortune by retailing out to needy debtors this glorious panacea for all their troubles."

"What say you to serving him somewhat in the manner we did his father? Just deny the obligation, and charge him with forgery. I think it would work admirably," laughed Brant; "for you can change your signature when, with honest zeal, you force him to receive your written bond, all business-like, you know; and it will be devilish strange if, with your standing in society, backed by my evidence if necessary, we cannot brand the simpleton with forgery; and then, if he will not peaceably give up the hand of Miss Coma, you can save yourself all further trouble, so far as he is concerned, by delivering him over into the power of the law. Eh, captain? Here's a dodge worth a thousand— isn't it?"

"I believe it will answer," said Montlack, musingly. "Yes, I know it will," he added, in a more satisfied tone, after a moment of thought; "and I can in this way not only save myself from all interruption on his part, but, what is still better, in a

case like this, forever damn him in the estimation of Coma herself."

"Of course," replied Brant, positively. "And remember, captain," he added, encouragingly, "you are working for a noble stake, for the hand of your lovely cousin is worthy of the struggle, without counting her broad acres."

"May the devil take me if I don't try it!" exclaimed Montlack, springing to his feet; "and if we succeed, Simon, the thousand dollars borrowed from him shall be yours."

"It's a bargain," replied the renegade; "and I am as sure of that thousand as if I had it here now in my pocket."

"*Bon soir, Monsieur Brant!*" exclaimed Montlack, mounting his horse. "I must away, now, to gather up my wits for the struggle. I suppose, when I need your services, I will always find you at the old cottage?"

"Exactly, and always alone; for the good people hereabouts are too much afraid of ghosts ever to visit my tumbledown retreat. But remember, captain, Simon Girty is never at home, and you must inquire for Mr. Brant, for he will answer just as well."

"Never fear; I won't forget," returned Montlack, putting spurs to his horse, and galloping away.

The renegade did not remain long behind; but, after watching the captain until he was out of sight, turned off from the road, and walked slowly away in the direction of the deserted cottage.

He had scarcely gone a minute when Sharp-Eye, raising his person from behind a rock not more than a hundred paces distant, muttered to himself, as he followed with his eye the retreating form of Girty:—

"Well, blast my eyes if I wouldn't give a hundred beaver-skins to know what them ar' two scoundrels wer' talkin' about! Cuss that feller with the bushy red head and big scar; I'm always thinkin' as how I knows him, but can't never 'zactly make him out. But never mind," he continued, shaking his head wisely; "I've trailed that ar' rascal from the

corner of the Sargeant's house to that rum old cabin down by the river; and blame me if I don't find him out yet, and the cause of all this spyin', and eavesdroppin', and powwowin', or my name ain't Sharp-Eye. And this 'ere smooth-tongue captain, he's worse than a lyin' Mingo, for I know'd him of old; and blast me if I ever know'd any good of him! He's one of them parley-vooin' Frenchmen, and drat me if I ever thought much of any of them, nobow, though they did come over and help us fight the Britishers! We could have jist walloped the redcoats anyhow, and without them Frenchmen; and I'm darned sorry the frog-eating devils ever had any hand in the scrimmage! I wouldn't be surprised now, since this 'tarnal captain has a finger in the pie, if Mr. Bryan and that ar' pretty gal of the squire's hadn't somethin' to do with this 'ere big talk. But never mind, Mr. Parley-voo and Mr. Red-head, you sha'n't have it all your own way. Sharp-Eye is on the trail; and it will be darnation strange if we don't smell 'em out yet—won't it, Bang?"

Bang, as if conscious of being in a dangerous neighborhood, gave his assent, with a low growl, to this query of the Scout; and soon after, master and dog, moving off in an opposite course to that taken by the renegade, were alike *lost in the woods*.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL DE LACY, the captain, and Coma were again in the parlor of the former. It was night—the night following the meeting of Montlack and Girty.

The party were occupied in very much the same manner as when first introduced to the reader, save that Montlack, for the last half hour, had sat alone by a window, busy with his

own treacherous thoughts; arranging and marshalling his dark legions to attack and deceive the guileless and artless heart of his unsuspecting cousin.

The wicked and false frequently deceive and victimize the truthful and good: but it is not so easy a contest as one would imagine; and frequently, very frequently, the artless, without intending it, overthrow the most skilful plans of the artful; leaving them like a general who, in attempting to surprise his opponent, is himself, without understanding exactly how, surprised and defeated.

Montlack had mingled much with the world, both the good and the bad of it, was a skilful reader of the heart, and well knew how to manage it to meet his own purposes; but with all his wicked cunning and daring, he was at loss now how to attack the pure heart of the maiden before him, so as to bend it to his own designs, and, at the same time, conceal his treacherous intentions. The way of the wicked is always hard, and the web of the false and traitorous ever liable to be broken; Montlack felt, that it was so, but nerved himself for the contest. He was aware of the difficulty of his present position; knowing that he must be cunning and artful indeed so to deceive Coma as to work out his plan of destroying her love and the character of her lover, and yet remain in her eyes the same good and kind friend she imagined him.

But he had determined upon the effort; and now, like a skilful tactician, drew his chair to her side, murmuring, in a low tone, "There was a time once, Coma, when you concealed nothing from your cousin Jean, but laid open to him your heart, and ever had in him a sympathizing friend. Have you discovered him less sympathizing of late, or less worthy of your confidence?"

The captain's voice was low and melancholy, and he spoke with such a tone of sorrow, and was apparently so deeply wounded at the very thought of having lost her confidence, that Coma, affected, replied quickly, and with evident emotion, "You deceive yourself, dear Jean, indeed you do; for I

have as much confidence in your kindness and affection now as I ever did; and if I have said or done anything to wound your feelings, you must forgive me, for it was not so intended."

"Then, why conceal from me the cause of your recent abstraction, and, I might add, coldness towards myself?"

Coma blushed, but made no reply.

"You well know, dear Coma," continued Montlack, apparently not noticing her confusion, "my deep affection, and, as I hinted last night, ardent love for you. But don't start; for you need not fear my recurring to that painful subject again. It was a bitter struggle, Coma, to feel that I had loved, loved so long—but loved in vain; and that that heart I had so long coveted, and hoped to call my own, was never to be mine, but was already given to another. But I knew at once, from your blushes and change of manner, that it was so; and determined, though it might break my own heart, that I would suffer in silence, and never bring a care upon your brow by pressing my unreciprocated love. Yet, Coma, although this has been one of the sorest trials of my life, how my heart bled to-day, when I accidentally discovered that you had not only given your love to another, for which I could not blame you, but had concealed it from me—thus proving that you had lost all confidence and trust in a heart that would willingly give its last drop of blood to insure your happiness! Was this like you, Coma? And was it right?—was it not cruel in you thus to treat an old friend and cousin?"

"Forgive me, Jean, that I ever hesitated to tell you all!" exclaimed the deceived girl, while tears of compassion and admiration rolled down her blushing cheeks. "You were ever good, and noble, and without deceit, Jean; and I know you will believe me when I say that it was not from want of confidence that I remained silent. Remember my maiden modesty, and I am satisfied you will forgive me."

"I believe you, Coma; for there is neither sin nor deceit in your pure heart; and I love you too well not to forgive."

Montlack, as if to show the sincerity of the pardon granted,

took the unresisting hand of his cousin in his own; and, pressing it respectfully to his lips, added, in a more cheerful tone, "There, now, we are friends again. I have kissed your hand as did the serfs of old—a mark of my bondage; and henceforth you may count me your slave, ready to obey all your behests."

"And my first command is that you be to me, as you have ever been, my dear cousin, ready to aid me in the hour of trouble, and sympathize with me in my moments of distress."

"Try me, Coma; and you will find me ever ready and willing, and, I trust, worthy."

"As a mark, then, of my renewed trust," said Coma, blushing deeply, "we will talk of him to whom I have given my love. But, oh! Jean, if this subject be at all distasteful or wounding to your noble and generous heart, say so at once; and never, never shall one word of mine bring a pang to your magnanimous heart!"

"I have made up my mind, and schooled my heart to the sacrifice, Coma," replied Montlack, with a desperate effort smothering his rage, and assuming a sorrowful tone; "and now, if you hesitate a moment in telling me all your plans, and all your hopes, and fears, and even your love—for why should I halt at that little word, so dear to others, although so dreadful to me?—I will doubt your promised confidence in my sincerity, and have but little to sustain me in my sad trial. Coma," he continued, more cheerfully, "tell me all your plans, what you design to do, and what part you wish me to play. If I cannot be happy myself, I would make you so."

"I suppose you know his name?" asked Coma, hesitatingly, as if in doubt how much he did know.

"The honest fisherman," answered Montlack, evasively, "who overheard your conversation, and was on his way, in hopes of a reward for his news, to inform the general, when he was met by myself, only knew of your love and engagement, and was entirely ignorant of the name of your lover."

"Oh ho, Captain Jean!" laughed Coma, "in my simpli-

city I was about numbering you among the scouts or wizards of the land; but discover that you have found out my secret in a very common and simple manner; you must therefore sink in my estimation, for you have lost all your wonderful powers, and stand before me like any other of mortal mould. But I thank you for stopping this water-god, or rather fishy eaves-dropper, on his way to my father. This story, told too suddenly, and without any preparation on our part, might have raised a very uncomfortable storm about our ears."

"So I thought," said the captain, glancing at the general, who was sitting in a distant part of the room, intensely interested (as of late was usual with him) in an account of the revolutionary movements of Europe.

With many blushes and frequent hesitation, Coma, in a low voice, with ever and anon an uneasy look in the direction of her father, narrated to the captain, who listened apparently with the greatest attention, the whole history of her love, from her first meeting with Bryan to their engagement and parting on the morning previous; to all of which the treacherous Montlack lent a willing ear, and, when she had concluded, remarked:—

"I have no doubt, Coma, he is all you believe him, and, for your sake, trust he is worthy of the invaluable boon you have given him; but he must not see the general before I have seen him, or before I have prepared the way, with your father, for this meeting. He may destroy all our plans by too much haste."

"You can easily see him, Jean," replied Coma, completely deceived by the kindly interest Montlack seemed to take in the matter, and falling at once into the snare he had set for her, "by riding over to Sergeant Duffe's. I feel," continued the fair girl, proudly, "that, when you once see and know him, and learn his goodness and gentleness of heart, you will transfer to him, dear Jean, some of the affection you bear your cousin."

"No doubt! no doubt!" muttered Montlack, hastily, scarcely

concealing a sneer, for it was as much as even his hypocritical heart, as cunning and determined as it was, could now do to restrain a burst of anger; but, by a mighty effort, he did so, and with a smile as deceitful as the sunny, alluring dimple upon the cheek of a heartless coquette, he added:—

"I will go early on to-morrow; but you must prepare me a nice little billet-doux, Coma, with full powers to treat, &c.—a kind of introduction, you know, as your envoy plenipotentiary—that he may receive me with full faith and honor."

"Of course," replied Coma, with a sweet smile of thankfulness; "and I will tell him how kind and good you have been, just as I told him you would be. Shall I write it now?"

"You need not be in such haste," said the captain, rather crustily, considering his determination to keep cool and in a good humor, "for I do not expect to start out on my embassy to-night."

"*Sacré!*" exclaimed the general, throwing down his paper, and speaking in so loud a tone as to make Coma start with terror—"sacré! it makes me sick to read how our brethren are carrying on in *la belle France*. It won't do, Jean; poor France is not yet prepared for a republic; a monarchy, or a military government, will alone restore peace and order. But what think you of their efforts?"

"Their attempts will all prove abortive, and their bloody efforts at making a republic, as they call it," sneered Montlack, "will soon result in a monarchy, and then farewell forever to all these mushroom leaders you are eternally reading about. Your upstart fungi of the Reign of Terror, and of anarchy and demagoguery, will soon be kicked out of power, neck and heels, and we'll never hear again of these shining lights of republicanism."

"Bah!" retorted the general, who, notwithstanding his own private views of family, &c., always argued in favor of freedom and equality, and the rights of man, "you are in a bad humor, Jean, and determined to sneer down merit because it has struggled up from the *canaille*."

"I am heartily pleased," retorted Montlack, with a mocking smile, "that you have at length concluded to adopt the leveling notions of this republic, and, for once in your life, believe that all men are free and equal, and that merit alone makes the man."

"You are familiar with my views in relation to rank and family," replied the general, sternly, at the same time glancing somewhat uneasily at his daughter, for he never spoke of the equality of men in her presence without a condition or proviso—"and you, no doubt, feel as much as I do the necessity of keeping up the dignity of ancient names; but this should not make us opposed to a popular government, or deery merit, merely because it has sprung from an humble origin."

"O! I am becoming very democratic myself, of late," laughed the captain, with a sly glance at Coma, "and have no doubt my fair cousin will bear me out in my republican views, and growing carelessness of ancient names and titles."

Coma, in her simplicity, imagined that Montlack was kindly combating the peculiar prejudices of her father, in order to smooth the way for her lover; and, so believing, with a thankful smile and a resolute heart—though her father looked stern enough to deter many a braver soul—replied to his half-laughing sally—

"I admire a proud name and ancient family as much as any one can do; and think a long line of ancestry, made noble by worthy and honorable deeds, well deserving of our praise and estimation, and a species of guarantee that their descendants will never swerve from the upright course pursued by their fathers. Looking at it in this light, I regard family and name as estimable and admirable; but, for one, I do not consider a man made worthy alone by the bravery and honesty of his ancestors, and think that he should be judged by his own works, and not by the deeds of those long since filling an honorable grave. But I will go a step still farther," continued Coma, gaining courage, "and say that I look upon a man of refinement, and education, and bravery—although he can count a

name no farther back than his own—as well worthy of praise, and esteem, and love as the most ancient noble of my father's ancestral home."

"Tut! tut! Coma!" exclaimed her father, with a shrug of the shoulders, "you know nothing about these matters. You were born in this land—where noble blood is not so highly esteemed as it should be—and have inherited, no, not inherited, but rather absorbed, the democratic notions of those by whom you have been surrounded. You say truly, that a man should be judged by his own works, and that a descendant of an ancient family should not be esteemed merely because he has noble blood in his veins; but suppose, Coma, he has, in addition to his ancient name and lineage, all the ennobling traits you mention, is he not more worthy of esteem and love than one who has merely the noble traits without the ancient name?"

"Your argument is very plausible, dear father," replied Coma, with a smile; "but you must permit me to differ with you. I consider one struggling from obscurity, and, in spite of the humbleness of his parentage, building to himself a name—a proud one, if you please—entirely upon native worth and excellence, far more to be admired and esteemed than one who has a long list of noble ancestry to sustain, cheer, and force him on, in spite of his own natural wants, to deeds of chivalry and nobleness. The one is entitled to all the credit himself; the other to none—for, raised and nurtured to consider bravery and noble actions a part of his patent of nobility, he could scarce be otherwise than noble and brave; and with him it is more a duty than a merit."

"Why, Coma," laughed her father, "from the heat with which you defend your peculiar notions, I'm a little afraid that, in spite of all my endeavors to the contrary, you have at last lost your heart to some Adonis among our farmers or fishermen. Which is it?" he added, in a slightly ironical tone. "Am I to have a plough and reaping-hook added to my leopard

couchant, or shall it be a pole erectant, with a string pendant, and a fish to the end on't?"

Coma laughed; but, in spite of her amusement at the pleasant manner of her father, could not help blushing, and made no answer to his good-humored charge; Montlack, however, came to her rescue, exclaiming—

"I don't think, general, you will have added to your leopard couchant either a plough or fish pendant; but what say you to a broken musket, a tattered banner, and a brave cavalier lying upon a bloody field?"

"Ha! does the wind lie in that direction?" said the old man, musing.

With an eager and bright look of beaming thankfulness and intelligence, Coma met the glance of the cunning captain; and this look was not clouded, as the general, rising from his chair to retire, said—

"The brave heart and bloody battlefield have been the outset of all nobility; and he that won his spurs in the fierce combat was ever deemed as noble as the noblest! I fear no stain upon my escutcheon, Coma," he added, tenderly, to his daughter, "if to my leopard couchant you add either the broken spear or tattered banner."

The parlor of De Lacy was once more empty; but it was not cold or cheerless, for bright glowing coals still crackled upon the hearth, and it was a fit place for revelling sprites and fairies to dance their airy numbers, cheered by the happy song of the cricket from beneath the huge old hearth-stone.

The general went away contented; Coma hopeful and satisfied; and the treacherous Montlack, although burning with internal fires, confident and exulting.

Time alone will unravel the gathering woof.

CHAPTER VI.

EARLY on the ensuing morning, Montlack, armed with the loving missive of Coma, went forth in search of his rival; and he went with heart and head both fully prepared to wind his slimy coils around the lover, as he had done around his trusting cousin.

At the same time, Bryan, with bounding heart, left the humble roof of his foster-father, and went forth to meet his mistress.

Shortly after, Sharp-Eye, accompanied by Titus and Bang, followed the footsteps of Bryan, but at such a distance as not to be discovered.

"Titus," said Sharp-Eye to the black, as he pursued the fresh trail of the unconscious lover, "it strikes me Mister Bryan is gettin' himself into some trouble, and if we ain't on the look-out to lend him a helpin' hand, I rather guess he'll be wusted, and may-be lose his scalp."

"Miss Coma?" giggled the negro.

"Worsen than her! for she ain't so bad, I guess; but then thar's that frog-eatin' Frenchman!—I believe he's got nigger blood in his veins—and that ar' red-headed scoundrel I've caught crawlin' 'bout like a 'tarnal Ingen. I wouldn't be surprised," he added, with a mysterious shake of the head, "if old Betsy," looking lovingly at his rifle, "would mistake that ar' same feller for a redskin yet, and jist blaze away all the same as if I wer' squintin' along them ar' sights at a genuine Mingo. Would you, Bang?"

Bang responded with a loud bark; but no sooner had he done so than the Scout, turning gravely upon him, and looking him intently in the face, said, sternly—

"See here, Mr. Bang; I don't want any of your loud talkin', now, jist remember; if we are in this darned civilized country, we are on a trail now, and I want you to answer my questions like a sensible dog, and all the same as if we wer' upon the war-path of a scalping Shawanee; do you understand, sir?"

Bang, looking very much cast down by the reproof of his master, replied with a low growl, as if fully aware of his curish forwardness; and Simon, as if satisfied with the Christian manner of his companion's repentance, added, with an emphatic gesture—

"Then take your place; and, mind! don't let me hear a word from you until you are asked some civil question. That bark of your'n would have lost us our scalps, had we been upon the trail of a Shawanee or Wyandotte."

Like a dog when he feels he has been doing some wrong, Bang drooped his tail, and silently took the lead, followed closely by the Scout; whilst old Titus, filled with superstitious terror at this seemingly intelligible conversation between the dog and his master, brought up the rear.

About half way between the mansion of De Lacy and the farm of Duffe, and only a short distance from the haunted cottage occupied by Girty, the rivals met. A minute later, and Bang, cautiously stealing to the top of a little hillock, stopped suddenly, giving a peculiar growl; and the Scout, as if fully understanding the warning of his dog, after motioning Titus to be still, went warily forward.

"Thar they are, sure enough!" he muttered, when once by the side of Bang; "and jist as I 'spected; that dratted Frenchman shaking the hand of Mister Bryan. Why, bless us, Titus!" he added, addressing the black, that worthy having crept to his feet, "he's no more than a savage, for he can't talk nat'ral born English, like an honest man; and when he first came 'parley-vooin' about, during the wars, he wasn't as high larn't in our lingo as Bang. Ugh! jist look how he shakes Mister Bryan's hand! He 'minds me, with his grins and jimeracks, of a cussed redskin I once met with."

"How do you make out dat?" asked the black, inquiringly, for he knew some story was at the end of the Scout's tongue; and, like some people we know of, couldn't let such an occasion slip.

"Well," replied the borderer, who was just as ready to tell, as the negro was to hear a story, "it happened somewhat in this way: I wer' smellin' up the trail of a prowlin' Shawanee, and had been beatin' about on it all day, when, the first thing I know'd—bang went a rifle, and whiz went a bullet most uncommon close to my ear, for I heard it sing as it passed. It war'n't no time before I up with old Betsy, and let blaze at the dodgin' villain in return; and down he dropped all in a heap like a 'pessum in persimmon time, and away I went to see how he got along with an ounce-ball in his carcass; and what do you think the pesky devil did?"

"Me don't know, Massa Simon! 'spect he sung out for quarters," replied Titus, innocently.

"No, he didn't, neither; that ain't the way we do business out in Kaintuck; he jist thought to throw dirt in my eyes, cuss him! and poked out his hand, like that jabbering Frenchman thar—darn me if I don't believe he's got nigger blood in him!—and said, 'How de do, broder?'"

"Golly! him be broder after miss fire?" said Titus, with a grin.

"Jist so; but I wer'n't goin' to 'knowledge no sich a blamed redskin rascal; and so gin him a taste of my tomahawk, and lifted his scalp. If he wer' a brother of mine," added the Scout, with a wink, "darn me if I ever seed him before! and we wer'n't raised by the same mamma, sartain! I took a lock of his hair to 'member him by, though; and here it is, and a very nice one too!"

Titus had often before seen, and, perhaps, admired, the bloody trophies of the Scout; but, after hearing the story of his companion, and his attention being thus drawn to a particular lock, he again, for a moment, with staring eye, contemplated it; then turned his rolling orbs upon the undisturbed

countenance of its possessor, then upon old Betsy; and then, rather hurriedly (for he thought he was watched by that worthy), upon Bang; and not feeling entirely safe, or at ease, in such dangerous company, slowly edged himself away from such neighbors.

Sharp-Eye did not notice this little by-play on the part of the black, for he had turned his head away, and was once more gazing eagerly down upon Bryan and Montlack.

The two latter personages had met, and greeted each other, very much in the manner described by Simon; for Montlack, upon meeting Bryan, had guessed that he was the object of his search, and with true French grace and courtesy had made himself known, and, with the letter of Coma in his hand, had soon secured the confidence and good-will of the unsuspecting lover.

For an hour or more, the rivals sat together in earnest conversation. There could not have been two individuals more unlike than Bryan and Montlack: the one open and excited, and, by his love, impassioned—the other cool and plausible, although, from the natural vivacity of his race, he appeared vehement and impulsive; the one all truth, honor, and confidence—the other all falsehood, faithlessness, and treachery. During this time, the captain had been busily reading the character of his intended victim; and, finding the task an easy one, for there was neither coldness to remove, hypocrisy to unravel, nor worldly cunning to combat, he at length, seizing an opportune moment, with a look and voice of well-assumed sorrow and mortification, exclaimed—

“You have learned, dear Bryan—for you must allow me thus to address you, now that you have the love of my cousin, and will soon, if nothing untoward happens, be still nearer and dearer to her—that I have long been the devoted admirer of Coma. My uncle desires our union; and I had cherished a hope that the heart of my cousin was not entirely dead to my devotion; but I was deceived, for it was only cousinly affection she bore me; and since I have discovered my error, although it

was a sad blow to my golden dreams, I have determined that she shall not know or see my suffering, and I shall use all my power with her father to secure her happiness, even though that happiness doom me to a lifetime of wretchedness. For this purpose alone am I here to-day, and nothing but my great love for her and secret determination to see her happy could ever have induced me to meet my successful rival, and make the mortifying confession I have just made.”

“Generous and noble man!” exclaimed Bryan, “how can I ever repay such great magnanimity?”

“By giving me your love, and sometimes thinking, you and Coma, of her absent cousin,” said Montlack, turning away his head to conceal the smile that, in spite of every effort, would play around his mouth.

“We can never forget your noble sacrifice,” replied Bryan, seizing the hand of Montlack; “but why will you leave us?”

“I might regret the sacrifice I have made, were I to remain here, day by day, witnessing your happiness, and forever brooding over my own great loss. No, no! when I see all your hopes consummated, and behold the face of Coma beaming with joy, I must away at once to some distant land, and there pray for your continued felicity. But, alas!” he continued, covering his face with his hands, as if ashamed to acknowledge his poverty, “why do I talk so? for I am without means, and even this poor boon, of dissipating my cares and sorrows in a distant country, and amid new scenes, is denied me.”

“Not while I have a cent to share with you!” exclaimed the duped lover, with generous emotion, his heart bounding with sympathy, and his whole soul filled with admiration at what he considered the nobleness of his rival. “Here!” he continued, extending his pocket-book; “I have not much; but what I have is yours; take it all; and would that I had it in my power to make it a hundredfold greater!—for, even then, it would not express my admiration and gratitude at your unheard-of generosity and nobleness.”

“I cannot accept your noble and generous offer,” said the

captain, with assumed backwardness, at the same time gently pushing away the extended hand of Bryan. "I thank you for your kindness, but must decline receiving so large a sum from a stranger."

"A stranger!" murmured Head, in a deep and feeling tone, for he was grieved at the refusal of his offer. "Did you not, but a moment since, call me dear Bryan? and has not your kindness and the letter of Coma made us as old friends? and will you still refuse my poor gift merely because I have not known you for years? Come, you must not treat me so! You, who have given so much to me, must not, and, by Heaven! shall not, thus turn away from my humble offering!"

"I cannot!" persisted Montlack, again refusing the extended gift; "I must even await the pleasure of my good uncle; for he is generous and liberal, and, had I not been so extravagant, I would now have, from the allowance last made me, a sufficient sum to bear me back to France, where, amid the tumult of revolution and wild raging of war, I might have forgotten, for a time at least, the heavy sorrow of my disappointed heart."

"I swear to you!" exclaimed Bryan, greatly excited by the assumed tone and manner of the captain, and the continued refusal of his offer, "if you do not receive it, I will cast the yellow dross into the Yadkin; and there may it remain forever, for I will never touch it again."

"Young men are ever thoughtless and rash," said the captain, not wishing to risk the loss of the money by persisting too long in his feigned diffidence; "and rather than permit you to be guilty of so foolish an act, I will receive it—but, remember, only as a loan."

"Thank you! thank you!" exclaimed Bryan, again attempting to push the money upon his companion; but Montlack, still refusing to receive it, replied—

"Not now, or in this manner; for when I receive it, Bryan, it must be done in a business, legal way, before a witness, and you must take my bond in return."

"Have it done as you see proper, so you receive it," said Bryan; "I care not what forms you go through, for it is of little consequence; but let it be done at once, and settled, for I will not rest satisfied until you have the money in your possession."

"I see very clearly, Mr. Bryan," replied Montlack, with a laugh, for he was well pleased with the success of his scheme thus far, "that you know nothing of the use of money. I can but smile to think what a figure you would cut in the hands of some I know of. *Sacré!* what a partner you would make for some close-fisted Jew! and how it would set on fire his swine-hating heart to hear you talk thus of giving away thousands, and without so much as a bond in return!"

"Such a course might not answer with money-loving Jews," laughed Bryan; "but with gentlemen, captain, I consider bonds unnecessary."

"But I do not," said Montlack, dryly; "for who knows how long I may call this head my own, once I am well mingled in the tumults and conspiracies of Paris?—and, my head gone, where will be the tongue to acknowledge my indebtedness? No, no; my bond is not worth much just at present; but it is worth more than my word; and the thing must be done all straight and legally, or I will not take the loan. To do so, as you seem in haste—a most unusual thing with a lender of money," added Montlack, with a smile—"we will step down to the cottage below there, where, if I am not mistaken, we will find a witness, and in the person of the honest fisherman who gave me the first intelligence of your love for Coma."

"The rascal that gave us such an alarm on yesterday?" said Head.

"The same," responded Montlack, "and a very honest fellow."

"I forgive him the momentary fright he caused me," said Bryan, feelingly, "since his eavesdropping has been the cause of my introduction to one so noble and generous as I have found you."

"None of your flattery, Bryan, or I will begin to think you have some of the Frenchman about you. But come, let us finish this matter of the loan, and then you may away to see Coma, and I will go try my power upon this stiffnecked uncle of mine."

Montlack and Bryan, arm in arm, as if the oldest and dearest of friends, walked slowly away in the direction of Girty's desolate cabin, and Sharp-Eye, after following their retreating persons with his eye until they had passed out of sight, sprang to his feet, muttering, in a puzzled tone:—

"Well, blast my buttons if this don't rather beat me! But up with you, Titus; the game is off; and now that we are in for it, jist let's see it out. It will be dratted strange if we don't get at the bottom of this 'ere matter, somehow or other, before we are done with it. Won't it, Bang?"

Bang, growling his usual assent, once more took the trail; and, followed by his puzzled master and the wondering black, slowly pursued the footsteps of the retreating rivals.

That lonely cottage, with its dreary, moss-covered roof, its tumbling chimney, its glassless windows, its half-gone porch, its broken-down fences, and its weedy, briery yard, was a striking picture of gloomy desolation, and decay, and death; and no wonder the simple rustics believed it the home of ghosts and spirits, and never entered within its haunted precincts. To me, no object is more sad and chilling to the heart than a deserted house, lonely and silent, with its neglected garden and yard, its rooms garlanded with cobwebs, and the dusty floor echoing back solemnly the footstep of the intruder. I knew such a house in my boyhood, haunted, of course, for it had not been inhabited for many years; and I can well remember how my hair used to stand on end, and my heart thump audibly, when, with my playfellows, made brave by numbers, we dared to enter within its silent and ghost-tenanted walls.

But Montlack and Bryan had no such fancies upon approaching the retreat of Girty, for their thoughts were otherwise en-

gaged; and without note or remark, they stooped beneath its timeworn lintel, and entered.

"I know'd it!" exclaimed the Scout. "That big redheaded feller, with the scar, has something to do in this 'ere matter, and whar he makes his mark, Titus, you may jist look out for blood and rascality, or I'm no judge of human natur'. Down on your marrowbones, old fellow," said Simon, turning to the black, "and try your hand at skulking. Jist throw yourself behind that broken piece of fence; then make a dodge for yon tree; then another for that stump thar; and then a bold move will take you to the house. Once thar, mind, old fellow, and use your peepers, for I want to know what's going on in that dratted old graveyard."

"O massa!" ejaculated the negro, in reply to these hurried commands and instructions of the Scout, "dis old boy can't do dat; him be 'fraid of the ghosts, for dat house be haunted dis long time."

"Haunted, you old white-liver!" exclaimed Sharp-Eye. "Just do as I tell you, or cuss me if I don't lift that woolly scalp of your'n, and then we'll have the ghost of a nigger to keep company with old Girty and his crew. Blame me, if I think they wer' far wrong, after all, in killing the old rascal for a Tory, for he must have been a precious old villain ever to have such a scoundrelly son as this renegade, murdering Simon of his. Come, be brisk, Titus," added the Scout, cheerily, as he noticed the hesitation of the negro; "who knows what good you may do Mister Bryan by this little private observation? And the ghosts, you know, don't travel by daylight, for they've got eyes like owls, all them I've seen, and can't see 'cept at night. That's it! go ahead, my old brave, for I'll keep watch over this 'ere establishment, and if Mr. Redhead but shows his muzzle, like as if he intended any harm, then we'll jist blaze away, and leave him thar to keep company with the tother ghosties."

"You say de ghosts don't trabel by daylight?" inquired Titus, throwing off his coat.

"It's agin natur' for them to be out 'cept at nights," replied the Scout, with a wink of intelligence at Bang.

"Den me be off; for I ain't 'fear'd of nothin' but ghosts and de devil," was the brave reply of the black, his love for his young master, with the assurances of Kenton on the score of spirits, at last overcoming his reluctance to intrude upon haunted ground.

Following the directions of his more experienced companion, Titus was soon snugly ensconced in the rear of the old cottage, and staring in through a convenient crevice at its inmates.

It was not long before Bryan came forth from the cabin, and with a light heart and foot moved off at a rapid pace. He was so intent upon getting away that he scarce glanced at the desolate building he was leaving, and it left no impression upon his mind. His thoughts were preoccupied, and with a more pleasant subject, for he was on his way to meet Coma. A few moments after, and the captain also came forth, and, chuckling to himself as he crossed the threshold, moved out through the weed-covered yard, pursuing, at a slow, deliberate pace, the same path taken by his deceived rival. Titus did not remain long behind, but, after a rapid and intense scrutiny of the dark visage of the ruffian left alone in the cabin, crept noiselessly away, and rejoined the impatient Scout.

"By golly! Massa Simon," he exclaimed, with a puzzled look, as soon as he got in speaking distance of Kenton, "dis is not de first time dis boy eber saw dat feller down dar in de cabin."

"Very like," muttered Sharp-Eye. "I thought the same the first time I saw him. But who the devil is he, Titus?"

"Dar you be too hard for me, Massa Simon," replied the black, scratching his head, as if to stir up his memory, and bring back the features of the scarred and disguised Girty.

"Well, blast him! let him pass," put in the Scout, impatient at the negro's delay. "We'll find him out soon enough. But tell me, Titus, what wer' going on down thar?"

"When dis child seed dem fust," replied Titus, assuming an air of importance that would have been vastly amusing to

the borderer at any other time; "dat is, Massa Simon, when I fust clapped my wisionaries on Massa Bryan, de captain, and dat tother feller—drat his red head," he added, parenthetically, "I knows him, but can't 'zactly call his name—de captain wer' scribing on a piece of paper, and den he got up, and dat big feller just sot down and put his fist to de paper too, and den Massa Bryan took it up and put it in his pocket, sort of careless-like, as if he wer'n't consarned much about it, and, pushin' a pocket-book to de captain, walked out; and dat wer' de last I seed of him."

"What then?" asked Sharp-Eye.

"De captain and Redhead—I golly! I knows him—jist give a laugh when Massa Bryan wer' gone, not like when you or Massa Duffie laugh, but a kind of laugh dat covered a feller all over wid chills, and den dey fell to countin' de money in de book; and I tell you now, Massa Simon, dar was a lot of it, and none of dem old continentals we wer' used to hab in de war, but real yaller gold, and nice bills, 'nuff to make your mouth water."

"Never mind; what did they do then?" said Simon, impatiently, for he was annoyed by the negro's garrulity, and wished to know all at once.

"When dey had counted it over and over, to see wedder him be all right, I s'pose, de captain jist pushed it all to Redhead, sayin', 'That's your'n.'"

"Did he call no name?" asked the Scout, with a puzzled look.

"De captain called Redhead Mr. Brant—if dis indiividual am not mistaken; but him's name am not dat, and I'll swar it—and told him, when he gib him all de money, dat him mout go as soon as conwenient, for he wouldn't need him any more, and him mout spile all by stayin' in de neighborhood. Dem wer' de captain's very words."

"And what did Redhead say?" asked Sharp-Eye.

"Him jist put de money in him's pocket, and laughed one of dem same kind of laughs; and de captain telling him, now

dat he had de money, him better be off at once, took up his hat and left."

"What then?"

"Gorrer-mighty! de big feller jist laughed agin; and, slapping him's d—d pocket, showed him's teeth, and, I golly! dis child's wision wer' obflusticated; him felt his wool riz, and his gizzard go pit and pat; and 'spect him didn't wait to see any more, for he 'blike dat feller de debil, and no mistake."

Sharp-Eye gave a muttered "Humph!" to this satanic conclusion of the negro's story, but made no farther inquiry. Shouldering his rifle, he looked with a longing eye towards the cabin, as if undetermined, but half inclined to pay its occupant a visit; but, changing his mind, he muttered, in a dissatisfied tone—

"No, no! it won't do. If I wer' only out in Kaintuck, I'd rouse him in his den; but, in this 'ere civilized country, I reckon they wouldn't think it perlite, and maybe Mister Bryan mightn't like it."

As if totally at a loss what to do or think, the Scout stood a moment longer, looking vacantly around; then, as if struck with some new thought, for his countenance brightened up, he hurried away at a rapid pace, followed by his companions; nor did he halt or speak a word until he had reached the premises of Duffe, when, beckoning that worthy with his hand, the two retired to a secret place; and, from the length of their conversation, must have held a long council of war.

The result of their grave deliberation was not made known either to Bang, Titus, or the world; and so we will have to leave it to time, that most ancient and successful of grandames, to discover, and a safe delivery make of the offspring of that portentous confab.

CHAPTER VII.

As we have made up our mind, in the language of the law, to stick closely to the record, and never wander *in pais*, we will not now stop to consume your valuable time (O Jupiter!) with a description of the general when he learned from Montlack the love of Coma, and her engagement; or of the blushing daughter when called into the presence of her angry father, to hear his matter-of-fact, and, we have no doubt, very uninteresting discourse concerning filial duties, obedience, and many other very proper subjects of discussion on any other occasion than when love is concerned. To tell the truth, and this is a duty enjoined upon us all—although, I fear, one most woefully neglected, if we are to believe one-half we read of in novels—this thing called Love is a terrible leveller, as much so as *sans culottism* in Paris, and cares about as little for locks, or bars, or paternal commands; and, as we do not wish to have anything to do with a matter or thing governed and ruled by no fixed law, we will now, like unto some politicians we wot of, just give it the go-by, and dive, with furious zeal, into something else.

It is enough for us to say, so that you may get fully into the thread of our story, that the general, persuaded by Montlack (for the captain had his scheme to play out, wishing as yet to stand fair in the eyes of his cousin), and softened a little by the tears and entreaties of his daughter, had made up his mind, like many good fathers both before and since his time (now that he couldn't help himself), to submit with as much grace as possible, and, that he might not yield too readily, had agreed to meet his intended son-in-law; and if the latter—he was very positive on this point—could show proper creden-

tials of his standing in society, and of the respectable name of his family, not to object to him on account of his poverty.

This determination of the general fully satisfied Coma, and she went on her way rejoicing; nor did it dissatisfy Montlack, for he well knew that, in the course of the intended examination, the relationship of Bryan to Colonel Head, the suspected traitor and spy, would very naturally turn up; and that alone, the cunning captain was confident, would be a sufficient reason in itself to destroy all the hopes of the lover, and raise an ungovernable storm of opposition in the bosom of his very proud and punctilious relation.

It was early evening, and twilight was still lingering in the west, as if struggling for supremacy, or, like some young widow, loath to put on the sable robes of night, when Bryan, with fluttering heart, sat in the grand parlor of De Lacy, undergoing that most terrible of all ordeals to a young lover, his first or last meeting with an intended father-in-law.

So far, the general had been all urbanity and politeness; and, if ever a man can feel entirely easy upon such occasions, Bryan had begun to enjoy some such feeling, when the former, with some abruptness, remarked—

"You are about, Mr. Head, to become a very near relation of mine, and as you are almost an entire stranger to me, I would be gratified to learn something of your father and of his station in society; for, you must know, my dear sir, that although I put very little value upon wealth, I am somewhat particular concerning family, especially in the connection we are about forming, and place a very high estimate upon a pure and honorable genealogy."

Bryan was unconscious that any stain had ever rested upon the escutcheon of his father, and to this direct inquiry of the general, which he had been expecting, answered quickly, and with a proud beating heart—

"I am very poor, as you are aware, and can only say for myself that I am an orphan, with a fair education, and with the emotions of a son descended from a gentleman, and claim-

ing, as the only legacy left me by my father, the memory of his unspotted name. I do not consider your inquiry at all unreasonable; nor do I blame or undervalue the estimate you place upon a fair name and family, for I feel satisfied that I will not incur either your contempt or reproach when I tell you I am the only child of Colonel Robert Head, of the Continental Army."

"What! do you mean the Colonel Head that fell at Guilford Court-House?" exclaimed De Lacy, his face, first turning ashy pale, and then livid with rage.

"The same," replied Bryan, quietly; for he did not see, or if he did, was unaware of any reason for, the great change that had come so suddenly over the face of his questioner.

Without another word to Bryan, the general sprang quickly to a bell, and ringing it furiously, bade the servant, answering his summons, to send to him at once the captain and Miss Coma. During this time, Bryan sat filled with amazement, totally at a loss to understand the hurried movements and great excitement now evident upon the features of De Lacy. But he was not allowed to remain long in doubt, for no sooner had Coma glided blushing into the room, and the captain, with a quick glance at his relation, presented his smiling face, than the general turned the astonishment of the lover quickly and at once to anger, by exclaiming, in a furious, contemptuous voice, at the same time pointing deridingly with his finger—

"And that is the noble son-in-law you doting fools would give me! Listen, Coma—and you, too, captain—for, if you did not know it before, I will inform you now that that low fellow—he who would join his ignoble name with that of De Lacy—is the son of a base spy and traitor; the wretched offspring of a disgraced and perjured man!"

Springing to his feet—while a flash of indignant fury gleamed from his sparkling eye—Bryan, with a flush of anger mantling his handsome face, haughtily confronted the stern-visaged old general, replying to his infamous charge in a proud, defiant tone.

"Were you not the father of that fair girl, and were not your head bleached with the frosting tread of Time, here, and now, would I prove upon your person the foul falsehood of your infamous and groundless slander against the honored name of my dead father."

"Oh, Bryan," murmured Coma, throwing herself between her lover and her parent, "remember that you are speaking to my father!"

"And in defence of one," said the lover, sternly.

"My father is proud and stern," continued Coma; "but he is just. He may be mistaken, Bryan, but he would not willingly or groundlessly defame the character of the living, much less the dead."

"You say truly, Coma," replied the old man, looking kindly, and with some degree of sorrow, into the face of his weeping daughter; "I would be the last man living to defame the character of any one, much less that of a dead companion in arms. But, young man," he added, turning once more to where Bryan stood, as yet thunderstruck by this unexpected blow, "what I have said is true; and if you—and I hope it is so—are ignorant of the disgrace of your father, then you are ignorant of a fact well known to thousands."

"You may truly believe what you now say, general," replied Bryan, firmly; "but you must be laboring under some grievous mistake. My father could not have been the degraded character you would have me believe. The son could not have remained so long ignorant of so terrible a charge against the fair name of his parent. The world is not so charitable as to allow him to live on in forgetfulness."

"Captain Montlack belonged to the army, and knows what I have just said is true," answered the general, appealing to that worthy.

Montlack, who had only been waiting a fit opportunity to turn against his rival, replied to this appeal of the general, with a look of hypocritical sorrow: "Alas! if this young man be

the son of Colonel Robert Head, then the charge made by you against his father—I am grieved to say—is but too true."

"Now, by the blood of my gallant parent, shed in the defence of his country," exclaimed Bryan, with angry quickness, striding towards the shrinking captain, "I, his son, here and now, take it upon myself to declare you, Captain Montlack, an infamous and wilful slanderer. Your uncle, here, may, within these proud walls he calls his own, attempt to cast odium upon my character, by attacking and defaming the fair name of my departed parent; and his age, and relationship to yon weeping girl, will protect him. But you, Captain Montlack, have no such protection; and I will make you, base slanderer that you are, acknowledge what you have just spoken a groundless falsehood."

"You forget yourself, young sir!" exclaimed the general, angrily, as he stepped between the enraged son and retreating captain. "This is no place for strife; and, if you were the gentleman you claim to be, you would never thus have permitted your passions to make you forget the courtesy you owe to the presence of a lady."

Bryan stood abashed at this cutting reproof of the general; and, turning, with a look of poignant grief, to the weeping Coma, as if to beseech her forgiveness and mercy, muttered—

"You say right, sir. This is no place for such scenes. But I trust that a son's deep feeling for the character of his defamed father will, in some manner, atone for and lessen my offence."

"Oh! yes, father," said Coma, eagerly. "I know that you will forgive him what he has said, for this, your own proud soul will tell you, has been a most terrible and trying moment to him, and may well justify his passion."

"For your sake, Coma, I forgive him," replied the old man, "and will take no umbrage at any language he may use in his mad anger."

Bryan bowed haughtily, and Coma whispered her thanks. But Montlack—finding that all danger of personal chastisement had passed away, and believing this an opportune moment to

throw off his hypocritical assumption of esteem and affection for his rival, and insure his disgrace and dismissal forever—exclaimed—

“By heavens! this young son of a traitor carries himself loftily! He presumes upon the presence of a lady, and that presence has protected him, or he would have long since been driven, like a base hound, from the house polluted by his person, and disgraced by his insulting and presumptuous demeanor. I acknowledge my error, and cry your mercy, general, for being so deceived by a cunning mercenary fellow like this. But you must pardon me, for it was my love for Coma alone that blinded me to his true character, and induced me to plead with you in his behalf. But, now that he has exhibited himself in his true colors, I would recommend that the beggarly knave—he that would so cunningly creep into an honorable house, and join his traitorous name to the proud escutcheon of the De Lacys—be driven forth with ignominy and scorn; and, if ever he has the hardihood to show himself here again, that he be treated like a common knave and beggar, that he is, and dragged through the horsepond.”

During this insulting tirade, Bryan stood panting with suppressed rage, his white teeth closing so tightly upon his compressed lips as to start from the livid flesh drops of blood. Coma, beholding his terrible agony, would fain have driven it away by sympathizing words; but the stern dark eye of her father forbade all interference on her part, and she sat in silence, looking mournfully upon the agitated features of her lover. With a mighty effort to restrain his anger and be calm, Bryan, after glaring a moment in silence upon the person of the captain, at length hissed between his clinched teeth—

“You are a base, plotting scoundrel, Captain Montlack, and only brave in words, when you know that the presence of your cousin protects you from personal chastisement. You have deceived me well, captain, and have laid your toils quite skillfully. But, remember, the hour of reckoning will yet come, and heavy, heavy will be my vengeance.”

“So,” sneered Montlack, “you would add assassination to your already sufficiently disgraced name, would you?”

“Begone, sir!” said the general, once more interposing, and angrily addressing Bryan. “After what has just occurred, you must feel that your company is no longer acceptable; and I will add that it is my desire that you never again cross my threshold.”

“As you will, sir,” replied Bryan, haughtily.

“Ay, begone, my doughty beggar!” added Montlack, mockingly; “and, if you need a few dollars to aid you in leaving the country, don’t be too proud to call on me, for I will give them willingly, if for nothing else than the manner in which you have played your part this evening.”

“You are cruel and ungenerous, Jean,” murmured Coma.

“Say no more, Montlack, and let the fellow go. He has been punished sufficiently,” remarked the general.

But the treacherous captain had a part to play, dark and deceitful—and for a particular purpose—and was but now throwing one of his strongest webs to entangle and destroy forever the struggling and almost hopeless lover. He knew that, so far as the general was concerned, all chance of his consent to the union of Bryan and Coma was now forever gone; but he was not satisfied that Coma had given up her love, or lost confidence in her lover. On the contrary, he judged from her emotion—and judged very correctly—that, notwithstanding the disgrace of her lover, he still held a very prominent place in her heart; and it was his intention now to lower him, if possible, in her estimation, and to do so by a grave and infamous charge, which he designed making, if he could only induce Bryan to mention the money transaction that had taken place between them on the day previous. With this secret design, to insure success, he had, in the manner we have already described, taunted Bryan with beggary, and mockingly offered to loan him money; and the scheme of the plotting captain was crowned with complete success, for, to his taunts and sneers,

his charge of poverty, and deriding offer of a loan, Head, stung to the quick, and goaded to desperation, sternly replied—

"I am a beggar, it is true, so far as wealth is concerned; but who, Captain Montlack, under the garb of friendship, made me a beggar, and stripped me of my last little means? To leave this country, as you say, I will need money; and that money I will demand of you—not as you would fain make those present believe—as a recipient of your charity, or as a gift from your dastardly hand; but as a right, and as a debt you honestly owe me!"

"I am ignorant of my indebtedness to you," sneered the captain, "other than a dragging through the horsepond for your present impudence; but I will give a few pennies at any time to clear the country of a traitor's son."

"What!" exclaimed Bryan, gazing with blank astonishment at the cool and mocking face of Montlack, "are you so forgetful of past events? or have you become so abandoned as to deny your indebtedness, and thus add the crime of deliberate falsehood to those of hypocrisy and deceit?"

"I most certainly deny any indebtedness to you other than that I have just mentioned," boldly replied Montlack.

"Thanks! thanks for this boldfaced depravity!" exclaimed Bryan, with flashing eye, as he drew from his pocket the bond of the captain, "for I will now convict you in the eyes of your uncle and cousin of the blackest and most degrading of falsehoods. Is not that piece of paper," he added scornfully, holding towards Montlack the bond he had executed, "your obligation, acknowledging indebtedness to me in the sum of one thousand dollars?"

Coolly receiving the paper, the captain, with an unruffled countenance, gave it a close scrutiny; then, turning boldly to Bryan, he replied—

"You have presumed a little too much upon my patience in this matter, sir. This paper is, as you say, an obligation in my name for a thousand dollars; but I now pronounce it a base forgery—evident upon the very face of it—for it is not in

my handwriting; and the witness you have to it is a renegade and murderer; and, I have no doubt, one of your accomplices in this cunning attempt to extort money."

Overcome by his conflicting emotions, and by the dark villainy of the man in whom he had so confidently trusted, Bryan stood transfixed; and for the moment was unable to make any reply. Taking advantage of his silence, the captain handed the bond that he still retained in his possession to the general, remarking, "Look for yourself; and you, too, Coma, if you are not already satisfied of the unworthiness of this man, look at that same paper he has had the hardihood to present as my bond; and you will be convinced in a moment of his utter depravity."

"It is a base forgery, as you say," replied the general, as soon as he had glanced his eye over the paper; "and not one word written in your usual hand."

"Alas!" murmured Coma, as she looked anxiously and doubtfully upon the face of her lover, "it is too true. Oh! who would have believed that that glorious person and that broad, noble brow covered a heart so black and so utterly deceitful?"

Bryan could have braved the eye, and returned scorn for scorn with the general and captain, for he knew that he was innocent; and although astonished and thunderstruck at the grievous charge thus made against him, would have treated it with proud contempt; but when he heard the low desponding voice of Coma, and felt that he had lost her supporting sympathy and love, it was more than his struggling heart could bear, and, covering his face with his hands, the strong man's whole frame trembled with terrible and uncontrollable agitation—and he wept.

"It is well, young man," said De Lacy, noticing his emotion, which he falsely ascribed to shame and guilt, "that you have at least a sufficient amount of honorable feeling left in your bosom to feel some remorse for what you have done. But go now, and let me see you no more; else my duty as a magis-

trate may make me forget my pity as a man, and compel me to place you under the unforgiving and unpitying power of the law."

"Ay! go now and hunt up this renegade leader of savages, this murderer of women and children, this excellent witness and beautiful accomplice of yours, the immaculate Simon Girty, and tell him for me," said Montlack, with a fiendish smile of triumph, "that such tricks as this may answer with children, but not with men of the world, and that he had better back to the camp-fires of his redskin friends, if he would escape the country with a whole skin."

"To you, Coma, I will now speak!" exclaimed Bryan, with sorrowful earnestness; "for it is worse than useless for me to bandy further words with such heartless judges as these. I now swear to you, by the memory of my father and mother, and by the memory of those blissful hours we have spent together, that I am guiltless of the dark charges made against me by this treacherous man; and that I will prove my father's name innocent of the heartless slander with which it stands defamed. And to you, Coma, I will also say, believe nothing that that cringing coward and soulless hypocrite, your cousin Jean, may tell you; for I pledge my honor——"

"A poor pledge!" laughed Montlack, interrupting him.

"Ay! I pledge you my sacred honor," continued Bryan, with a look of scorn at his rival, "that I will yet convince you of his utter depravity and meanness, and yet show him forth in his true character—the wolf stripped of his sheep's clothing!"

"Do!" exclaimed Montlack, mockingly. "Go, and hunt up this Simon Girty; for he was an accomplice of your father's treachery, and will not only prove his innocence, but, as he stands in the same relation to yourself, may do you the like favor. I do not consider my character in much danger when the renegade Girty and the son of a spy and traitor are my defamers."

"Cursed scoundrel!" hissed Bryan, furious with rage at his

taunts, "you are safe now; but the time will yet come, and may my arm wither, if I do not have an awful reckoning."

"I cry your mercy, my fair sir," replied the captain, with provoking coolness; "but you had better remember that I hold you in my power, and if you remain long in this country, that little affair of the bond may become troublesome. I have known smaller offences furnish wristbands and anklets of iron; and if you have not a fancy for such ornaments, you had better beware."

"Give me the treacherous bond of this treacherous scoundrel!" exclaimed Head, approaching the general, who still held the paper in his hand, "for I see through his viper plottings now, and will yet find means to prove its genuineness, and convict him of base dishonesty."

"You will do no such a thing, general," said Montlack, "for I have proclaimed that bond a forgery, and call upon you now, as a magistrate, to hold it in your possession. I am now willing, on account of his recent position towards one of our family, to permit the knave to leave the country unpunished; yet, if he does not embrace the opportunity thus given to depart at once, and I find him lingering in this neighborhood, then I am determined to enforce the law, and make him suffer the full penalty of his crime."

Drawing back as if from the poisonous tongue of an adder, Bryan rapidly scanned first the stern visage of De Lacy, then the exulting countenance of his enemy, and then the sad and tearful face of Coma; and, murmuring to himself, "No, no! I will do nothing now," added in a louder tone, as if addressing the company—

"Well, be it so; I care nothing for the yellow dross of which I have been stripped, for it would be of no use to me now, and there are other matters of settlement between us of far greater importance."

"No doubt," sneered Montlack; "but when I hand you over to the officers of the law, you will find this bond cut quite a conspicuous figure; as much so as your worthy witness, could

he be found, and would venture his honest person within the reach of justice."

"Farewell, Coma!" whispered the lover, springing to the side of the weeping girl before her astonished father could interfere to prevent him; "believe me innocent until I see you again, and then shall all, now seemingly so dark, be as clear as your own spotless conscience."

"God grant it may be so!" sighed Coma, "for I know not what to think."

The general hastened to the side of his daughter, and Bryan, drawing back at his approach, looked the old man so calmly and proudly in the face, and so honest and open was his manly countenance, and so steady the gleam of his flashing black eye, that even the haughty De Lacy quailed beneath his glance, and, instead of the reproaches and insults he had intended to heap upon the head of the unfortunate lover, instinctively bowed, without uttering a word. To this silent and unintended mark of respect, Bryan returned a grave nod, and, with a marked and threatening gesture of the hand at his exulting rival, turned upon his heel and was gone.

So far, duplicity had carried the day, and hypocrisy and falsehood were victorious over honesty and truth.

"Honesty is the best policy," there is no doubt; yet, in this world of ours, rascality is so often successful as to be a great encouragement to knavery.

Hypocrisy is odious to every one. Yet who, in all this wide earth, will cast the first stone!

CHAPTER VIII.

DUFFE, Simon Kenton, and Titus—a rather singular triumvirate in a love affair—sat gloomily by the fireside of the former, anxiously awaiting the return of Bryan. They knew where he had gone, and had been now for some time momentarily expecting his appearance. It was getting late, and more than once the foster-father had peered out wistfully in the gathering gloom of night to catch the approaching tread of his returning son. The wind sighed sadly through the moaning boughs of the swaying forest, filling the heart with desolate sadness. All nature seemed preparing for a storm; for now and then a gust of wind came howling along, accompanied by frequent flashes of lightning, followed by low rumbling thunder; and Duffe, after one of his anxious visits to the door, returning with a troubled brow to his seat by the fireside, muttered—half in soliloquy, and half for the ears of his companions—

"I don't like the appearance of the night. The signs all declare a coming storm; and presently we will have it, sweeping down through the forest like a troop of cavalry to the charge. What can detain the boy?" he added, anxiously, after a moment's pause, and, once more rising from his seat, strided to the door.

"Don't be oneasy, Sargeant," said Simon, following him, "for it tain't no use, and the boy will turn up presently. You know how a young chap feels when he gets 'long side of his sweetheart. Bless me! if he don't jist forgit whether it ar' day or night, and don't care no more 'bout darkness or storms than he would for a hint 'bout bedtime. I used to feel that ar' way myself, Sargeant, 'fore that lubberly rascal married

my gal. Cuss him! I gin him a good lickin', anyhow, and that wer' some satisfaction. But, blame me, Sargeant, if I wer'n't proper glad when I hearn he wasn't dead after all. You don't know how this 'ere thing troubled me, for I left him for dead; and them ar' lawyer chaps—blast 'em!—called it murder, and I had to leave the country. Although I wer' a killin' them darned Ingens every day, and didn't care a cuss about it, this 'ere lubberly scamp's big round face—as I saw it when I thought him dead from the thrashin' I had gin him—wer' always peeping at me from behind the trees, when I wer' lookin' out for Ingens, and sittin' by me at the camp-fires, tho' nobody ever wanted his company or axed him. Whoop! how I danced when I hearn he war'n't dead, but alive and kickin', and had lots of little papooses; and I sot out at once, and come all the way back to the old State, jist to shake his hand, and thank him for not dyin'. I tell you what, Sargeant," continued the hunter, addressing the inattentive ears of his companion, "it ar' one thing to kill an Ingen, and another to kill a white man. It ar' all nat'ral and right enough to scalp a Mingo or Shawanee, but, blast me! if you'll ever catch Simon Kenton killin' another white man, 'less it be that ar' murderin' renegade, Simon Girty, or sich like varmin."

"Hist!" exclaimed Duffe, his face brightening. "I hear a step."

"Yes," replied the borderer, putting his hand to his ear, and catching the step with all the quickness acquired by a frontier life; "and comin' on with as measured a tread as an Ingen chief goin' to the council-fire of his nation."

"Let's set down," said Duffe, returning to his seat, "for Mister Bryan might not like so much looking after."

"That's a fact, as true as preachin'," muttered Kenton, resuming his place by the fire, "for these 'ere young fellers, once they've got hair on their chins, are pesky touchious 'bout bein' watched over, and advice, and sich like."

Scarcely had the Scout and Sergeant, moved by a feeling of delicacy that would not have been expected of them, resumed

their seats, and put on an air of indifference, before Bryan, pale and haggard, staggered into the room, and, falling heavily into the first vacant seat within his reach, covered his face with his hands, his entire frame shaking with the intensity of his agitation.

Duffe, who, notwithstanding his awkward and stiff appearance, was, both by heart and education, a gentleman, suspecting at once that the strong emotion exhibited by his foster-child was produced by some disappointment in his love-affair, and, may-be, a rejection of his suit, sprang quickly to his side, saying, in a low undertone—

"Never mind, my boy; the cloud will soon pass away, and all will be sunshine again."

"Hello, Mister Bryan!" shouted Sharp-Eye, in a more boisterous voice—for he had his own notions about such matters, but spoke now with as much anxiety as his more refined companion—wishing to arouse and console the lover, and at the same time conceal his own emotion, "you hain't seen any ghosts lately, have you? Cuss it, boy! don't be a shakin' in that ar' way; it makes me feel bad—dev'lish bad, I can tell you—for it 'minds me of them 'tarnal agers I used to have. Here, jist take a swig of this 'ere whiskey, and all will be right in five minutes, by the Sargeant's turnip over the mantle, or I never killed an Ingen."

Bryan, aroused by the loud voice of the Scout, removed his hands from his face, and fastened his burning orbs for a moment upon the countenance of the rough but sympathizing borderer. Then, motioning away the proffered bottle with his hand, shook his head despondingly, and once more resumed his dejected position.

"Gorror-mighty!" exclaimed Titus, who had been looking on in blank amazement, "I 'spect Massa Bryan am clean gone crazy, or he been seen old Girty's ghost."

"What of Girty? and where is he?" inquired Bryan, raising his head quickly, and speaking with eager anxiety.

"Cuss me, if I know!" responded Kenton, with a doubting

look, as if he thought old Titus was not so far wrong in his suspicions, "less he be prowlin' round the settlements with some of his murderin' red-devils."

"Come, Bryan, arouse yourself, and tell us the cause of your strange agitation," exclaimed the Sergeant, at the same time laying his hand upon the arm of his foster-child.

Awakened by the touch of Duffe, Bryan struck his hand sharply upon his brow, seemingly to concentrate his wandering thoughts; then, looking around sadly at the anxious countenances of his friends, murmured—

"Your hand, Duffe; and yours, Simon; and yours, too, Titus; for I need now the sympathy of you all—even the humblest."

"And you have it," replied Duffe, in a trembling voice, for he was deeply moved by the sad tone of his foster-child, and could scarce restrain his tears.

"And here's my paw," added Sharp-Eye, with eager zeal; "and may I be roasted to a cinder, Mister Bryan, by the darned Shawanees, if it ain't your'n, now and forever, as long as thar's blood enough in it to feed a musquito."

"I know it! I know it!" exclaimed Bryan, grasping with warm affection the brawny hands of his two friends; "and with you will I willingly trust my honor and my life."

"And woe be to those that would attempt to deprive you of either!" exclaimed the sturdy Sergeant.

"Ay! a woe and a cuss on them all!" added Kenton, drawing up his stalwart person, whilst a gleam of deadly brightness flashed from his keen blue eye.

"And tho' I be black, Massa Bryan," muttered the honest negro, "my heart be white, and in de right place. Say de word, and old Titus die."

"Thanks! thanks to you all!" exclaimed Bryan, a tear gushing from his eye at the generous devotion of his friends. "With you I fear no guile or deceit, and to you will I declare my disgrace, and the dreadful tortures I have suffered this night."

"Tell us all, my boy," replied Duffe, with kindly interest. "It will relieve your heart—and, although we are but humble in rank or fortune, you know, you will have our sympathy—and our advice may be of some advantage."

"Before I make known to you my own wretched situation," said Bryan, firmly, and looking intently into the open and excited countenance of the Sergeant, "I would have you, Duffe, tell me honestly and candidly, and without hesitation, whether or not my father was a traitor to his country, and a spy?"

Had a bombshell burst at the feet of the listening Sergeant, he would not have been more utterly amazed than he was at this unexpected question of Bryan. For a moment, he stood in speechless astonishment, when Bryan, interpreting it as a desire to evade an answer, and as proof positive of the dreadful charge made by De Lacy, exclaimed with bitter agony—

"Oh, my God! is *this*, my last hope, gone? and is it true that I am but the dishonored son of a miserable and disgraced spy?"

"And he that says so is a base liar!" howled the Sergeant. "Be he the highest of all the land, I will here now, and to his teeth, pronounce him an infamous slanderer."

"And I! and I!" shouted both Kenton and the black.

"God bless you for what you have said," exclaimed Bryan, wringing the hand of Duffe; "free my father's name from this dark charge, and you will make his orphan son happy in spite of all his other woes."

"Your gallant father's fame has no stain resting upon it," replied the Sergeant, with eager haste; "for he lived and died a true patriot, enjoying the love and esteem of his general, and of all those whose esteem was worth having."

"But how comes it," inquired Bryan, "that General De Lacy and Montlack have branded his memory with this grievous charge, and that, too, to his son? Were there no grounds for this base slander?"

"A miserable and petty foundation, believed by none but

the envious and malicious," replied Duffe, contemptuously, and as if the charge scarcely required a refutation.

"But what was it?" asked Bryan, anxiously.

"A letter was found, directed to the British general, and signed with the name of your father," replied Duffe; "but it was not in his handwriting, was not believed for a moment by any one that knew him to have been written by him, and was considered, by all, the base machination of some enemy (a fellow by the name of Girty was suspected) to injure him. Your father stood as high after that, in the estimation of the army and of General Greene, as he ever did at any period of the war."

"And have you told me all, and held back nothing?"

"All, so help me Heaven! I have not concealed one jot or tittle; and willingly would I now fill his bloody grave, were I entitled to his honored name."

"Now do I breathe again," said Bryan, his countenance radiant with heartfelt joy; "and once more can I look the world in the face without fear and without disgrace. Forgive me, father! that I ever doubted for a moment your honor or patriotism—for never will I doubt again, though all the world cry traitor, and spit poison upon your grave!"

"By the Eternal! I would like to hear any one, of this world, brand the name of my old friend and commander with treachery!" hissed the excited Sergeant. "I would grind him beneath my heel as I would the head of a poison-spitting adder!"

"Or a woman-scalpin' Ingen," added the Scout, ominously, feeling the handle of his hunting-knife.

Bryan could only look his thanks for the honest devotion of the two old soldiers for their colonel; and then, in a more cheerful voice, although his brow was still clouded with gloom and care, gave them a rapid account of his interview with De Lacy, and the subsequent charge made by Montlack against himself; adding, in conclusion—

"But I care nothing about this groundless slander against

myself; for now that my father's fame has been purified, conscious of my own innocence, I feel confident of soon freeing my name from all stain, and of convicting this dark hypocrite of falsehood and treachery."

Duffe made no reply to this hopeful conclusion of Bryan; for he saw at a glance that he was in the power of a cunning villain, and one that would not hesitate to push matters to extremes, if he could thereby further his own interests. Seeing the situation of his foster-child in this light, the Sergeant's head sank despondingly upon his bosom, and he gave utterance only to a deep smothered groan.

But Sharp-Eye, seeing the matter in an entirely different phase—for he believed the testimony of Titus and himself would amply prove the innocence of Bryan, and the guilt of Montlack—exclaimed, with eager haste—

"I know'd it! blast my buttons, when I saw that ar' red-headed rascal and plotting Frenchman powwowin' together, if I didn't know jist as well some devilment wer' hatching as if I'd seen an Ingen track prowlin' 'round the settlements. But never fear, Mister Bryan, for may the Shawanees roast me if I can't settle that ar' little affair 'bout the money as straightforward and slick as the best lawyer in the country. Can't we, Bang?"

The assistant counsellor, Bang, receiving new life from the cheery voice of his master, assented to his query with an animated growl; but Bryan, by no means satisfied with this additional affirmation of the Scout's power of proving his innocence, eagerly sought an explanation.

"Nothing plainer," replied the borderer, with a mysterious wink at the grinning black, at the same time deliberately settling himself and crossing his legs, thinking, "Now I will have it all my own way, will take my time, and all in due season will let the cat out of the bag, and enjoy my honors; but, in the mean time, I will just ask a few questions for dignity's sake, to show off my shrewdness, and make believe that it was a very knotty case to unravel." There was a great lawyer lost

to the country when Simon became a scout, and, acting up to these secret thoughts of his, looking gravely at Bryan, he asked—

"But who the devil was that ar' feller with the red head? I mean the scamp that signed the paper 'long with the cussed parley-voooin' Frenchman?"

"But how know you that he had a red head?" exclaimed Bryan, with surprise.

"May-be I dreamed it—and may-be I didn't," replied Simon, with another knowing wink at Titus, the black returning his wink with interest, by shutting both eyes, and showing all of his teeth. "But it ain't got nothin' to do with this 'ere case, Mister Bryan, how I larned that ar' fact. So jist answer a civil question, and don't be axing me any."

"He was introduced to me as a poor fisherman, by the name of Brant," replied Bryan; "but, when I came to examine the bond, I found that he had signed his name Simon Girty."

Had Kenton sat down upon the head of a rattlesnake, or the back of a porcupine, he could not have sprung up more rapidly than he did when he heard the name of the renegade; and his first exclamation, after a loud whistle of astonishment, was—

"Bring out your cradle, Sargeant—if you've got any sich a thing 'ere. Put me to bed at once, and feed me upon warm milk, for I'm a poor baby, as blind as a bat in daytime, and as dull as a donkey with his ears cut off. Sharp-Eye, indeed!" he added, bitterly. "I've no more right to that name than the most lubberly greenhorn that ever crossed the mountains. Blast me! if I don't wish them yellin' Shawanees, when they had me tied to their cussed toastin'-stick, had put an end to me before this 'ere disgrace. Who would have thought it? Simon Kenton—the Sharp-Eye of Kentuck'—to be fooled! and fooled, too, by that thievin' rascal Girty! and right here in the States, and under his own nose! May the devil take me if I don't be the laughin'-stock of all the boys in the settlements! Sharp-Eye, indeed! Come, Bang, let's be off. This 'ere civilized country won't suit us. If we stay here much

longer, we won't be able to follow a buffalo trail. But thar's one thing we can do, Bang. We'll jist go down to that ar' haunted house, and, blast me! if we don't lift the scalp of that bloody villain, if the ghosts of the Girtys pile themselves up before us as high as the Blue Ridge. Come! we can't stay here any longer, for the Sargeant hain't got no cradle."

"Stop, Simon; it will be no use to go there now!" exclaimed Bryan. "I came by the old cabin, and this Brant, or Girty, was gone, and the cottage as silent and lonely as if it had never been occupied."

"Well, Mister Bryan, it does go agin my natur', and no mistake," replied Simon, resuming his seat, but not with a very satisfied look, "to be fooled so uncommon bad, and by a cussed critter what's neither Ingen nor white man. But that's neither 'ere nor thar, now, so we'll jist go on with that tother bisness, if you'll tell me whar we wer' when that ar' 'tarnal name so obflusticated me."

"You were on the point of informing me how to prove my innocence respecting the bond given to me by Montlack; and, if you can do so, you will not only deserve, but have my eternal gratitude."

"This 'ere life will do, Mister Bryan," responded Kenton, once more resuming his careless, half-laughing manner, "for as to etarnity, that's a thing I don't know much about, but rather guess it ar' a plaguy long time for any man's gratitude to last."

"But the proof of my innocence?" said Bryan, restlessly.

"Thar's nothin' easier; for your own say-so will be enough for any honest white man—I won't say Frenchman; and, if that won't do them law fellers—for they are so up to lyin' themselves they won't b'lieve anybody else—then I'll jist say so myself, and, cuss me! if I wouldn't jist like to see any of them big wigs dispute my word."

"Neither of these will do in law," replied Bryan, sadly, "and, if this is my only dependence for safety, I fear my enemy holds me completely at his mercy."

"Mercy! the devil!" exclaimed Sharp-Eye. "Who talks 'bout mercy? And do you 'spect it from sich a lyin', thievin' rascal as that? I'd as soon 'spect mercy from a bloody Ingen, when he had my topknot in his hand, and his knife all ready for service, as to 'spect it of that darned Frenchman. But s'pose Titus and myself—'specting some rascality, when we dis-kivered this Frenchman and Girty (blast his red wig!) parley-voo-in' together—had followed up your trail, and seen you all in company, and had been peepin' in that 'tarnal old haunted house, when the cussed rascals signed that ar' paper? What would you say to that, Mister Bryan? And do you kalkulate that would be enough to satisfy them ar' speechifyin' lawyers?"

"If what you say be true," exclaimed Bryan, grasping the hand of the joyful Simon, "then can this troublesome matter be settled at once, the hypocrisy of that treacherous captain fully exposed, and my own name freed from the dishonoring charge of forgery."

"Well, Mister Bryan, don't be cast down any longer, for that ar' supposin' case of mine ar' as true as the Gospel; be-kase Titus and me did follow up your trail, and, when them tarnation villains wer' foolin' you outer your money, old Titus wer' close by, lookin' in at you, while I wer' standin' off, at good shootin' distance, waitin' for that ar' redheaded rascal to show his scalp; and, blast me! if I don't wish he had, now I have dis-kivered it wer' that bloody thief, Girty."

Bryan had listened with intense interest to this account of Kenton's; but, to the great surprise of the latter, who expected a sudden outburst of joy, the former not only showed no sign of exultation, but—still more astonishing to the honest borderer—with a look and groan of despair, sank back in his seat, covering his face with his hands. And Duffe, too, to whom the Scout looked for an explanation, met his gaze with a gesture of impatience, muttering something very near akin to an oath.

"Well, blast my eyes if you ar'n't a strange couple!" grumbled Simon, not a little piqued at the manner in which his

very important news had been received; "for here you are, like a pair of old women at a camp-meetin', moanin' and groanin', jist when I wer' 'spectin' to see you caperin' about for joy, like a herd of young bucks on a frosty mornin'. But what's to play now? Jist sing it out; for, cuss me if I wouldn't like to know the cause of all this 'ere groanin', and cussin', and sich like!"

"It is no fault of yours, Simon," said Bryan, sorrowfully; "but I could not restrain my anguish when I learned that it was Titus, and not you, who had been a witness to what occurred in Girty's cabin."

"What's the difference? Can't Titus see and tell the truth as well as anybody else?"

"His evidence will not be received in a court, and he cannot be a witness when a white man is on trial, not even where his testimony would save the life of the criminal."

"What's that you say?" exclaimed the borderer, with a whistle of astonishment. "Why, I'd take Titus's word as soon as any man's livin', and a blamed sight sooner than many who pass for white men! If that's the law you've got in this 'ere civilized country, I'd sooner take my chance out in the settlements, whar thar's no law."

"Yet it is true," replied Bryan. "A slave cannot give testimony either for or against a freeman."

"Well, if Titus can't give testimony, I'll jist do it myself," replied the Scout, with honest simplicity.

"But you did not see them sign the bond, and deliver it to me," said Bryan.

"What matter if I didn't? Titus did—and it's all the same."

"But you can't swear it."

"Can't swear it!" exclaimed the Scout. "What's to prevent me? Titus saw it all; and, cuss me! if I don't swear to it on every Bible in Jerusalem! What's got into you to think I wouldn't swear to anything Titus told me wer' so? I'll swear it in all the courts of the commonwealth, if that ar' will

satisfy you; and, what's more, will lift the scalp of any rascal doubtin' my word."

"It won't do, Simon," said Bryan, sadly; "for, although I would believe Titus as soon as any man living, still, the law will not permit him to give testimony, nor will it allow you to testify upon the strength of what he has related to you."

"Then let the law and the courts go to the devil!" exclaimed the Scout; "and, if this 'ere plottin' Frenchman—for I b'lieve he's got nigger blood in him—goes to tryin' any of his traps on us, we'll jist gin him a taste of backwoods law, for it ar' a blamed sight better for sich fellers than any you've got here."

"There's some reason in what Sharp-Eye says," remarked the Sergeant, who had been silently turning the matter over in his own mind, "for there is no use in puzzling our brain about testimony, since this matter has not yet been brought before the courts, and we have every reason to believe that it will not be. If it does come to that point, then we will make the best defence in our power, and I am confident that innocence will triumph over guilt. For the present, the testimony of Sharp-Eye and Titus will be sufficient to convince Miss Coma; and, if I am not mistaken, Bryan cares more for her good opinion than of all the balance of the world."

"Jist the thing, Sargeant," exclaimed the Scout, glad of any way to get around the present difficulty. "And, blast me! if I don't have you 'lected judge of the first court we have out in Kentuck! But, at present, cuss all courts! say I, and may we never be troubled with any of the pryin' botherations consarns out in the 'Cane Land; I can't 'zactly see the use, nohow, of them judges, and 'squires, and constables, and sich like, botherin' a gentleman with thar rules, and laws, and other deviltries."

"I thank you, Duffe, for your kind suggestion," added Bryan, when Kenton had finished his philippic against the law, "and will seize the first opportunity of proving my innocence to Miss De Lacy. She, like ourselves, will give full weight to the evidence of Titus, and, if I but convince her of

the guilt and treachery of her cousin, and of my own innocence, then will I care very little about the law. I can face, then, all the terrors of a legal tribunal with a bold front, sustained as I will be by her sympathy, and a consciousness of my own freedom from all guilt. But what of this Captain Montlack? I promised to have a settlement with him, and can't pass over the indignities he has offered me in silence."

"I rather guess it would be agin natur' to do so," said the Scout, "and my only wonder is that you didn't settle him at once right thar, before the old man and his darter. I knows it tain't right to be blazin' away when the women-folks are about; but blame me if I could have kept my feelers off that yaller Frenchman, nohow."

"Gorror-mighty! I wish you had to been thar, Massa Simon," blubbered Titus.

"You say right, my boy," remarked Duffe, calmly, in reply to the question of Bryan, "for his slander of your father's memory, and the cruel insults offered yourself, must be atoned for, and there is only one course left you as a gentleman, and I will see that all proper steps be taken to insure you every satisfaction."

"Whoop! hurrah! now you are talkin' somethin' like," shouted Sharp-Eye, throwing up his cap; "and jist say to the yaller devil, Sargeant, when you see him for Mister Bryan, for he has a right to the first pop, that thar's a certain Capting Simon Kenton—don't forget the capting, for I've been a capting agin the Ingens—who'd like most astonishingly to send an ounce ball through his rascally gizzard, always giving him a chance, you understand, to return the compliment. Don't forget, Sargeant, for blame me, if Bryan don't settle him, I will, for I've been fooled by that 'tarnal thief, Girty—fooled myself 'bout making old Titus a witness; but may I be eternally and forever obflusticated, if I'm gwine to be fooled outer that yaller Frenchman's scalp. Will we, Bang?"

Bang howled a negative, or rather assent, to his master's bloody determination; and now that the dogs have declared for war, we will hold our peace.

CHAPTER IX.

"THAT ain't so bad, Mister Bryan; and s'posin' that yaller rascal had been thar, you'd have spiled his appetite to a sar-tainty."

Such was the remark of Kenton, as, with great gravity, he examined the mark of Bryan's bullet upon the target at which he was firing, and which Titus held up for his inspection.

"But," added the Scout, as he made preparation for again loading the pistol, "though you shoot darned well for a green one, and this here popgun makes a blasted sight of fuss and a big hole for sich a small consarn, I ain't 'zactly satisfied with this 'ere way of doing up the business; for, s'posin' it wer' to happen that this 'ere Frenchman, after doing you all the harm he can, wer' to jist accidentally pink you, and get off himself without bein' hurt, that ar' wouldn't be so darned funny; and I guess it would be tarnation little satisfaction to be first insulted and then killed. Did you ever think of it in that ar' way, Mister Bryan?"

"The chances are equal," said Bryan, "and there is no other way for a gentleman to wipe out an insult received."

"Darn poor way, if he should happen to be wiped out himself," grunted the Scout. "But here's the pistol; try your hand again, and if you can shoot as well with the tother feller before you as you do now, he won't 'scape with a whole skin, and that ar' some consolation, anyhow."

It had been a busy morning at the Sergeant's; for, whilst Simon was trying the "narves of Mr. Bryan," as he called it, Duffe, with much zeal and care, had been dragging from its sacred place of deposit his seedy suit of regimentals, and preparing it for immediate use. His wife lent a willing hand

in furbishing up the blackened buttons and tarnished lace of this ancient suit, and she did so without question or remark, for she was one of those wise women who thought her husband knew best what he was about; and then she had no idea of the solemn occasion of its present disentanglement, for the Sergeant never disturbed these sacred relics of the past, save on high days and militia musters, and the poor woman, not being overly curious (a rather remarkable trait for one of her sex), took it for granted that a training day had come, and so worked diligently on at the resurrected paraphernalia, and without one thought of seeking the cause of its resurrection. But in due time, this furbishing up, and polishing off, and brushing down, came to an end, and the tall, sinewy person of the Sergeant, encased in his regimentals, made its appearance at the door, followed to the threshold by the admiring eyes of his wife. Walking with the stiff, measured tread of a veteran, his fine athletic person showing off to much advantage in his worn and time-beaten uniform, Duffe slowly approached Bryan and Kenton; but he did not halt, or, if he did, it was only for a moment to make them a military salute, and then, without a word to either, passed on, marching with proud and precise step, in the direction of the De Lacy mansion.

"Jist as natural as eatin'," exclaimed the Scout, admiringly, touching his cap in return to the salute of Duffe; "and the very sight of that ar' old uniform makes me ache with the thought of them cussed drillin's we used to go through in old times. Halloo!" he added, as the Sergeant stalked away, "don't be forgettin' that ar' message I sent the Frenchman." Then turning to Bryan, with a last look at the vanishing form of Duffe, he remarked, with a well satisfied air, "He's one of 'em, Mister Bryan, and we'll do up this 'ere business of our'n to a sqar', so blaze away agin' at the 'tarnal rascal, and let's see the state of your narves."

Sergeant Duffe, although not particularly blessed with the goods of this world, was very favorably known throughout the country, and on account of his honesty, and patriotism, and

tried bravery, was, if not cordially and upon intimate terms, at least politely received and welcomed by the most aristocratic of his neighbors, so that he found no difficulty in obtaining entrance to the house of General De Lacy, and no sooner had he presented his stern visage at the door, and inquired for Captain Montlack, than the bowing servant led him at once to the parlor, announcing with negro pomp and ceremony his name. There was no one in the room but the captain himself, who, raising his head at the announcement of Duffe, with all the politeness of his nation, arose quickly from his seat, exclaiming—

"I am truly glad to see you, Mr. Duffe. You look very natural and familiar in your uniform, and remind me very much of old times. But take a seat. I suppose you wish to see the general? He is out now, but will be back in a few minutes."

"My business, this morning, is with you, captain," replied Duffe, returning the warm greeting of Montlack with a stiff bow and military touch of the cap, "and is such as to brook no delay and very little ceremony."

Montlack had guessed the cause of the Sergeant's appearance so soon as he had caught sight of his face and uniform; but, notwithstanding, chose to be very ignorant, and to this stiff reply to his warm welcome said, in the same pleasant voice, as if totally unconscious of his visitor's purpose:—

"Eh, Sergeant, are you out giving notice to attend a training? We captains of the war have had a fall since peace was declared, and are not only common soldiers now, but militia at that, and commanded by our subalterns. Ha! ha! it would be a good joke if you had a notice for the general, and I would like right well to see you serve it on him."

"I'm not on that business now," said Duffe, with freezing politeness.

"Then to what may I ascribe the pleasure of your company?" inquired Montlack.

"I come, at the request of my friend Mr. Bryan Head, to

ask of Captain Montlack the satisfaction usually given by one gentleman to another for an insult offered," replied Duffe, promptly, and again politely touching his cap.

Although Montlack had been fully confident, from the first appearance of Duffe, of the intent of his visit, yet when he had thus clearly and unmistakably delivered his hostile message, in spite of every effort to the contrary he could not conceal his emotion, and, whilst his face turned deadly pale, stammered forth—

"My good sir, I am somewhat surprised at your language, and am not certain that I yet exactly understand the purport of your message."

"Nothing plainer," replied Duffe, bluntly. "Did you not, last night, in the presence of General De Lacy and his daughter, grossly insult Mr. Head? and did he not then tell you he would require satisfaction at your hands? I come now, on his behalf, to know when you will give him the pleasure of a meeting, and to arrange everything necessary on such occasions with your friend, if you will be so good as to name him."

"*Sacre!* You speak plainly enough now," said Montlack, with a sneer, "and I am very sorry that I cannot gratify the young gentleman."

"Captain Montlack certainly does not refuse to give Mr. Head the satisfaction he demands?" said Duffe, with a look of surprise.

"That is my determination," replied Montlack.

"You will not refuse to give me the reason for this unexpected conclusion of yours?" said Duffe, struggling to be calm.

"Certainly not, if you insist."

"I do," said Duffe, sternly.

"My reasons for declining a hostile meeting with your friend can soon be given," replied the captain; "and when you have heard them, Monsieur Duffe, I doubt not but you, like myself, will consider them amply sufficient."

"I await your pleasure, for, if you continue to decline giving my friend the satisfaction he claims of you as a gentleman,

then, of course, I claim it as but due to myself to know the ground of your refusal."

"I most certainly do decline this meeting," said Montlack, but with some hesitation, as he noticed the contracting brow of his visitor; "and as you insist upon my reason for so doing, it is simply because this Mr. Head is not only not my equal, but is the son of a spy, and himself a felon."

It was a dreadful struggle for Duffe to restrain his anger; but with a mighty effort he did so; and to this insulting reply of the captain, touching his cap with punctilious politeness, he remarked:—

"I trust, Captain Montlack, that you can have no such objection to myself; and as you have positively refused to meet my principal, I now claim at your hands that honor."

"Surely you are not serious?" exclaimed Montlack, stepping back in astonishment.

"Never more so," replied Duffe.

"Why really, Mr. Duffe," continued Montlack, "I am astonished at your demand, and if you seriously seek a hostile meeting with me, then I must decline, since I have no cause of enmity towards you, but, on the contrary, have for you the very highest respect."

"Which I am sorry to say I cannot reciprocate," replied the Sergeant, with some heat. "But once for all, Captain Montlack, will you fight Mr. Head?"

"No. I have given a sufficient reason for refusing."

"Then, will you fight me?"

"I must also reply no; and I cannot understand why you make so strange a demand, since, in refusing your principal, I make no charge against you, but, on the contrary, acknowledge the very highest respect for you."

"Will you permit me, captain," said Duffe, after a moment of silence, "to make a few remarks, not exactly pertaining to my present mission, but suggested by what has just occurred?"

"Most certainly," replied Montlack, with his wonted smile, "for I can assure you, Mr. Duffe, that I regret very much

what has taken place, and trust that, although I do not consider myself bound to give this Mr. Head the satisfaction he has, I must say, rather impudently demanded of me, you will see the propriety of my course, and attach no blame to any one but the gentleman himself. As for the demand made by you, I look upon it in no other light than a punctilious fulfilment of the code of honor; for you surely have no grounds of ill-will against me, or for the hostile meeting you have sought."

"I have grounds, and the very best of grounds, for the demand I have made," thundered the Sergeant, no longer able to control his anger, "for you have slandered, basely slandered, not only my foster-child, but the memory of my old commander; and I here now brand you, Captain Montlack, and to your very face, not only as an infamous hypocrite and defamer of the living, but as a malicious and wilful slanderer of the dead; to which I will also add the merited titles of liar, scoundrel, and coward! Now, will you fight me?"

"I have already answered you," sneered Montlack, "and think, as you have more than executed your mission, that you had now better take your departure. I might be tempted to have you thrown out by the servants."

"Not before I have placed my seal to what I have said, and given you the coward's portion," retorted the Sergeant, at the same time administering to the captain's visage a buffet which sent him reeling to the extremity of the room.

Stopping only long enough to meet the furious face of Montlack and listen to his smothered oaths of vengeance, with a smile of scornful contempt the Sergeant turned upon his heel and left the room, not sufficiently ruffled, by this passage at arms, to make him forget to acknowledge, with military exactness, the bow of General de Lacy, whom he met upon the steps.

Once more at home, Duffe, with great apparent indifference, gave Bryan and Kenton the result of his mission, adding, in conclusion, that it was no use to make any further attempt,

for the captain, in addition to being a knave, was in his opinion a most arrant coward.

"Then, what is to be done?" asked Bryan.

"Horsewhip him! horsewhip him!" exclaimed Duffe, in a pet; "that's the next step!"

"No it tain't, either," said Kenton, "for such rascals don't care for a horsewhippin', and the next thing would be one of them darnation suits for damages. Jist bear a hand here, Sargeant, and let me go, and I'll give you my scalp if I don't make this 'tarnal Frenchman toe the mark."

Before either Bryan or Duffe had time to think, or raise any objection to this proposal, the Scout had whistled Bang, and was gone.

Fortune favored the borderer; for Montlack, after the visit and departure of Duffe, thinking that he would be troubled with no more such visitors for that day at least, had, with the double purpose of preventing a meeting between the lovers and soothing his own ruffled feelings, gone out to walk in the grounds; but scarcely had he strolled a half a mile, when, at a short turn in the path he was leisurely pursuing, he came suddenly upon Kenton. Having never before seen the frontiersman, or at least for some years, Montlack did not recognize him, and had no suspicion of his being in any way connected either with Bryan or Duffe. He, therefore, without being disturbed at his presence, went boldly on, and was about passing the Scout with a slight nod, when the latter, touching his cap, exclaimed—

"Halloo, Mr. Capting, if you ain't in too all-fired a great hurry, I would jist like to have a word with you!"

"You are very familiar, my good fellow, for one of your cloth," replied Montlack, with a rather contemptuous stare at the uncouth dress of Simon.

"That's me, 'zactly, capting; I always wer' familiar on a short acquaintance, 'specially with Ingen scalps, bears, rascals, and sich like—war'n't I, Bang?"

Bang having fully indorsed the impudence of his master,

the captain, after another long stare at the odd couple before him, said angrily—

"Your impudence places me in rather a difficult category, for I must either be an Indian, bear, or rascal; and as I do not lay claim to either of these honorable titles, I beg that you will exercise your familiarity with some other person."

"As to that ar' Category you speak consarning of," replied Sharp-Eye, with a provoking laugh, "I guess I don't know nothin' at all about him; but as to Ingens, or bears, capting, I don't stand back for any man alive. You ain't an Ingen, capting, for I rather think you are a leetle too black; nor are you a bear, though, to tell the truth and shame the devil, you have got some of the ways of that ar' varmint. But, if you mightn't consider it too bold or too presumptuous-like in a feller of my cloth, capting, I would jist like to ask, to satisfy my curiosity, if you ain't got some nigger blood in you?"

"*Sacre!* you low-flung rascal! do you mean to insult me?" shouted Montlack, becoming furious at the cool effrontery of his questioner.

"*Sacre, the devil!*" grinned Sharp-Eye, for he was enjoying the fury of his victim; "who wer' sayin' anything 'bout *sacre*? I wer' jist axing you a civil question 'bout your nigger relations, and blame me if I don't b'lieve you are gittin' mad."

"See here, fellow," said Montlack, becoming cool from the very excess of his fury, "stand aside at once, and let me pass, for I wish to hear no more of your impudence."

"Impudence, Mr. Capting," replied the Scout, with a quiet wink of the eye, "you war'n't never more mistaken in all your life—not even when you thought yourself a beauty or a gentleman. Why, I wer' always considered the modestest kind of a man, and wer' never thought impudent but once, and that wer' at Squire Boone's great quilting, when I kissed all the gals, not even 'cepting the niggers. I tell you, capting, that wer' a wonderful mistake of your'n; worse than that ar' Category, or when I 'lowed myself to be gobbled up by a darned Ingen."

"Stand off, blathering fool!" exclaimed Montlack, with a fierce gesture of impatience; "I have no further desire for your company, and the sooner you leave me, the better."

"That's jist what I said to a dratted grisly bear once; but he wouldn't go away himself, nor would he let me go."

"I will not be bothered with you longer," shouted Montlack, "and if you do not let me pass, will turn upon my path and leave you."

"That's jist whar we differ, captin'," replied the Scout, with a slight shrug of his shoulders, "for though that 'tarnal yaller face of your'n ain't sweet enough to turn the stomach of a bumblebee, still I have a great desire for your company jist now, and wouldn't like to part without a lock of your hair, 'specially as I've come a good way to see you, and on particular business."

"Who are you? and what's your business with me?" exclaimed Montlack, haughtily.

"First tell me, captin'," inquired Kenton, with apparent earnestness, "if you ain't got some nigger blood in your veins, for I'm particularly anxious to know, and have a reason for axing the question."

"No!" thundered Montlack, fairly badgered into a reply; "and now, as I have answered your impudent question, maybe you will be good enough to let me know your name and business? Speak at once, or I leave you."

"Not till I say so, captin'," replied Kenton, changing his tone, and touching his rifle significantly; "and I can't spare you jist now. Here's what I call my persuader, and Betsy is a talkin' old gal, I tell you, 'specially when a feller won't listen to a perlite request. Do you take?"

"I understand you, sir," said Montlack, haughtily; "you mean to threaten me unless I remain until I receive your permission to depart."

"'Zactly, captin', as plain as if I had said it myself; and when you diskiver who I am, I guess you'll conclude I wouldn't be darned slow to carry out my threats."

"*Mon Dieu!* if you do not wish to run me mad, say at once what you want," exclaimed Montlack.

"That's jist what I'm after," replied Simon, with imperturbable gravity, "and am darned glad your dander is on the riz. But I don't want any of your African lingo, captin', for you might be a cussin' me in that ar' uncivilized tongue, which I won't stand nohow. Jist mind your eye, and don't be 'mon dooin' me any more; for if you do, tarnation take me if I don't knock that black face of your'n into the middle of next week."

Montlack grasped the barrel of his rifle, as if he would fain use it over the head of his tormentor; but, catching the steady gleam of Kenton's eye, he quickly smothered his desire; and the Scout, who had watched every motion of his hand and eye, seeing that his heart had failed him, said with a laugh—

"Well, now, captin', since you've got no nigger blood in you—though cuss me if I can see 'zactly how you come to be so blamed black without it—I'll jist come to the pint right off. Do you know Mr. Bryan?"

"Are you here, too, about that Mr. Head?" exclaimed Montlack, with a groan.

"'Zactly," replied Kenton, drawling it out; "that's jist my business, and I left Mr. Bryan over at the Sargeant's, tryin' his nerves at a little spot 'bout the size of one of them ar' buttons on your coat; and I do say, captin', he shoots beautifully; none of your accidental shots, but always plumb up to the mark. If he don't spile that ar' coat of your'n, then burst me if I don't 'knowledge I'm no judge of narves or shootin'."

"What does all this jargon mean?" exclaimed Montlack, impatiently.

"You are darned hard of hearin', captin'; but I s'pose you ain't had your ears bored for the hollow horn lately?"

"For mercy's sake stop your blathering, and tell me what all this means," shouted Montlack, striking his forehead with his hand.

"It jist means no more nor less than you must go over with me and toe the mark with Mister Bryan? He wants a chance

of boring a hole through you for them ar' insults you offered him the tother night, when he couldn't thrash you because the gal wer' present. I guess I would have took your scalp if it had been me; but its agin Mr. Bryan's politeness to fight when women-folks are 'bout. He wer'n't fotedched up right, capting."

"Did he send you with this message?" said Montlack, becoming more cool, now that he had discovered the business of his strange interrogator.

"That's neither here nor thar, capting; the question is, will you fight?"

"I have already declined a meeting with your Mr. Bryan, and do not wish to hear anything more from him," said Montlack, in his usual sneering tone.

"But you must and shall fight him," replied Kenton, doggedly; "for I've promised it, and ain't going to break my promise for sich a feller as you."

"But I will not!" exclaimed Montlack, angrily; "and you are wasting your time, if such be your purpose."

"Now see here, capting," said Kenton, examining the priming of his rifle; "I never killed but one white man, and he got well, and I swore I'd never kill another; but blast me if I hain't jist made up my mind to take your scalp—for I ain't half satisfied of your being white—if you don't go along with me and fight Mr. Bryan."

"But this will be downright murder," exclaimed Montlack, with some alarm, "and you dare not execute your threat."

"I dare do anything," said Kenton, with solemn firmness. "You may jist call it downright murder, or downright what you please; but I calls it downright scalping, which ar' pretty much the same thing. Did you ever hear tell of one Simon Butler, or Simon Kenton, or Sharp-Eye?"

"That savage outlaw of Kentucky?" inquired Montlack.

"The same."

"Often; and he must be a bloody wild devil, indeed, from what I have heard of him," replied Montlack.

"He only kills the savage enemies of his people," said Ken-

ton, proudly, "and in a fair hand to hand fight, riskin' scalp agin' scalp. But he's no hypocrite, no false friend, no slanderer, and no coward, Captain Montlack; and if you hain't never enjoyed that ar' pleasure, you can now look upon Simon Kenton the outlaw, as you call him, for he's standin' before you."

"You Simon Kenton!" exclaimed Montlack, starting back in surprise; "I can scarce believe you."

"I've no doubt you are surprised," replied Kenton, with a slight sneer of contempt at the astonishment depicted upon the face of Montlack; "but still, surprise or no surprise, I'm Capting Simon Kenton of the Kaintuck Rangers, at your sarvice. And now, capting, as you know me, I'll just state another one of them categories—you must either fight Mr. Bryan, fight me, or be scalped without fightin'; so make your choice, for I ain't goin' to stay here all day tryin' to persuade you to be a gentleman."

Finding himself in a very bad "category" indeed, worse than the first he had so much complained of, the captain stood a moment, as if in deep thought, then stammered forth:—

"I have refused to fight with Mr. Head, because I consider him beneath my notice; but as to you, captain, I have no such grounds for declining, since I acknowledge you my equal, and if I had any cause of enmity"—

"What do you call a cause?" exclaimed Kenton, interrupting him. "I've cause enough myself, and if you'll only jist tell me how I can give you a cause—which, darned if I ain't been tryin' to do all this time—then cuss me if don't give you all the cause of enmity you desire, for fight you must, either with these here little babies," holding out a couple of enormous horse pistols, "or with rifles; or, if you don't like these, then take to a tree like a 'tarnal Ingen, for I tell you now, capting, once for all, that you are an 'imphemious scoundrel; and as you've insulted Mr. Bryan, and won't fight him, then you must fight me; so take your choice, and be darned quick about it, for my Ingen's gettin' up, and I can't wait."

Seeing that Kenton was determined upon a fight, and that

in the borderer he had one to deal with that would not be easily shaken off, Montlack, with a treacherous smile—for he had made up his mind to sacrifice his straightforward, unsuspecting enemy—replied:—

"Well, Captain Kenton, as you will force me into a fight, it shall be with pistols, and the sooner this unfortunate affair is over, the better."

"Give us your paw, capting," exclaimed the Scout, joyfully. "Blast my eyes if you ain't a white man after all said and done, and I guess ain't such a darned bad feller but what we could find a worser. Here, take your choice of the little children," he continued, presenting the pistols, "and say how we are to fire."

Montlack, with a sinister smile, received the proffered weapon, and to the request of the borderer replied:—

"This is rather a novel duel, captain; but as neither of us has a second, I propose that we stand back to back, and, at a signal to be given by you, that we each walk ten paces, and wheel, and fire."

Kenton, having no suspicion of treachery on the part of Montlack, assented without hesitation to his proposal, and the next moment the bold frontier man and wily Frenchman had taken their places.

"Now!" exclaimed Kenton; but scarcely had he gone five paces before the ball of Montlack, who had not moved, whistled close by his ear.

Turning quickly around, the blue eye of Kenton flashed for a moment with deadly lustre upon the treacherous Frenchman; but Montlack, exclaiming with eager haste that it was an accident, and expressing a hope that he was unhurt, the Scout's anger passed away at once, and with a countenance again unclouded he replied:—

"It would have been darned unlucky to have been killed by accident, capting, and just when you were about to do it in a genteel way. Cuss me if I wouldn't rather die ten times intentionally than once accidentally, for I can't see the sense of

dyin' when nobody wants you, and you ain't 'spectin' it yourself. Thar's jist no use or satisfaction in an accidental death, and I'm tetotaciously obliged that you didn't accidentally shoot an inch or more to the right; for if you had, capting, you'd have spiled as nice a scalp as wer' ever stuck on a man's head. But never mind, capting, accidents will happen in the best regulated families, they say; and as this 'ere wer' an accident, then let it go as one, though cuss me if I can 'zactly see how it happened."

"'Pon my honor, it was purely an accident," exclaimed Montlack, hastening to wipe away all suspicion from the breast of his opponent.

"I guess it wer' an accident that I wer'n't killed," said the Scout, dryly; "but that's neither here nor thar now, and as you've let off one of them ar' 'little children,' capting, why it only follows that we must jist try the full-grown roarers. How shall it be?—forty steps and blaze away, or behind trees, in the Ingen fashion?"

"I would prefer that it should be neither," replied Montlack, "for, as I came very near shooting you accidentally, I would hate to do so now intentionally."

"Thar's jist whar we differ, capting; for if you had killed me accidentally, I'd never forgiven you; but if you do so intentionally, you have my full permission. Fight we must, for that 'ere 'category' we were speakin' consarnin' of, I guess wer'n't blown away by that ar' little accident of your'n, but ar' still somewhere about."

"If such be your settled determination," said Montlack, a brilliant thought at this moment flashing across his plotting mind, for he had no idea of fighting if he could get clear of it, "then I'll fight you in your own way, each of us taking a tree, and firing when we see proper."

"Whoop! hurrah!" shouted Kenton, throwing up his cap; "now we'll have fun, capting. 'Tis jist the thing, and I pardon you that ar' little accident, since it has foted about this 'ere kind of fightin'. It will 'mind me of old times out in

Kaintuck, and that yaller face of your'n dodgin' around the trees will look as nat'ral as life. Take your tree; here's mine."

"Since I have agreed to fight you in your own way, with which I am not at all acquainted, you must pledge me your word of honor, Captain Kenton," said Montlack, preparing to execute his *ruse*, "that you will take no advantage of me, and will not look out from behind your tree until I have chosen mine and given the word."

"You have it," replied Kenton, "and needn't fear any accidents on my part."

"Then mind your promise," remarked Montlack, with a smile of cunning, as he walked quickly away, and on the opposite side of the tree chosen by the Scout.

Five—ten—fifteen minutes had passed, and Kenton was growing restless and anxious for the signal of the captain; but mindful of his promise not to look out, he manfully kept his post, though, to tell the truth, he did begin to think the captain very particular in his choice of a tree.

Five minutes more had passed, and the waiting borderer, no longer able to restrain his eagerness for the fight, shouted out—

"Hello, captin', darnation take me, can't you find a tree to suit you?"

The captain made no answer, and the Scout, after waiting five minutes longer, his suspicions in the mean time becoming somewhat excited, muttered impatiently—

"Wall, drat me if this don't beat all! May-be the rascal ar' waiting for me to show my scalp, that he may try one of them ar' accidents agin? I'll hold on a little longer, though cuss me if I couldn't have laid an ambush, and killed a half dozen Ingens by this time."

A few moments rolled by, and the impatient borderer, becoming still more restless, once more muttered to himself—

"Wall, I did promise not to look out till he had found his tree and gin me the word—and I won't break my promise; but I'll jist go round this confounded piece of timber, with my back front forward, and let him blaze away if he please:

for blast my coonskin if I can stand this 'ere any longer, no-how and way it can be fixed!"

Suiting the action to the word, Sharp-Eye slowly backed around the tree, momentarily expecting the bullet of his opponent; but when once fairly on the opposite side, turning his face quickly in the direction Montlack had taken, to his very great astonishment he beheld that worthy some half a mile distant, hurrying, at a rapid pace, towards the mansion of General De Lacy!

"Whew!" whistled Kenton, shaking his fist at the vanishing person of his foe, "fooled agin by the eternal Moses! but won't I make him smoke for this yet? Ingen, Frenchman, or nigger—and tarnation blame me if I don't 'b'lieve he's got nigger blood in him—he's thrown dust into my peepers this time. Come, Bang, this 'ere civerlized country don't suit us; let's be off at once, or we'll forget all we ever know'd. We were thought *some*, out in Kaintuck; but here we are jist nothing, and laughed at by every greenhorn in the country! That bloody thief Girty first made a fool on us; but that wer'n't so bad; then we made fools of ourselves, 'specting old Titus could be a witness; and now, worse than all, that skulkin' yaller devil of a Frenchman has played us round his finger, laughed at us, and left us. Blasted ninnies that we were, standing like fools behind a tree, while he walked away! Sharp-Eye! Sharp-Eye! you that have so often outdodged the dodgin' Ingen, to be dodged in this 'ere way, and by a cussed nigger, it ar' too bad! Come, Bang! let's dodge away from this, or we'll have all the darkies in the country laughin' at us! Whew! it makes me sick, and darned if I'll ever look out from behind a tree agin without a wrench at the stomach!"

Tricked and defeated, Kenton walked away crestfallen and grumbling, and Bang, if you judged him by his drooping head and tail, fully sympathized with the discomfiture of his master.

CHAPTER X.

"He's a 'tarnal coward, as sure as shoot'n', and of the foxy specie; and what's more, has got nigger blood in him!" exclaimed the Scout, in conclusion of the graphic account of the meeting between himself and Montlack.

"He was rather too much for an unsophisticated backwoodsman!" said Duffe, smiling.

"Un—un—un what? But never mind; I reckon you don't mean anything wrong by that ar' jaw-breakin' word of your'n, Sergeant; and I 'knowledge the corn that I wer' done for by the yaller rascal; and so does Bang, and so does all on us, I guess; but thar's no use cryin' over spilt milk: and it will be dratted strange if our time don't come round afore he gets to be an honest man!"

The Scout had finished his narrative, and Bryan, smiling at the mortification he exhibited, both in his words and looks, at being outwitted by Montlack, left him to the tender mercy of the Sergeant, and strolled listlessly off into the woods.

In leaving his companions, Bryan had no particular intent or purpose in view, although, without knowing why, he went in the direction of General De Lacy's. At any rate, he had no hope or expectation of meeting his enemy the captain; but perhaps, unconsciously, had a faint notion or presentiment that, somehow or other (what lover has not experienced the same?), though the chances were against him, he would get to see Coma, and, may-be, meet with an opportunity of making known to her his own innocence and love, and the deep plot of his treacherous rival.

And this mission of love was destined to be far more successful than the warlike embassies of the Sergeant and Ken-

ton; for Coma, impelled by hopes very near akin to those of her lover, discovering that Captain Jean had sullenly determined to remain in doors for the remainder of the day, took advantage of this domestic freak of his, to steal cautiously from her room, and hurry to the usual trysting-place of herself and Bryan. But she did not go joyfully forth to the anticipated meeting with her lover; for, in truth, there was no gladness in poor Coma's heart, and as yet nothing but darkness, gloom, and doubt. Still, he had whispered her to believe him innocent until they had met again, and she was determined to do so, though it was love and heart struggling faintly against reason and conviction. Yet, although desponding, she had that last refuge of the miserable and despairing—a lingering hope; and that hope, the brightest child of Mercy, even though small and weak, and almost pulseless now, was sufficient to bear her up, and with a sunshine smile led her on and on, till, with a cry of renewed confidence, she had once more fallen trustingly upon the throbbing bosom of her lover!

"And you will doubt no longer?" exclaimed Bryan, with rapturous emotion, pressing to his heart her shrinking form.

"Never more," she whispered.

"Let that cunning cousin of yours say what he may?" added the lover.

"False once, false always. I will believe him no more," was her trusting reply.

"And your father?" muttered the lover, doubtfully.

"Can never lessen my love, or shake my confidence in you now," murmured Coma, looking up confidently into his face.

"Then, let what will happen," he exclaimed, with proud energy, "let sorrow, and shame, and poverty fall upon me, I will ever be to thee, Coma, as I am now. Is it so?"

"Ever," was her firm, but lute-toned reply.

"Now I am happy!" exclaimed the satisfied lover, "and defy the world, with all its dark cares, and sorrows, and sins, ever again to cast a gloom cloud across my heart, sustained, as it now is and will be, by your unwavering love!"

For a moment, the lover sat in silence, as if afraid to break the charmed spell: fully enjoying that mingling together of soul with soul; that secret mesmeric communing of spirit with spirit; that total forgetfulness of past sorrows and present dangers in the sunny shadowings of the glorious future—that unseen, intangible, indescribable ethereal; that sweet low vibration of the pulsating heart, bringing along with it music, and song, and genius; governing all, and governed by none; and known in man's vocabulary as Love! Fully, and freely, and gushingly, now that all doubts had been removed, did this fairy spirit, like the bright waters of an ever bubbling spring, overflow and infuse itself throughout their hearts; and for the time, Bryan and Coma were supremely happy, forgetful alike of the Past, the Present, and the Future, and knowing naught else but that they were in each other's arms, loving and loved. Their souls were cloudless now; but dark shadows were creeping on and around them, and though they knew it not, and felt it not, Coma, even then, as if gifted with the spirit of divination, with a low sigh, that charmed spell giving place to prophetic imaginings of coming evil, murmured—

"Oh! Bryan! who would have thought the soul of man so dark and treacherous? And who can I trust, now that Cousin Jean, seemingly so kind, and generous, and noble, has proved so wicked and faithless?"

"Trust on me, dear one," exclaimed the lover, his face beaming with honesty and sympathy; "and if ever I prove false to thee, even in word, thought, or deed, then may my soul go down to the grave in sorrow and gloom, without a pleasant memory of the past, or hope of the future! But how came you, Coma, at this moment of indescribable happiness, to think of that heartless villain?"

"I know not, Bryan; for, like the wind we see moving the leaves of the tree, and feel kissing with cool lips our fevered cheek, it has come and gone; but where from, and where to, and for what reason, I am unable to say. But may-be," she continued in a sad voice, "that the thought of him, at such a

moment as this, is a shadowing forth of approaching evil; and O Bryan! I do fear him, and tremble when I think of his dark hypocrisy and treachery."

"I fear him not!" exclaimed Bryan, "now that you know his falsehood, and can brush from your guileless heart the poison of his adder tongue; and believe me all the more innocent, as he would make you think me dark and sinful! I feared him once, but only feared him because I knew that you were ignorant of his cunning treachery; but now that you know all, I feel towards him as I would to a hideous poisonous spider! If he keeps within his web, I'll pass him by with contempt; but, if ever his loathsome form shall cumber my path, I'll grind him to atoms beneath my feet!"

"Promise me, Bryan," said Coma, alarmed at his fierce look, "that you will seek no difficulty with this plotting cousin of mine; for he is base and treacherous, and I fear his aroused malice."

"No fear of him," said Bryan, contemptuously, "for with all his other faults, he has not the redeeming trait of bravery; but has shown himself as cowardly as knavish! Already have I sought at his hands the only reparation he could make me for the insults and injuries offered me in your presence; but like a base coward that he is, the felon and slanderer refused, and upon the ground that I was beneath him, and a criminal! I would be base and low indeed if beneath or more criminal than the traitorous plotting Captain Jean!"

"I do not fear that he will do you corporeal injury," said Coma, with a proud glance at the active and graceful form of her lover, "but O! I do fear his secret, crawling malice! My God!" she continued, with more agitation, as if suddenly struck with the dreadful thought, "what if he should attempt to execute that horrid threat he made of giving you over into the power of the law? Tell me! O tell me, Bryan, is it more than one of his wicked threats, or are you really in danger from his malice and treachery?"

"I am innocent, Coma," replied Bryan firmly, but sadly;

"and have a confidence that God will not permit falsehood and wickedness to triumph over truth and innocence. Yet I will not conceal from you that, if this depraved cousin of yours shall press this charge, as he threatens to do, and will swear to his present false and groundless statement, then I would be in very great danger of falling a victim to his enmity; and the chances are against me."

"O Bryan, what shall we do? what shall we do to soften the hatred of this wicked man?" exclaimed Coma, clasping her hands in agony, and gazing with sorrowful eagerness into the eyes of her lover.

"Nothing!" was his short, stern reply; "nothing, dear Coma—for sooner would I moulder in a dungeon, and have my name forever blackened with infamy and disgrace, than take one step towards seeking the mercy or pity of this infamous hypocrite. He may go on with his hatred and treachery; but I will meet him with a bold front, as a guiltless man, and can look down upon him and scorn him, though he succeed in his malicious undertaking, and incarcerate me in a prison. But cheer up, dear one; for he has not yet executed his threat, and may repent, or fear to take this bold leap beyond the confines of truth and honesty."

"No! no! believe it not, Bryan," said Coma, weeping; "for he that would be guilty of the treachery of which Jean has already been guilty would tremble at no other guilt, would draw back at no other crime, and would hesitate at no other sin. No! no! you are lost! lost! and the wicked and false will triumph, unless God comes to the rescue, or you find some means of proving your innocence."

"Give not away to your fears, Coma," said Bryan, cheerfully, "for all is not yet lost. The law is terrible, very terrible to the guilty; but remember, it is also the safeguard and protection of the innocent. I have great confidence, once this matter is placed under the cognizance and control of the courts, that the truth will be sifted out, and the innocent go forth without a stain; whilst the guilty one, caught in his own toils,

will receive the merited scorn and contempt of every honest man. Then cheer up, dear one, and smile again. Do not weep and despair before the storm cometh, for it may never be here; and the raging winds have not yet given even a token of its approach."

"But it will come," returned Coma, sadly, although slightly cheered by the firm voice of her lover; "for it only sleepeth, Bryan, and will burst upon us when we least expect it, tearing and rending all before it; and O! if you, the strong man, are prostrated by the tempest, what will become of your poor Coma?"

"Never fear! this false-tongued hypocrite has not my fate so entirely under his control. Remember! I have witnesses to prove his intimacy with the renegade Girty, and that they were in company on the very day the bond was given. This evidence will go a great way to show his treachery, and will, at least, prove to your father that our enemy spoke falsely when he finished his knavery by denying his signature and all knowledge of his base accomplice."

"True!" exclaimed Coma, with a hopeful smile. "You are right, Bryan, and we will not bow to this arch traitor. God will lay open the cunning devices of my malevolent cousin; and all honest men will see at once his trickery and wickedness. Sin may triumph for a season, and hypocrisy get the better of truth; but the vail will be rent asunder at last, and the hideous monster will be able no longer to conceal his deformity."

"And in due time," said the lover, in the same confident tone, "whether our enemy shall attempt to execute his threat or not, I will show to your father his baseness and deceit; and I will also prove to him that he unwittingly defamed the character of my gallant parent, and that there is no foundation for the heavy charge against his fame."

"Bless you for these consoling words," murmured Coma, hope and joy once more taking the place of despair and sorrow. "We will be happy yet, in spite of the malice and hatred of

this man. I feel that it will be so, and will, therefore, no longer doubt and fear; but like the daughter of a soldier—"

"And sweetheart of a soldier's son," exclaimed Bryan, gayly.

"Ay, and sweetheart of a soldier's son," added Coma, blushing, "meet all dangers that may arise with a bold heart, confiding fully in your innocence—"

"And love," said Bryan, again interrupting her.

"And love," she whispered—"ay, your love, Bryan, and my devotion."

"Hist!" exclaimed Sharp-Eye, as, bounding over a little knoll, he stood in the presence of the lovers, "the inimy are on the trail, and I guess you ain't particklar anxious to meet them jist now."

Kenton, thinking that Bryan had gone forth in search of Montlack, without more ado had followed his footsteps, intending to be in at the rencounter, and see that the captain did all things fairly, and was guilty of no more accidents; but finding that the meeting was likely to be more loving than hostile, the Scout quickly retired beyond sight of the lovers, placing himself, however, at a convenient distance between them and the mansion of De Lacy, where he remained upon watch, guarding their privacy, until he beheld the general, in company with Montlack, approaching, when he immediately, as we have already shown, bounded over the concealing knoll and gave the alarm.

"Why are you here, and what do you mean, and what enemies are you speaking about?" exclaimed Bryan, sharply, for he was in no humor to be thus interrupted, and suspected the Scout of being an intentional eye-witness of the meeting between himself and Coma.

"I 'spected you wer' after the captain, Mister Bryan; but when I saw how it wer', I thought it mightn't be far wrong jist to step over the hill thar and keep a lookout for interlopers till you had had your talk. So Bang and me jist kept up a particklar sharp squintin' towards the big house, for we 'spected

the inimy wer' thar, till we cotched a sight of the ginerall and that yaller rascal, what fooled me so this mornin', comin' this 'ere way, when we thought it wer' 'bout time to draw in the outposts and give the alarm."

"Thank you, Simon, for your care and kindness," exclaimed Bryan, extending his hand to the Scout; "and you, too, Coma, must know this brave and generous man, for he loves me as a father, and you see how he watches over my safety."

"I had often heard of you, captain," replied Coma, with a smile, "even before Bryan had told me of your love and care for him; and now," she added, placing her soft, tiny hand in the rough grasp of the borderer, "I want you still to love and guard him, and also find, if you can, a little place in your heart for me."

"A little place, my blossom of the forest?" said Kenton, with native-born gallantry; "why, it ar' all your'n for the axing; and if it wer' as big as a camp-meetin', it wer' all the same, for you should have it for one of them sweet smiles. Cuss me if Mr. Bryan hadn't better look out, or he'll have Captin' Kenton for a rival, instead of that darned Frenchman. I wouldn't be surprised if you jist took the whole on my heart, and drove Mr. Bryan clean out altogether; would you, Bang?"

Bang, as he was in a lady's company (unlike some puppies that we have seen), modulated his usual assent into a very low growl; but still sufficiently loud to attract the attention of Coma, who, patting him upon his shaggy head, by this simple act alone (so much does kindness influence both man and beast) not only insured the devotion of Sharp-Eye, but of Bang himself, which was no trivial acquirement, and which the brave dog, in after days, fully exhibited by his unwavering faithfulness.

"The yaller-skins are drawing near," exclaimed Kenton, peeping cautiously over the top of the little hillock; "and I guess you'd better be making tracks, Mister Bryan, if you ain't got no notion of tryin' that 'tarnal rascal a blaze."

"Remember! Bryan," said Coma; "you have promised me

not to seek a meeting with Jean. Go, now, and whenever I have an opportunity, I will meet you here again."

"Farewell!" murmured Bryan, holding her hand (the Scout intentionally turning his back upon them); and, unpardonable sin, except on like occasions, he smothered her answering farewell with a kiss.

Touching his cap, Sharp-Eye bounded away, followed by Bryan; and Coma was left to meet the suspicious glances of Montlack and lowering brow of her father.

But she did it nobly; for love is equal in strategy, any day, to hatred and malice; and the quick, piercing rays of the cunning captain's burning orbs could read nothing in her smiling face but a slight shade of sadness, mingled with a little natural surprise at the honor of their unexpected company.

Bah! you life-long deceitful hypocrites, pride not yourselves upon your cunning! You are often made the victims of the most artless simplicity. The artful witness, priding himself upon his shrewdness, with a well-conned story at his tongue's end, falls an easy victim to the skilful attorney; but save us from one of your say-nothing, simple fellows, is the prayer of all the devout of the profession, for you often mark him down as a fool, when, in truth, he is doing that same honor for yourself.

CHAPTER XI.

HOPE, some one has beautifully remarked,

"Shall sit upon the tossing waves of thought,
As broods the halcyon on the troubled deep."

And so it was now with Coma!

With a little pardonable simplicity, or deceit if you will have it so, for if the two are not one and the same thing, they very fre-

quently, in this rare old world of ours, go hand in hand together; then, I say, with a little pardonable simplicity or deceit (for all stratagems are fair, you know, in love, or war, or horse-swopping), Coma had completely (to use a common and very *feeling* expression when literally executed) thrown dirt in the eyes of her father and Montlack, and concealed her recent meeting with her lover. But she was not so successful on the night following, when she again sat in the parlor at home along with her father and cousin; for the latter, believing, with the poet *Æschylus*,

"When the heart conceives
Thoughts of deep vengeance on a foe, what means
To achieve the deed more certain, than to wear
The form of Friendship?"—

had, with smiles and soft sighs, been fluttering around her; more than once hinting at his devotion, and hoping that she would look upon him now as she had done in olden times, and again call him her dear cousin Jean, as she was wont to do before the unlucky events of the last few days; and, perhaps—O what joy it would be to him!—might yet return his ardent affection.

Coma for a long time bore his unceasing and deceitful murmurings with a praiseworthy and martyr-like patience, and without saying anything that would reveal her late conversation with Bryan, and the discoveries she had made; and merely brushed from her thoughts, by unmeaning and indifferent replies, his unwished-for buzzing, as she had often done, with a careless brush of the hand, the melancholy, troublesome hum of the mosquito, which forever (and his conversation was very similar) seemed, to the annoyed ear, as if about to make an attack, but never exactly bringing its determination to a point; or rather, if you will allow us a legal pun, "filing its bill."

But Captain Jean was not to be put off so, and like the Irishman's little bird, to which we have likened him, at last passed beyond the limits even of her indifference; and after no inconsiderable amount of treacherous abuse (done by innuendo) upon the head of the absent Bryan, filed his bill with due

ceremony by remarking that he had the commands of her father to press his suit, and trusted that she would receive this offer of himself (the most valuable gift he had in the world) with a kindly sympathy!

"Yes!" exclaimed Coma, tortured almost to madness, and her whole soul burning with indignation at his continued hypocrisy, "I will receive this valuable offer as it deserves, with scorn and contempt! I know you now, base hypocrite and heartless villain that you are, and you can no longer deceive my simple heart with your honeyed words and pretended affection! He, that you would make me believe base and undeserving, and upon whom you have been pouring your slanderous poison, is immeasurably above you in all that is honorable and praiseworthy; as much so, cunning plotter, as the heavens are above the earth!"

If Montlack had placed his hand in his bosom to draw forth the locket of his sweetheart, and instead thereof had grasped a slimy coiling snake, he could not have been more astounded than he was at this unexpected and bitter outburst of Coma.

But recovering himself, after a quick glance at the general, who sat in a distant part of the room looking forth from a window, and finding that he had not noticed the excited voice of his daughter, Montlack hissed from between his compressed teeth—

"Ha! does the wind lie in that direction, fair cousin? I had believed you too noble ever again to have even a lingering thought of that base hound, now that he had proved himself so unworthy and so degraded!"

"The Jews called Christ Beelzebub!" retorted Coma, coldly.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Montlack, with a scowl of intense malice.

"That the base and wicked were ever ready to decry the good, and vilify the characters of their betters!" replied Coma.

"Now, by heavens! I have always heard that love was blind,



COMA.

but this is infatuation beyond my very dreams!" retorted Montlack.

"I am not at all surprised that my honest cousin should exhibit so much astonishment at a simple truth!" remarked Coma, with cutting irony.

"Have I said aught but the truth respecting this low fellow?" asked Montlack.

"You have said naught that was true!" replied Coma, bitterly. "Falsehood is branded upon your very brow, and all that you have spoken is as false as your own base heart; and you would not dare thus to speak were you in his presence, and unprotected by the company of a female!"

"Is he not the son of a degraded traitor? Answer me that. And has he not made himself a felon by committing forgery? And did I not brand him with these dark crimes? and has he ever resented the infamy thus heaped upon him?"

"No! no! no! I answer all of your questions, no!" exclaimed Coma, giving way to anger; "he is not the son of a traitor; my father was mistaken, and will soon acknowledge his error; he is not a felon, as you well know, and has not resented your insults," laughed Coma, scornfully, "because you were too great a coward to give him an opportunity! Are you answered now, Monsieur Montlack?"

"I am!" muttered the discomfited captain, attempting a sneer; "but when and where did you make these wonderful discoveries? Has this very truthful and honorable Mr. Head been giving you these veracious accounts of himself?"

"Not at all acknowledging your right thus to catechize me," replied Coma, "I am not ashamed to say that Mr. Head was my informant, and I wish no better evidence of *his* purity and *your* baseness than his simple word."

"As I expected," retorted Montlack, mockingly; "the criminal brought forward to prove his own innocence. Bah! Coma, do not let your senseless infatuation thus lead you astray! Why, if we placed any confidence in their words, the veriest

scoundrel and cutthroat in all the land would be as pure and innocent as an angel."

"I have other proof of his innocence," said Coma, coldly, "if that will be more satisfactory to my justice-loving cousin."

"Who? What?" exclaimed Montlack, eagerly, his countenance, in spite of all his efforts, growing pale and anxious.

"Old Titus saw you when you signed that bond which you now pronounce a forgery; and was looking in upon you and your trusty friend Girty when you were preparing your hellish net to destroy an innocent man," replied Coma, exultingly.

"Any one else?" asked Montlack, drawing a long breath, as if greatly relieved, and speaking in a light, disparaging tone, for he wished not only to deceive Coma, but conceal his own uneasiness.

"His word is sufficient," replied Coma.

"Ha! ha! 'tis too good," laughed Montlack, with forced gayety; "almost equal to a comedy—a criminal proving innocence by his own words, backed by the testimony of a negro, and that negro his slave, and what is still better, convincing a silly girl by such indubitable proofs. Ha! ha! Excuse me, cousin, but I must laugh."

"Your mirth is very unseasonable, Monsieur Montlack," replied Coma, haughtily, for she was not deceived, but greatly annoyed by his feigned amusement. "If, however, you feel disposed to be merry, I will no longer be a check upon your mirth, but retire at once to my room."

"Stay, stay, Coma!" exclaimed Montlack, checking quickly his merriment as he beheld his cousin preparing to leave him; "this trifling has lasted long enough, and we must now treat this affair seriously, and with the importance it deserves."

"I await your wishes, sir," replied Coma, with chilling politeness.

"I have a right, Coma, as your relation, the nearest of blood to your father, and as a suitor for your hand, accepted and acknowledged by your parent," said Montlack, gravely, and even sternly, dwelling with emphasis upon the words "accepted

and acknowledged," "to watch over and protect you from the snares of a cunning fortune-hunter, and I intend to enforce that right, for your happiness, if nothing else, and at all hazards, though I may thereby increase your hatred and aversion to myself."

"I acknowledge no such right as you claim," said Coma, proudly and firmly, "and think, Monsieur Montlack, that you are transgressing the strict rules of politeness and courtesy, or, in other words, to be plain with you, are becoming unbearably presumptuous. When I wish advice or counsel, I will seek it of my father, and you must excuse me if I now leave you and join him."

"Stop, Coma, or your pride may meet with a fall," muttered the captain. "I have a proposition to make you, and if that fails," he added, sneeringly, "I will join you in your short journey across the room."

"I am ready to hear you, sir," replied Coma, halting, "provided you do not remind me so presumptuously of your self-constituted rights."

"If it is your good pleasure," retorted Montlack, unable to resist a sneer, "I will say nothing more of my rights, but state at once, and as plainly as I am able, my wishes, and leave it with you to say yea or nay."

"Go on; I am all attention," was the impatient reply of Coma.

"Notwithstanding your indignant denial of the guilt of this fellow Head," remarked Montlack, looking steadily into the face of his cousin, "I am fully able to prove him a felon, and hold his fate in my hands. Even your infatuation cannot blind you to this fact. Your sanguine hopes are all groundless, for his word, or the evidence of his slave, will not be admitted in a court of justice, and my oath, the handwriting of the bond, the witness to it, and the improbability of my borrowing money from him, an almost entire stranger, will all go to prove the forgery and his guilt."

"To what does all this tend?" asked Coma, trembling with agitation.

"Why, so far I have, from respect for your feelings, neglected to treat this felony in the manner it deserves, hoping that the criminal might leave the country, and, once gone, that you would forget that such a being, so unworthy of your esteem or notice, had ever been in existence; but since it has not so happened, I have but one course left me. You must either pledge me your word and honor that you will never meet or correspond with him again, or I will take measures immediately—for longer delay would compromise me in the estimation of the community—to secure him as a criminal, and see that he receive the punishment merited by his crimes. You have now my determination, and I swear that I will execute it, for it is not a silly threat; so weigh well your answer, for upon it depends the future fate of this unworthy man."

Coma was fully aware of the danger hanging over the head of her lover, and trembled with the excess of her agitation as she listened to the cool villany of her unworthy suitor; but remembering her own recent promises to Bryan, never to doubt again, and his noble determination to meet boldly the groundless charge made against him, she did not hesitate long, but, rising from her seat, said firmly—

"Your false tongue can never again lower him in my estimation; he is innocent, and fears not your malice. As to your threats, I regard them not!—and to your request, unhesitatingly say nay! I will now join my father."

"And I bear you company," said Montlack, with a smile of devilish meaning, adding, in a lower tone to himself, "for your father must know all this, and shall aid me in netting the bold rascal!"

Aroused by the approaching tread of Montlack and his daughter, the general turned quickly in his chair, exclaiming—

"Have you tired of each other's company, children, and come to join me in looking out upon this beautiful moonlight scene? I have been dreaming of the past and future, and have

enjoyed myself passing well, though communing with myself, and chewing the cud both of bitter and sweet fancies."

Coma sat down by the side of her father, but made no reply.

Montlack, with a glance at his cousin, as if to give her a last chance of agreeing to his request, but which met with no answering look, with an air of deep sorrow replied to his uncle's exclamation—

"The conversation of Coma and myself has been anything but a pleasant one; and I am truly sorry to add to your bitter thoughts by saying that I have been struggling in vain to convince my cousin of the unworthiness of this Mr. Head, with whom she is so much infatuated, and have in return for my kindness only received unmerited abuse, and the information that she had met him to-day, and that he was innocent both of being the son of a traitor, and of forgery; and in spite of all my entreaties to the contrary, and all the evidence I have brought forward to prove his guilt, so much has she fallen under his blighting influence that she still regards him with favor, and says she will meet him again. This is truly distressing, general; and I know of no way to destroy his influence, and get clear of the presumptuous fellow, but to seize him at once for the forgery he has committed, and send him to keep company with his equals in a prison. I had hoped to persuade Coma to see him no more, and treat him with the contempt he deserves; but failing in my endeavors, I have concluded that it was my duty, although a painful one, first to let you know all, and then take immediate steps to have this fellow arrested and punished. In so doing, I trust that I have not presumed too far, and that my relationship, and the lively interest I feel for the happiness of my cousin, and in the fair name of our house, will excuse this seeming interference in so delicate a matter."

The general, although greatly astounded and enraged at the information so abruptly given him by Montlack, managed to smother his anger sufficiently to hear him to the end; but

when the cunning captain had concluded his plausible story, exclaimed—

"I not only pardon you, Jean, but thank you—and thank you warmly—for the honest zeal you have shown in protecting the fair name of our house. But you, Coma, what shall I say to you?" he added, turning with flashing eye upon his shrinking daughter; "and is it possible that you, the child of a De Lacy, have degraded yourself so much as to again hold communion with this miserable wretch?"

"He is not miserable, father, on account of any crime," murmured Coma, bravely determining, now the storm had come, to meet it with a bold heart, "for he is innocent, as he will prove to you, if you will only permit him; but he is miserable, father, because he has been slandered and judged unjustly, and has not an opportunity of proving his innocence."

Wishing to destroy all the influence of Coma, and strengthen, if possible, the prejudice of his uncle, Montlack, in a half mocking, half serious tone, as if amused at the ridiculousness of the charge, and at the same time somewhat hurt, hurriedly remarked—

"Ay! I had forgotten to inform you, general, that this very cunning Mr. Head has already proved his innocence to the entire satisfaction of my cousin, and has done it by his own veracious statement, confirmed by the testimony of a negro; and what is still more amusing, though I must confess somewhat galling to my self-esteem, has convinced her that I am a great scoundrel, and was engaged in a conspiracy with the renegade Girty to strip him of his money, and then ruin his character! I expect he had about as much of the one as the other to lose, and it wouldn't bankrupt the nation to purchase out his stock in trade. Had it been anybody else but my cousin, I would have resented this silly and odious charge in a manner it deserved; but ascribing it not so much to her ill-will for myself as strange infatuation for this man, I have thought best to consider it the mere idle offspring of a diseased heart. I wouldn't be at all surprised," added the captain, with a light

laugh, "if General De Lacy became one of the conspirators against the welfare of this unfortunate young gentleman, before we are well done with this annoying affair."

"Shame, shame, Coma!" said her father, angrily; adding, in a more sorrowful tone, "Is it true that my daughter has sunk so low as still to retain a sentiment of affection for one so totally unworthy, and to allow that feeling, with silly infatuation, to destroy and wipe out from her heart all respect for her father, and all remembrance of past kindness and friendship on the part of her cousin? Shame on you, Coma! If any other than Jean had told me this, old as I am, I would have driven the shameful slander down his dishonored throat, and laughed him to scorn!"

"He hears but half that hears one party only," said Coma, sadly.

"She would have us, general," remarked Montlack, "listen to the denial of the criminal himself, or, forsooth, take the testimony of his tutored and trembling slave! A brave way, this, to get at the truth."

"Is it so, Coma?" asked her father.

"It is," replied the daughter, firmly; "for Mr. Head, himself, is noble, and brave, and truthful; and the black, though belonging to a despised race, has ever been noted for his honesty and veracity."

"This is folly, Coma!—the very extreme of folly," said the general; "and do you for a moment suppose that I would take the word of a criminal, and of his slave, against the statement of an honorable man, and that man my own blood relation?"

Montlack turned a triumphant look upon Coma; but she, undaunted, returned it with a flash of contempt, and, nerving herself for another and last struggle, exclaimed, in reply to her father—

"But this is not all, for he will prove to you, by the testimony of Captain Kenton, that Monsieur Montlack was in company with this renegade Girty, as he calls him, on the day previous, and at the time this bond was executed; and he will

also prove, by the testimony of Sergeant Duffe and others, that his father stood as fair and unsuspected after this slander of his being a spy had been whispered against him as any officer in the army; and he will go still further, and prove that my *brave* cousin here cowardly refused him the satisfaction given by every gentleman for insults offered, and not only refused to meet him, but to meet the Sergeant, even after the latter had disgraced him with a blow; and yet more than that, he will convince you that our most chivalrous relation, who holds the honor of our house so much at heart, after being forced to agree to a hostile meeting with Captain Kenton, cowardly and basely attempted his murder, and when he had failed in his bloody attempt excused himself under the pitiful plea of accident. All this, and more, will he prove, if you will only give him an opportunity; and I pray you, father, for the sake of your daughter, and of justice, that you will do so, and be no longer influenced by the false, but plausible stories of your base and treacherous nephew."

Captain Jean had determined in his own mind to show no astonishment at anything Coma might say, but to meet all her charges against himself with indifference, or with the air of an injured man; and no doubt he would have done so, for he had perfect control over his own emotions and features, had he but had an inkling of what she knew, and of what she was about to say; but, as he had not, in spite of all his endeavors, he could not entirely conceal his uneasiness, and as Coma spoke, exhibited marked symptoms both of fear and guilt, sufficiently so to convince her of the truth of what she had heard, and to raise some doubt even in the mind of the general.

"Can this be true, Jean?" inquired the father, turning his stern eye full upon the face of the abashed captain.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Montlack, recovering himself, and attempting to conceal his fears under the appearance of merriment—"and has my wise uncle caught the madness and infatuation of his daughter, that he asks, if it was not so supreme-

ly silly, such an insulting question? Why, my dear sir," he continued, noticing his uncle look uneasy under the fear of ridicule, "do not these wonderful stories bear falsehood plainly written upon them, and staring forth at every turn? I must confess that I was greatly astonished to see the folly even of Coma make her so credulous; but to hear you ask whether these charges were true or false has increased my surprise tenfold."

"Pardon me, Jean," said De Lacy, reddening under the ridicule of Montlack; "if I had thought a moment, I would have never asked so silly a question. I see my folly now, and the ridiculousness of these wild stories."

"I acknowledge," continued Montlack, "that Sergeant Duffe called upon me in behalf of this young fellow, and that I refused to give him the satisfaction he demanded, simply because he was not my equal, and was the son of a traitor, and himself a felon."

"And very properly," remarked the general.

"As to Duffe striking me, and I refusing to resent the blow, that story is but on a par with the others," continued Montlack, "and without one atom of foundation; for the Sergeant, who is a man of honor, seeing at once that my reasons for declining a meeting with his principal were valid and good, quietly took his leave, and, if I am not mistaken, was met by you, general, upon the stairway, exhibiting in his appearance, I suppose, no mark either of anger or violence."

"None at all; I never saw him more polite," replied the general.

"As for this Mr. Kenton," said Montlack, "that my de-ranked little cousin mentions so frequently, I know nothing of him more than he fled the country some years ago for murder, and since that time has been a wild and reckless outlaw upon our western frontier. If he can be found, I have no doubt he will swear to all Coma has said, and even more, if this cunning Mr. Head will make the consideration sufficiently large. Why," added the captain, "I would want no better

evidence of the guilt of this man than the witnesses he introduces to prove his innocence. First of all comes himself, the son, as you well know, of a traitor and spy; then a negro, his own slave; then a reckless murderer and outlaw; and who next, unless it be the veritable Girty himself, I am at a loss to say. Bah! Coma, don't you see how ridiculous these stories are? What inducement had I to the crime and treachery you have charged against me? Was I not his strong and fast friend? and did I not plead his cause with your father until I found him unworthy of your love? And why should I go to him, a stranger, for money, when my uncle has never refused me any sum I have asked?"

"True," muttered the general.

"Besides," continued Montlack, "we have every reason to believe that this fellow never had such a sum; for none of these worthy witnesses of his, not even his foster-father, the Sergeant, has ever mentioned his having any money."

"I can prove that!" exclaimed Coma, her face brightening, "for he told me so, and before the date of that bond."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Montlack, "and here is his other witness. You will be highly honored, uncle, when your daughter shall be brought into a court, along with a negro, renegade, and outlaw, to prove the character of her lover, the forger."

De Lacy became livid with rage at the very thought of such a disgrace, and, in reply to the captain's galling picture of his daughter's appearance in court as a witness for Bryan, exclaimed, in furious rage—

"Begone, Coma! and let me hear no more of this low scoundrel. I would sooner see you in your grave than undergoing the stare of a grinning crowd in a court of justice."

"But, father," said Coma, "you would not have an innocent man convicted of a crime, and disgraced forever, when my evidence might be of advantage, and perhaps save him?"

"Innocent!" shouted the general, giving way to his fury. "Why he is as black, and base, and guilty as hell itself, and none but a maudlin love-sick fool could think otherwise. I

tell you, Jean, our leniency has made this young scoundrel bold and daring, and it will be criminal in us to let him escape longer."

"To-morrow, I will see that he be placed in the hands of justice," replied Montlack, glancing at Coma, "and then he will have an opportunity, as he so much desires it, of proving all the fine stories he has been telling my very credulous cousin. Depend upon me, it will not be my fault, sir, if I do not soon free you of his troublesome presence, and send him to herd with his fellows in guilt in the penitentiary."

"He is innocent, father, indeed he is!" exclaimed Coma, weeping, "and you have been deceived by Jean. You will find out at last that this cousin of mine, who is nothing more than a base, plotting hypocrite, has been using you as a tool to cover up his own wickedness and treachery, and insure success to his villainous schemes."

Poor Coma! she was very unfortunate in using the expression "tool;" for, although nothing is more common than for one man to be made a tool of by another, still there is no expression in the English language so loathed and hated as this. And so it was now with the general, and he shouted with fury—

"A tool! Things are coming to a pretty pass indeed when a silly girl has hardihood enough to brand her father with the odious title of tool. Begone, shameless girl, to your room, and consider yourself a prisoner until you have my permission to leave it. Remember," he added threateningly, as she arose to obey his harsh command, "that if you ever meet or correspond with this man again, I will disown you, and drive you forth a beggar, never more to return. Go, now; you have my commands and my determination; and by the eternal heaven if you break the first, you shall suffer the latter, though I crush my own heart, and destroy my name forever, by enforcing the penalty!"

CHAPTER XII.

"NOTHIN' more sartain," replied Kenton, in answer to an inquiry of Bryan respecting Simon Girty; "he's worse than an Ingen; and I'm as sartain this wer' him as my name's Simon Kenton. I've trailed him and his murderin' redskins many a day through the woods of Kaintuck, and would have known him at first sight out thar, notwithstandin' his red wig and ragged dress; but cuss me if I 'spected him here in the old settlements, and he fooled me, sure enough."

"You will have your revenge some of these days," said Bryan, consolingly.

"As for that, Mr. Bryan, I guess I'm already even with him; for I fooled him once," chuckled the borderer, "to the loss of 'bout thirty of his yellin' devils."

"How was that?" asked the Sergeant.

"Why, you must know, Sargeant, I wer' at the time I'm speakin' of in one of them stockade forts, out in Kaintuck, called Bryant's Station, and had been thar for a considerable spell, as hunter and spy for the settlement, when one mornin', jist as we wer' all gittin' ready to leave the fort for a grand hunt, we wer' suddenly pretty considerably dumfounded by the 'pearance of a band of Ingens, yellin' like devils, and pepperin' away at us, from the east side of the station. At first the youngsters, for we had 'bout forty men in the fort, began to grow sorter pale, but after a short spell, findin' they wer'n't all dead, and that the redskins only numbered 'bout thirty, they wer' for rushin' out at once and takin' it rough and tumble with the inimy. But I know'd it wer' agin the natur' of an Ingen to risk anything, and wer'n't goin' to be fooled by the 'tarnal rascals in that ar' way, and told the boys that wer' jist what the red devils wer' after; and, in my opinion, they

had an ambuscade on the west side 'round the spring—which wer' about two hundred yards outside the picket fence—and they wer' only waitin' for us to sally out by the east gate, to make a rush on the west side, and carry it when none of us wer' thar to make any show of a fight. The captin, who know'd all about Ingen ways, wer' jist of my notion, and the boys, too, when they had hearn me out; and so we all fell to thinkin' how we'd turn the tables on the blasted critters. First of all, the captain said, we must git a supply of water from the spring, for if the Ingens wer' in force, which wer' pretty sartain to all on us, then they would lie around the station for days, and we'd all die for the want of somethin' to drink. But how to git it wer' the question, and a darned tough one, too, and troubled us 'mazingly; for we wer' jist as sartain the Ingens wer' in ambush round the spring as if we had seed 'em. At last, when we couldn't do anything else, we all come to the conclusion—though it did go a little agin the grain—that it wer' best for the women-folks jist to take thar pails and go to the spring as usual, as if nothin' wer' 'spected."

"And more shame to you!" exclaimed Mrs. Duffe, bridling up, "to send the women where you were afraid to go yourselves!"

"We wer'n't 'zactly 'shamed," replied the borderer, with a roguish wink, "but felt sorter ticklish-like. We know'd they wouldn't be in much danger, and wer'n't afeared of the Ingens doin' them any harm, for we knew, if they wer' in ambuscade, as we 'spected, they wouldn't show themselves for a few women scalps, when, by lyin' still, they might surprise the fort, and scalp the whole on us."

"And did they go?" asked the Sergeant's wife, becoming impatient.

"Sartainly," replied Kenton; "but it took a pretty considerable quantity of coaxin', I can tell you, as much so as to make one of 'em marry a fellow. Howsomever, at last, when we had pretty nigh gin up the idea, they all 'greed to make the trial, and the captin's wife takin' the lead, the rest all

follored her. When they wer' all once well outer the fort, blast me if we didn't begin to repent, and feel like chargin' out on the red rascals; but thar wer' no help for it then; so we jist kept a close watch, holdin' on to the gate, and if one Ingen had show'd his head, cuss me if we wouldn't have been down on 'em, if they had been a thousand to one. But they didn't make any noise, and, jist as we 'spected, kept low, without diskiverin' themselves; and the women went on slowly to the spring, and by turns filled their pails and returned to the fort, all in due order, till they got safe back to the gate, when they begun to crowd some; but we didn't say anything, and made no complaint, though they did spill a sight of the water. It wer' a ticklish manoeuvre that, Sargeant, but 'twas the best we could do, and our only chance, and I reckon we didn't breathe more nor once from the time the women left the gate till they all got back agin."

"What did you do, then?" asked Duffe.

"O, we felt safe enough!" laughed Kenton. "Once we had the water inside of the fort, we didn't care a dratted bit for all the Ingens in creation. We know'd the most of them wer' down around the spring, so we jist sent out ten of the most active of the boys to brush with them fellers on the east side, and the balance of us got ready on the west side, to wait thar main attack. Sure enough," continued the Scout, warming up with the recollection of the fight, "so soon as the boys commenced pepperin' away at them ar' devils on the east side, and the Ingens gradually retreated 'cordin' to thar plan, and the boys follored slowly, 'cordin' to our'n, up jumps that ar' same Simon Girty, with more than five hundred of his red-skins, and made straight for the west gate. But we wer' all thar waitin'; and when they had got in good shootin' distance, may-be we didn't let 'em have it!—and blast me if we didn't jist cover the ground with thar painted bodies, and in a minute not one of them wer' to be seen! They got back to cover a little faster than they got outer it, cussin' and howlin' at how they wer' took in; and at the same time our boys came runnin'

in at the east gate, laughin' and shoutin' at how we had fooled the tarnation critters."

"Pretty well done!" exclaimed Duffe, with a soldier's admiration of a well-played stratagem; "you outtricked Girty that time very handsomely!"

"I guess he wer' proper mad at his defeat!" laughed Kenton, "for I hearn him cussin' away like all wrath, and jist called out to him, in a good-humored way, to try it agin; but he only cussed the louder, and swore he'd have our scalps before he wer' done with us."

"And did he get them?" asked Sally, with great simplicity.

"Not 'zactly," said the Scout, rubbing the top of his head, and glancing with his laughing blue eye at the earnest face of the questioner, "for we wer'n't perlite enough to go out and give 'em to him, and he wer'n't able to get in and take 'em—and so we jist 'mused ourselves for a day or so shootin' at each other, and when he found nothin' wer' to be made at that ar' game, he quietly broke up the siege and left. We didn't insist on his stayin' any longer, and wer'n't uncommon sorry when he left; for, to tell the truth, our water began to run very low, and with it went our fine spirits, and one and all we wer' gittin' pretty considerably tired of constant watchin' and fightin'."

"A very fair brush," muttered the Sergeant. "But did you permit him and his savages to leave the country without interruption?"

"A cuss on it—no!" shouted Kenton, his eye gleaming with fury, and his half jocular tone giving place to one of deep passion. "But it wer' a sad day for us that we didn't."

"How so?" inquired the Sergeant.

"The cunning villain went away, leavin' a broad trail behind him, as if to invite pursuit," said Kenton; "and we, havin' received a reinforcement, makin' our number some two hundred men, wer' fools enough to fall into the snare—and follerin' on, like blind dogs on a fresh trail, stumbled into an ambuscade, wer' defeated, and lost half our number. Blast him! he wer' more than even with us at the Blue Licks."

"Gorrer-'mighty! what's dat?" shouted Titus, springing to his feet, as a little packet thrown through a broken window-pane fell lightly upon his woolly pate.

"After him, Bang!" exclaimed Kenton, springing to the door, rifle in hand.

"Stop, Simon, for Heaven's sake!" shouted Bryan, who, seizing the packet, had recognized the address; "whoever it is, he is a friend—let him go."

"Jist as you please, Mr. Bryan," replied the Scout, calling off Bang, and turning back. "I thought, may-be, it might be my old friend Girty agin, and wouldn't have been darnation sorry if it wer', for I'd like most cussedly to take a blaze at him jist now. Blast me, if it wouldn't be some satisfaction to lift his scalp, after thinkin' 'bout that ar' bloody defeat of our'n!"

By the ruddy light of the blazing pine fire, Bryan quickly deciphered the hurried note of Coma—for the packet received so mysteriously was from her—and through it he was informed of all that had taken place at the mansion, of the rage of her father, the continued treachery of the captain, and of the final determination of the latter to have him arrested. She also made known that she herself was a prisoner, but if, upon the approaching trial, it would be of benefit to show that he had told any one of his being in possession of money, then to have her brought before the court, and not to hesitate a moment on account of her sex or diffidence; for it was a duty he owed both to himself and her to make the very best defence in his power, and she would never forgive him if he neglected any means of proving his own innocence through a mistaken regard for her feelings.

"Generous girl!" muttered Bryan, dropping his head upon his hand, "I fear that my love will only bring heavy sorrow to thee, and disgrace and disappointment to myself."

"None but the brave deserve the fair," said Duffe, with kindly interest, wishing to arouse his desponding foster-child.

"True!" exclaimed Bryan, his gloom giving way a little, and speaking now in a firmer and more cheerful tone; "we

must not despond, but bend all our energies to defeat the villainous schemes of our enemy!"

"Blast the yaller rascal!" chimed in Kenton. "Is he at his tricks agin?"

"Coma informs me," replied Bryan, divining the wish of his companions, "that the captain has completely deceived her father, caused her to be confined to her room as a prisoner, and intends to-morrow to have me arrested on the charge of forgery!"

"Ugh! what a tarnation scoundrel!—why, he could deceive the devil himself with his blasted smiles and soft lying tongue! But come, Mr. Bryan," said the frontiersman, with his accustomed promptness, "let's go at once, and set the gal free; tie up the old ginerel if he makes a rumpus; and give this 'ere blasted Frenchman, as he won't fight, and has got nigger blood in him anyhow, 'bout five hundred lashes to 'member us by!"

"And what would we do then?" said Duffe, wishing to convince the rough but honest hunter of the folly of such a course.

"Do?" replied Kenton, somewhat at a loss for an answer—"why, jist do what we please, and leave this 'ere cussed country, with its laws, and gammon, and trumpery, and sich like, and make our way to Kaintuck, whar' the only court-house is the broad heavens—the only law, the heart—the only defence against sich villains as these, a strong arm and a brave soul—and the only punishment, the bullet and tomahawk! Them's my laws; and what's the use, jist tell me, of courts, and lawyers, and judges, when they all work for money, and for the rich agin the poor, and won't break one of them ar' confounded rules of thar's, not even to save an honest man, and punish a black-hearted traitor?—whar's the sense, I say, in lettin' a yaller lying Frenchman swar away the liberty of Mr. Bryan, and refusin' to permit old Titus, who's jist worth a thousand sich as him, to prove his innocence? No! no! Mr. Bryan; jist foller an old Ingen hunter's advice for once, and don't trust yourself in them ar' courts—for blast me, if you do, if they don't tumble you, like a nigger, into one of them dark dun-

geons they've got, and you'll never see the blessed daylight agin. It's no use, I tell you, to try to make yourself out innocent in them ar' courts; for that's not thar business, and they'll jist make you out as black as the very devil himself, in spite of all on us! No! no!—take my advice; let's go and free Miss Coma, thrash the Frenchman, and then make a bold push for the 'Cane Land,' leavin' a dark trail behind us! Them's my sentiments."

"Your plan will not do, Simon," replied Bryan, shaking his head at this earnest appeal of the Scout, "for my name and character are at stake, and I must remain and defend them, though, as you say, the chances are against me, and more than probable I will be consigned to a dungeon."

"When we're hemmed in by Ingens," said the Scout, sentimentously, "and can't run, then we jist make up our minds, as die we must, to fight it out, and take the chances!—but when thar's no hope for victory, and the path ar' still open, we don't, like plaguy fools, jist hand over our scalps to the blasted redskins, but turn our backs at once, and make tracks, hopin' for better success at some other time."

"But matters are not so desperate with me as you imagine," said Bryan, "for I am, as you know, innocent of any crime, and have strong hopes of making it so appear to the court, and of confounding the cunning captain."

"Thar's jist about as much hope of your provin' your innocence," replied the Scout, sullenly, "as I would have, if bound to the stake by the Shawanees, of movin' them to pity! If you ever git into them ar' courts, and into the hands of them oily-tongued lawyers, if you ain't lost to a sartainty, then my name ain't Simon. Ain't he, Bang?"

Bang growled his assent as plain as a politician when making known his principles, and the Scout, as if fully satisfied with being indorsed by his dog, in whom he had great confidence, especially as he always agreed with himself, after a rather triumphant look at Bryan and the Sergeant, resumed his seat, to await in silence their determination.

"Bryan is right," remarked Duffe, with a good-natured smile at the excited borderer, "for this is a land of laws, and by the laws must this matter be settled, and to the laws must we all, as good citizens, submit."

"A darn'd poor recommendation to encourage immigration into any country," growled Kenton, for he had as great a hatred as terror of the laws; and a judge and court were far more terrible in his eyes than a band of yelling savages.

"Don't give up so, Simon," said Bryan, cheerily, "for the battle is yet to be fought, and they won't find us so easy to corner, after all."

"O! if you are for fightin'," exclaimed the Scout, his face brightening, "then I'm in. Darnation take me if the Sergeant, and you, and Titus, and myself, not forgettin' Bang, can't lick out the whole 'posse come at us,' with that ar' dratted Frenchman and the lawyers flung in for good count. Now you are talkin' somethin' like, Mr. Bryan, and I hain't got a word to say agin it."

"You are entirely mistaken in my meaning, Simon," replied Bryan, smiling at the borderer's simplicity; "I did not intend that we would fight them in the manner that you suppose, but with the law and in a legal manner!"

"Cuss the law!" exclaimed Kenton, passionately; "I wish I were whar I'd never hear of it again! Blast me if I don't feel, all the time you talk so much about it, as if I wer' in one of them darned jails, with 'bout a hundred pounds of iron on my wrists and ankles. I thought you had some sense, Sergeant, but you hain't got a dratted bit, or you wouldn't be encouraging Mister Bryan in any sich blasted foolishness!"

"You have been wandering so long upon the frontiers, Simon," replied Duffe, good-humoredly, "that you have taken up a very mistaken notion of the law, and of the manner of righting wrongs in older settled and more civilized countries. The courts are not such terrible bugaboos as you think, and dispense justice far more frequently than they have the credit of doing; and are intended to right wrongs, punish the guilty, and

protect the innocent! Don't fear; I am confident Mr. Bryan will have justice done him, or I would be very far from counselling his present course!"

"Fear!" said Kenton, with a grim smile; "that ain't one of my words! Drat me if I fear anything or anybody, if they'll only sing out and give me warnin'! Let them cuss, or yell, or make a fuss, darn me if I care how, so they raise a rumpus, and I'm thar and no mistake! But them courts! blame me if they ain't so still and quiet, and all so regular-like, with them fellers forever writin' away as if life wer' at stake, and them cold-lookin' old chaps sittin' behind them great big books, and sendin' a poor devil off to them darned jails, which ain't fittin' even for an Ingen, and jist doin' it too as if it wer'n't nothin', and all regular and right, and without any fuss or even a loud word! blast me, when I sees them a doin' everything so still and quiet-like, and smilin' and laughin' all the time as if it wer'n't nothin' to be lockin' up a feller-mortal away from the blessed light of the sun, if I don't feel kind of chilly all over, and fancy I've got in among the dead, and look round for the graves and bones! It tain't nat'ral, Sargeant, I tell you tain't, for, if a feller has done wrong, why don't they cuss and make a fuss, and sorter 'rouse him up a little; and not jist be axin' a few civil questions, as if thar wer' nothin' outer the way, and then sendin' him off to jail as good-humoredly as if they wer' tellin' him to go home to his wife and little ones! No! no! Mr. Bryan, keep clear of them courts, for they hain't got no feelin' for a poor feller, and don't care no more for his prayers and distress, and promises to do better, than I do for a dead Mingo!"

Kenton spoke so earnestly, and described, in his simple way, so accurately and forcibly the noiseless unfeeling minutiae of a criminal court, that it was not without its influence upon his hearers; and Bryan's pale and agitated countenance told too plainly for concealment the emotion excited in his bosom.

"Faith, Simon!" exclaimed Duffe, with a laugh, for he saw the effect of Kenton's chilling description upon Bryan, and

wished, if possible, to remove it; "you have a most holy horror of legal proceedings, and, to judge from your earnest and graphic sketch, must have been more than a spectator of one of these scenes!"

"I never wer' in a court but once," said Kenton, a shade of sadness flitting across his bronzed and weather-beaten countenance, "and I wer' then but a boy; but I've never forgotten the sad sights I then witnessed, and never will; and many a night have I been haunted by the memory of that smilin'-faced and, in my imagination, stony-hearted old judge! and you know, Sargeant, I've been a fugitive from justice myself, thinkin' I wer' guilty of a great crime when I wer' not! and this kept alive all my horror and terror of the law; and blast me if I've 'zactly got over it yet!"

Bryan walked restlessly across the floor, for the memories of Kenton were anything but soothing to him in his present perplexed, and, in spite of all his hopes, dangerous situation. He felt, and acknowledged in his own heart, that, with the influence of Montlack and General De Lacy against him, his chance of having an impartial hearing and strict justice was anything but flattering. At one time he almost came to the conclusion of taking the advice of Kenton; but then came thoughts of Coma, his own declarations of innocence, and the unfavorable impression his flight would leave; and once more he braced himself for the trial, and determined, in his own mind, notwithstanding the chances were against him, to quietly wait and bravely meet the insidious attack of his foe.

Mrs. Duffe had never felt a mother's love, for she was one of those whom God, in his wise Providence, had seen proper never to bless with offspring. Yet she had not become soured with the world as some people are, because not blessed with young flowerets of her own to watch over and protect, and fill her kind heart with the warm gushings of a mother's love. She neither sighed nor complained, nor grew sad, as some people do, because she was not thus blessed, for she felt that, although she would be happy, too happy, to clasp to her bosom a bright

bonny child, and listen to its low laugh and infantile prattle, still, as God had not seen proper so to bless her, she had no right to murmur; and it might be best after all, for, if she had been denied some joy, she had also been spared much care and perhaps sorrow. In truth, her simple trusting heart, although ignorant of poetry and untouched by the wild and thrilling emotions of more refined and sensitive minds, was the seat of some such a thought as that so beautifully described by *Æschylus*, where he says—

“With joy we see our offspring rise,
And happy who not childless dies;
But Fortune, when her flowerets blow,
Oft bears the bitter fruit of woe.”

As we have said, Mrs. Duffe had never known a mother's love, but she had experienced a feeling very near akin to it for her foster-child Bryan; and now, as she beheld his agony, her heart yearned to throw her arms around him and assure him of her constant affection. She saw his distress, and knew full well, from the workings of his pale face and contracted brow, the terrible battle going on in his heart, and with a woman's sympathy she would have brought consolation if she only knew how; but not knowing what to do she had remained silent until she saw him shudder at Kenton's description of the heartless ceremony of a court, then springing to her feet she approached him, kindly laying her hand upon his shoulder, as she said—

“Come, Bryan, my boy, it pains me to see you so distressed! The excitement of this day has been too much for you, and you have suffered enough already without dwelling any longer upon the gloomy ceremonials of the approaching trial! Cheer up! and remember, my boy, that we who love you best know that you are innocent, and will love you all the more for your sorrows, and, let them do what they may, they can't destroy or take from you our affection! Come, now, and lay down, and sleep like one that is guiltless of all crime, and confident in the protecting power of God! You will be all the better, and all the more able to meet your foes, after a sound sleep!”

“I feel that you are right, dear mother—for I will still call you mother, as you are the only mother I have ever known,” said Bryan, a tear of affection welling up in his dark eye—“and like a son will obey your wish now as I have often done when a boy; and may He who governs all things not forget her that has ever had a kindly heart for a motherless boy!”

As Bryan left the room, the honest Sergeant clasped to his bosom his weeping wife, and the stern, uncouth, unlettered frontiersman, wiping from his glistening eye a falling tear, exclaimed, with the wild vehemence of his unrestrained nature—

“May Heaven desert me when I desert that boy!”

CHAPTER XIII.

MONTLACK, finding that his cousin's confidence in and affection for Bryan had been in no way impaired by his defamation, did not hesitate, now that he was sustained and urged on by his uncle, to execute his ulterior plan.

He had a twofold inducement to urge him on in his villany: one to free himself from all fear of personal chastisement, and the other to take away all chance of any future meeting between the lovers. Either of these inducements would have been sufficient to fully excite his malicious passions and confirm him in his treacherous designs; but with them both, he made no delay in loudly publishing the charge of forgery against his rival, and proceeded immediately to have a warrant issued for his arrest.

Bryan, although aware of his intention, made no attempt to escape, but, on the contrary, quietly took his way to the village, and there suffered the officer, without any resistance on his part or apparent surprise, to take him into custody and carry him at once before the examining court.

We will follow him into the presence of the two justices, and along with the eager crowd take a look at these awful functionaries, and hear the result of the trial, of such great importance to our hero, and of so little interest or consequence to his judges or any of the pressing listeners, with the exception of the Sergeant and his companions, Kenton and Titus.

The justices were rough and unpolished, and almost unlettered men; having great pride in their office, and eager, judging by their actions, to appear upon intimate terms with the general and Montlack, who were considered the most wealthy, and therefore, as we have no titles in this country, the most aristocratic citizens of the neighborhood; and for whom the honest dispensers of the law had, with praiseworthy politeness, made room upon the bench, and with whom they were now engaged in earnest conversation.

Kenton, armed as if for battle, with rifle, tomahawk, and knife, stood like a gigantic statue, leaning against one of the pillars of the court-room, gazing silently and gloomily upon the crowd; ever and anon turning a flashing eye upon the justices, who were still conversing with Montlack, and breaking forth momentarily in heartless laughter, as if totally ignorant or careless of the grave nature of their present duty. The heart of the simple backwoodsman, as he looked, recoiled with secret terror; and when he witnessed the apparent intimacy of the prosecutor and judges of Bryan, he lost all hope, and internally cursed the folly of Duffe and Bryan, and blamed himself that he had not been more urgent in pressing flight.

And what hope of acquittal or justice had Bryan from the two judges chosen and prejudiced against him by his foe, and upon such intimate terms with his enemy, the impeaching of whose evidence was the only chance of safety?

None! and Kenton was right, all the poets and lauders of the law to the contrary notwithstanding; for what prospect has a poor, unknown, and humble man of obtaining justice, when opposed by the rich and the powerful, and whose word has to be weighed in the balances against the haughty denial of his

wealthy opponent? Rags have ever been considered *prima facie* evidence of knavery, and poverty of dishonesty; while, on the other hand, the gilding and tinsel of wealth have ever been considered, by the mass at least, as proof positive of truth and honesty. Let a pocket be picked in a crowd, and the shabbiest-looking man in the company will be seized upon as the criminal. Let a house be broken open and robbed, and ten to one the poorest man in the neighborhood will be immediately suspected. Let two men be walking along a street, the one well dressed, and the other in shabby apparel; and let the former dash a stone in at a window, and he may pass on unsuspected, whilst his companion will be hurried at once to the police-office. It is the same with the world as in courts; and dress, appearance, and station have an equal influence in both. A poet of antiquity has most beautifully described what a court should be, but what, I am sorry to say, it very frequently is not: where he says,

“ But justice bids her ray divine
Even on the low-roof'd cottage shine,
And beams her glories on the life
That knows not fraud or ruffian strife;
The gorgeous glare of gold, obtained
By foul, polluted hands, disdained
She leaves, and with averted eyes
To humbler, holier mansions flies;
And, looking through the times to come,
Assigns each deed its righteous doom.”

But we will now return to the trial of our hero.

Montlack came down from his seat by the judges, and after whispering his groundless proof of the guilt of the prisoner into the willing ear of the prosecuting attorney, and hinting a *douceur* in case of success, the latter proceeded without delay to make known the crime of Bryan to the court, and prove it by the artful prosecutor and prejudiced general.

Conscious of innocence, Bryan sat in the prisoner's box, supported by his friend and foster-father, the Sergeant; and so

calm and unruffled did he appear, now that he had made up his mind to submit to his fate, and trust his defence to the justice and righteousness of his cause, that the wily captain actually trembled when he looked upon his open, unflinching countenance, fearing (for who is ever confident in a dishonest act?) that there was something still behind and unknown to him, which might yet destroy his well-concocted plot, and cover himself with richly merited opprobrium and disgrace. But the captain, had he only glanced at the desponding face of the artless and honest Sergeant, would have been assured at once, and rested easy, if a wicked, plotting, treacherous soul like his could be satisfied with anything less than positive conviction.

With the proud consciousness of integrity, Bryan refused to employ any counsel, as he said, either to distort or conceal, and determined, greatly against the wish of the more practical Duffe, to make his own defence, believing, in the simplicity of his heart, that his own straightforward story, told with the earnestness of truth, would be believed by all, and convince the court at once of his innocence.

We must acknowledge that this was a very silly determination on the part of our hero; for, being a lawyer himself, it will not do to encourage any such contempt of the profession; and we will just here take occasion to advise all persons who get at loggerheads with the law never to think of getting through without the service of a lawyer; for, although we do sometimes get them into a difficulty, it is equally true that, when they fall into difficulties themselves, we are the only persons who can get them out. It takes a lawyer to meet a lawyer, and no one is so ready to unravel rascality as our profession; for, although the old saying, "set a thief," &c., will not apply to us, still we have so much to do with rascality and rascals that we soon begin to know all their beats, and can stumble upon their lurking-places, when less practised persons, although well skilled in the world and worldly affairs, would be totally at fault. But we will not wander from the trial, especially when we are fully aware that our episode on lawyers is useless, and

the world already pretty well *satisfied* of our shrewdness upon all things connected with villany.

The prosecuting attorney, having fully proved by the captain that the bond exhibited in court was a forgery, and never given by him to the prisoner; and also by General De Lacy, and several other respectable witnesses, that it was not in the usual handwriting of Montlack, with an exulting smile at the justices (which was acknowledged by a significant nod), and a contemptuous look at Bryan, rested the case.

Being asked by the court in a rather careless manner, as of course he had not, if he had any defence to make, or any witnesses to examine, Bryan arose from his seat, and gave a simple, unvarnished account of all that had taken place between himself and the captain; and, in conclusion, called upon the Sergeant to prove his respectability and honesty; and upon Kenton, to show his intercourse with Montlack, and the intimacy between the latter and Simon Girty, the witness to the bond.

The truthful earnestness of Bryan, and his manly, open face and frankness, made a decided impression in his favor upon the crowd, but none at all upon his judges; for they had heard nothing but what had been explained to them by Montlack; and their unmeaning, stolid countenances wore no expression of doubt or sympathy.

When the Sergeant, in giving his testimony, had proudly alluded to the goodness of heart and honesty of the prisoner, and to the patriotism and bloody death of his father, and, in conclusion, had, with a look and tone of honest indignation and scorn, made known the cowardice and hypocrisy of Montlack, there was a murmur of approbation from the crowd, and for the moment Bryan and even Kenton had a hope. But this transient flash of sympathy from the fickle mob was as quickly dispelled as excited, by the prosecuting attorney asking, in a sneering voice—

"The prisoner is a foster-son of yours, I believe, sir; is he not?"

"He is, sir," calmly replied Duffe; "and I am proud of him."

"O! no doubt of that—none in the world!" laughed the lawyer; "and I don't wonder at all that you give him such a good character; my only surprise is that you hadn't made him out a saint at once, while you were at it. You can stand back, sir. Whenever we have up any more of your children, we will send for you; for we have no doubt they are all honest fellows, just like this one."

Thus, with a light laugh and pointless sally, had the adroit attorney destroyed the favorable impression made by Bryan's story, and the Sergeant's straightforward, honest evidence; and once more the crowd, careless and uninterested, relapsed into indifference, while the judges smiled approvingly upon the cunning counsel.

A cloud gathered upon the brow of Duffe, for he saw through the design of the lawyer, and knew that he had succeeded; but, hopeless, he made no reply; and retiring from the witness-stand, again took his seat by the side of Bryan.

The dark portals of the dungeon, concealed for a moment by the bright wings of Hope, were again in view.

Kenton was next called to the stand; and, as the borderer removed his cap, exposing his broad bronzed forehead, and grasping in his sinewy hand his trusty rifle, stood proudly erect, glancing around with fearless eye upon the eager multitude. A slight murmur of applause greeted his appearance. But this mark of approbation caused a frown to gather upon the brow of Montlack, which one of the sycophantic justices observing, hurried to remove, by exclaiming, in a harsh, peremptory voice—

"See here, sir witness? do you consider us cutthroats, that you come thus armed into court?"

"I don't consider you any better; and if you want my genuine opinion, and no concealment, blast me if I don't b'lieve you are a darned sight worse," was the cool reply.

"We do not permit such language as that," retorted the

judge, angrily; "and if you are not careful, Mr. Kenton, I believe that is your name, you will get yourself into a difficulty."

"May-be you don't, and may-be you do," said Kenton, carelessly; "but if it are difficulty you want to be gettin' into, you've said enough, and I'm your man."

The crowd laughed at the borderer's contempt of the court; and the justices, not liking his formidable appearance, and the cool manner he received their threats, took another tack to gain their point, by ordering him to lay aside his rifle.

"It's agin my principles," replied the Scout, "ever to part with old Betsy. She 'companies me by day, and sleeps with me at night; and I couldn't begin to feel easy without her. Ay, Bang," he added, stooping to pat his dog—that worthy having, at length, managed to creep through the dense crowd to his feet—"you've got yourself into darned bad company, and many a dog has been killed for bein' in no worse."

Another laugh from the crowd greeted this rather equivocal speech of Kenton; but the justices being in no way amused at a joke at their expense, one of them exclaimed—

"This is insufferable, sir; and if we thought you intentionally impudent in your remarks, would not hesitate to commit you for contempt."

"I wer' talkin' of dogs," replied Kenton, with a smile of cunning simplicity, "and had no idea your honors would take it as personal."

Another burst of merriment greeted this sally, and the lawyer, wishing to curry favor with the court, by coming to their rescue, remarked in a cool, sneering tone—

"We have had quite enough of your would-be wit, sir, and want you now to tell all you know; and it may be well enough to add, before we go further, that we *expect* you to tell the truth."

"I reckon you've the advantage of me thar, Mr. Lawyer, for that ar' more than anybody ever 'spected of you," was the cool rejoinder of the Scout.

A roar of laughter met this keen retort of the backwoodsman, and the justices themselves, enjoying the discomfiture of the lawyer, or put in a better humor by finding another in the same situation as themselves, good-humoredly bid the witness to go on, and give in his evidence in his own way.

Left to himself, and permitted to go on as he saw proper, Simon gave a minute account of all that he knew, not sparing the captain as he went along; whom he continued (contrary to the repeated commands of the court) to call the "'tarnal yaller rascal," surmising, every now and then, that "he had nigger blood in him," and wer'n't a legal witness, appealing as usual (much to the amusement of the bystanders) to Bang, who, without meaning any indignity to the court, always gave a ready assent, believing, as all dogs and hangers-on should do, that the master knew best.

On one of these occasions, the lawyer, wishing to turn the laugh against the imperturbable witness, remarked—

"That dog of yours must be the devil, or the devil's representative, for you seem to counsel with him altogether!"

"Not as I know on," replied Simon, coolly, "though he ar' the devil to trail Ingens. But I always hearn say," he added, with a slight twinkle of the eye, "that the lawyers wer' the only representatives the devil kept on this arth, and I b'lieved it; for, in all cases of rascality, they seemed to be the first persons counselled with, and wer' most ginerally on the side of the villains; I reckon he's darned well represented, and won't soon change his servants, mister!"

This time the crowd were nearly convulsed with laughter, the court joining heartily; and even Bryan and Duffe could not restrain a smile; while old Titus, not having the fear of the law before his eyes, and instigated by some wicked devil, made known his delight by giving explosion to a tremendous guffaw—

"Gorrer-'mighty!" exclaimed the black, speaking generally, and addressing no one in particular, the scar on his cheek, distorted by laughter, rendering his face hideous, "dat ar' 'turney

am totaciously used up. Dis nigger speck he let Massa Simon 'lone, next time."

Finding the lawyer not disposed to make any further remark, Kenton continued his evidence, winding up by saying "that Montlack and Girty signed the bond in the old haunted cabin, and received the money from Bryan."

"How do you know that Captain Montlack signed this bond?" said the lawyer, sharply, after counselling a moment with the prosecutor, and holding the paper up to Kenton; "did you see him do it? Remember! I ask you, did you see him, with your own eyes, either sign this paper or receive the money?"

"Not 'zactly with my own eyes," said Simon, with great simplicity, "for I wer'n't thar, but Titus wer', and saw him, and he's as white as that yaller rascal, and told me so; and blame me if I don't swar to it!"

"O! I have no doubt of that!" sneered the lawyer, "or to anything else this negro or the prisoner would tell you. You can stand back, sir, for we don't wish to cross-examine a man so reckless of the truth as you are."

"A joke are a joke, mister," replied Simon, his eye burning with gathering fury, "but by the Eternal, if you pretend to charge me with falsehood, if I don't cut out your lying tongue right here, in spite of the court and all this 'ere crowd, or my name ain't Simon Kenton!"

"Go it, old bruiser!" shouted some one of the crowd; "cuss me if we don't see you fair play and a free fight!"

"Silence in court!" shouted one of the justices; "we'll fine and imprison the first man that creates a disturbance."

The lawyer saw that he had gone too far, and trembled for his life when he beheld the frontiersman significantly place his hand upon the handle of his knife; but having mind enough left to know that discretion was the better part of valor, especially in a case like the present, he quickly exclaimed—

"It was merely a joke, sir; I only wished to pay you up for some of the hard licks you have given me."

"If that's all," said Simon, falling back to his place, "I'm done, and hain't got nothin' more to say. But darn me, Mr. Lawyer, if it didn't look to me surprisin'ly like you meant jist what you said; though I've always hearn it remarked, you lawyers never mean what you say."

The evidence concluded, the prosecuting attorney, as is usual with lawyers, made a very few remarks, scarcely unfolding in his opening address a single point that he intended to press in his last speech, merely expressing in general terms his confidence of the guilt of the prisoner; and pointing out the strength of the testimony against him, and quietly taking his seat, left Bryan to make the best defence in his power, without any particular argument or point of evidence to combat or rebut!

Well aware of his critical situation, and gifted with a shrewd and quick mind, well cultivated, and not altogether ignorant of the law, Bryan proceeded to make his defence. For more than an hour he poured forth his rapid and teeming thoughts with impassioned eloquence and energy; convincing, if not the court, at least the audience of his innocence. And the lucid manner in which he exposed the treachery of Montlack was not without its effect even upon the prejudiced mind of De Lacy, who began to look uneasily, if not suspiciously upon the ever-smiling face of his nephew, and a doubt sprang up within his heart.

But the trial was not yet over. The attorney for the commonwealth, by the rules of the court, had the right to reply, and when Bryan had taken his seat, lost no time in availing himself of this right. With a regret that one so gifted as the prisoner had shown himself to be was so criminal, he launched forth with his invective—treated the statements of Bryan with ridicule—scoffed at the evidence of Duffe and Kenton—laughed at the idea of the prisoner having money to loan, and of the wealthy captain becoming a borrower from a stranger, when he had an uncle ever ready to supply his demands—scorned and treated with contempt the idea of impeaching the testimony of Montlack and De Lacy with the evidence of such a man as Kenton, founded upon the story of a negro, and that negro

the slave of the prisoner—taunted him with being the son of a traitor and spy, and the companion of the renegade Girty—sneered, with hellish glee, at his hypocritical air of innocence—and concluded with an appeal to the judges (which was quite unnecessary) to enforce the laws of the country, and see that the punishment, well merited by his crime, be inflicted upon the prisoner.

When he had finished, and with a smile of exultation and triumph taken his seat, Bryan was conscious that every sympathy excited in his favor was gone. The impression he had made upon the audience and General De Lacy had been brushed away by the cunning and plausible taunts and sneers of the attorney; and now they were all alike convinced of his guilt, and only wondered how they could have ever believed him innocent.

'Tis strange! but in ninety-nine cases in a hundred a sneer or laugh will have more influence upon the minds of men than truth or eloquence! I have no doubt, myself, but that the devil is as much the father of sneerers as he is of liars, and would be willing to take odds that he tempted mother Eve herself with a light laugh.

The justices whispered a moment together; then nodding to each other, as if both were satisfied, one of them briefly declared the court convinced of the prisoner's guilt, and directed the sheriff to convey him to prison, there to await the sitting of the criminal court.

Although nerving himself for the worst, and scarce hoping for acquittal at the hands of the justices, Bryan was visibly agitated when he heard their verdict dooming him to a dungeon, and only regained his self-control by catching a glimpse of the triumphant face of his rival, which steeled his heart at once, and rendered him able to meet the judgment with a quiet look of indifference. This apparent indifference sent a chill through the bosom of the uneasy Montlack; for, although victorious over his rival, he could not conceive the cause of his seeming resignation, unless there was something

still behind and untold, that would eventually prove his innocence and insure acquittal.

Duffe, having no hope, and no feeling of pride to sustain him, was overwhelmed with the terrible certainty of his foster-child's conviction and punishment; but Simon, who had been moved even to tears during Bryan's speech, and who could with difficulty restrain his anger during the address of the prosecuting attorney, when he heard the decision of the justices delivered in so careless and heartless a manner, could restrain his fury no longer, but, springing to his feet, shouted with a voice of thunder:—

"May I be burned at the stake by the bloody Shawanees if you cold-hearted knaves don't talk as quietly 'bout sendin' a feller cretur to your cussed jail as if you wer' invitin' him home to dinner! Blast me if I wouldn't rather be tomahawked, and scalped, and burned than stay one night in your darned dungeon; and if Mr. Bryan will jist say the word, darn the step shall he ever take toward your infernal old block-house! Come, boy," added the Scout, turning to Bryan, "you've given the 'tarnal rascals a chance of sayin' you wer' innocent, and they won't do it; and now thar's nothin' left us but to pitch into 'em, and thrash the whole consarn! Never fear; we can do it; and blame me, if you'll jist say the word, if I don't commence with that ar' yaller-rascal, and the lyin' lawyer, and end with them beauties up thar behind the books, then my name ain't Simon! Hello, Sargeant! rouse up! for thar's a 'tarnal good chance of scrimmage jist at present; and you, Titus—whar's the black rascal?—may take a hand, so you don't touch any of my chaps. What say you, Mr. Bryan? We've tried them at thar all-fired law, and they've got us jist as I 'spected; now let's try 'em Kaintuck style, and see who'll take the most scalps."

"No, no, Simon! I thank you for your zeal in my cause," said Bryan, "but this is a land of laws, and although I have been condemned unjustly, I will submit, and trust that I will yet be able to establish my innocence!"

"Submit, hell!" vociferated Simon; "whar's the sense of submittin'? and drat the law, and lawyers, and judges, and everything else what condemns an innocent man to a blasted dungeon!"

"Go it, old roarer!" shouted a wild young fellow from the crowd; "them's my sentiments!"

"Hold your tongue, sir!" exclaimed one of the justices, recovering from his surprise, addressing Kenton; "another word, and I will send you to prison!"

"Now, blast me," replied Simon, with a look of defiance, "if I wouldn't jist like to see you tryin' that ar' experiment! Mr. Bryan can do as he pleases; but when you come to talk 'bout this 'ere individual, that ar' another thing altogether. S'pose you jist try your hand at sendin' me to jail! Won't we walk into thar affections, Bang, like a streak of greased lightning?"

"Seize upon him, sheriff!" shouted the justice; "summon a posse and take him to jail!"

"Now you're talkin' to my fancy, old chap!" exclaimed Simon, with a smile of derision, at the same time tightening his belt and loosening his knife; "I'm jist ready now to give you an elegant specimen of Kaintuck fightin', if any of you will come up to the brush!"

But none of the audience were at all interested in punishing the stalwart frontiersman, and the sheriff, having no desire to be his first victim, kept at a respectable distance; while the justices, thinking they had done quite enough to sustain the dignity of the bench by ordering the arrest, whether it was done or not, quietly adjourned, leaving Bryan under the control of the sheriff, and Simon in undisputed possession of the courtroom.

Seeing that his betters had retired, the officer politely requested Bryan to accompany him to the prison, which, after a sad parting with Duffe and Simon (the latter still insisting on an appeal to force), he quietly did, waving his last adieu as the

heavy doors of the dungeon closed upon him; shutting out, for the time, light, liberty, and hope.

The wily captain had succeeded, and his designs were now in a fair way of being consummated. The lover was in prison, the father deceived, and Coma would be the reward of his successful villany.

Rejoicing in his success, Montlack hurried the justices and attorney away to a rich dinner and wine.

Prostrated, hopeless, and crushed in spirit, Bryan groped about in his dreary dungeon.

Overwhelmed with sorrow, the honest Sergeant moved slowly and silently on his path homeward.

Striding along in company came the gigantic borderer, his eye still red with fury, and his tongue still pouring forth torrents of abuse upon all law, and lawyers, and judges, and more particularly those with whom he had just parted.

At his feet, but now unnoticed by his angry master, trotted the faithful Bang.

The honest slave Titus, with his heart weary and heavy with grief for his young master, came slowly on behind.

They had met with defeat, and were returning now :

"No buoyancy
Is in their steps, no song upon their lips,
No triumph on their brows."

At the splendid mansion of De Lacy, Coma wept in silence; hoping, yet dreading, to hear the result of the trial and fate of her lover.

At the lowly hearthstone of the Sergeant, the foster-mother sorrowed for her child; and, in the loneliness of her solitary abode, anxiously awaited the footsteps of the absent, and supplicated the throne of the great Ruler of all our destinies.

Such is life, and such the every-day occurrences of this strange world of ours.

CHAPTER XIV.

To no one does time travel so slowly as the prisoner; and when I say prisoner, I mean one confined either by sickness or power; and yet, even with him, does the old veteran move glibly enough when he remembers that each day passed brings him one nearer the grave.

But with Bryan, the days and nights had been wearily long.

More than a week had rolled by since he became the tenant of a dungeon, and although a week is but a moment in an ordinary lifetime, his face and appearance already exhibited the effects of confinement. Yet he had not been immured, as some we have read of, in a dark unwholesome dungeon, far away from the genial warmth of, the sun, and totally cut off from the blessed light of day. His jailer had not been a cruel one, nor were the rules of the prison very rigid, or the confinement very close, for around the prison, which had once been the head-quarters of Cornwallis, was a broad sloping lawn, surrounded by a wall some nine feet high, and in this were the prisoners, guarded only by one of the keepers, permitted to spend most of the day.

Although Bryan had availed himself of this privilege, he had no intercourse with his fellow-prisoners, and kept aloof from their sports and amusements.

They were generally rough, uneducated, and wicked men, having no associations in common with him; and for whom, and with whom, he had no sympathy.

At first they were disposed to be very gracious, and wished to be upon boon terms with their new companion; but Bryan not meeting their advances in a proper spirit, their friendship was soon turned to hatred, and their malevolence began to show

itself in numerous petty annoyances and practical jokes, which our hero meeting promptly in the very outset by coolly knocking down the leaders of his annoyers, since that period, for it was a *striking* argument, and one that could be easily comprehended by even the dullest mind, he had been left to himself and his own bitter and desponding thoughts.

But the very privilege of enjoying daily the sun and light, and the pure atmosphere, instead of making his confinement more bearable, only made his dungeon more horrible and tormenting, and caused him to sigh the more for liberty. The very birds that floated in the pure clear heavens above him, or glided with rapid and sinewy stroke across his vision, reminded him of all that he had lost, and made him long with aching heart to get once more into the green woods, and wander unrestrained by bar, or bolt, or wall.

At such times he would sit and gaze far away up into the blue firmament, and wonder if his father and mother were looking down upon him, and knew of the sad and hopeless fate of their son. Then he would dream of the past, and bring back to memory all the glad days of his youth, and wander in fancy along the bright sunny streams where in happier hours he had strayed; and, forgetting the present, he would sometimes even dive into the future, and gather gay flowers and weave garlands as rich and brilliant as if no shadow had fallen across his path; and then again he would be by the side of Coma, upon the shady banks of the Yadkin, listening to the murmuring notes of the tumbling waters, or the still softer and sweeter tones of her rich and loving voice; and then back once more to the hearthstone of the kind Sergeant would his careering fancy carry him, and again would he look upon the face of his foster-mother, and hear the manly tones of the brave and simple-hearted Kenton, and mingle with him in his wild adventures and hairbreadth escapes.

But then would burst upon his ear the loud blasphemy of his wicked companions, and the harsh voice of his jailer; and, in a moment, all of his gay dreams and beautiful fancies, like the

famous apple of Sodom when crushed in the hand of the curious traveller, were gone and dissipated; and once more he would find himself a prisoner, sad, and lonely, and desponding, in his dark and dreary cell.

Imagination can do much towards lightening the ills, and burdens, and cares of life, but it cannot do away with a reality; and though we may sleep and dream for a while, the hour of awakening will come, and, with it, the same reality which for the moment had been covered up and concealed by the wing of dreaming fancy.

The prisoner will always find it so; for bolts, and chains, and walls are stubborn things, and the law, the key, the pickaxe, and labor are necessary for their removal.

But Bryan had his visitors, for the Sergeant, his foster-mother, and Titus came daily to see him; nor had the Scout entirely deserted him; for, although shy of the prison, and shunning with horror the dark dungeon, he had managed to meet Bryan more than once in the outward court, and had pressed him again and again to make his escape, and fly with him to Kentucky. Kenton could not comprehend Bryan's reasons against flight, and continued, whenever he met him, to press this point, hoping that time and confinement would change his determination. As yet, much to the borderer's dissatisfaction, he had always steadily refused.

Nor had Coma forgotten her unfortunate lover. She had managed, in spite of the constant espionage of Montlack and her father, to send him a long letter full of sympathy and love, and which, by the kindness of the jailer, he had answered with one equally loving and impassioned. Titus was his messenger, and had promised faithfully to deliver his answer into the hands of Coma, and Coma alone, and, in return, bring back her reply.

He was now anxiously pacing his narrow cell, waiting the coming of the black, when a heavy step was heard along the passage, the bolts of his dungeon were drawn back, the door swung open with a creak, and for the first time during his

imprisonment, Kenton stood within the contracted walls of his cheerless cell.

A slight shade of disappointment (lovers are always selfish!) flitted across the face of Bryan at the appearance of the Scout. He had, as we have said, been expecting Titus, and, what was still more important to him, a letter from Coma; and when he heard the step along the passage, his mind, directed by the inclination of the heart, jumped at once to the conclusion that it was his returning messenger; and he could not but feel, in spite of his joy at beholding his old friend, a momentary emotion of discontent.

But no sooner did he behold, through the gloom of his dungeon, the countenance of Kenton, pale and haggard with the force of his emotion, and saw a tear of sympathy glistening in his clear blue eye, than all discontent fled in a moment, and with a cry of pleasure he sprang forward, grasping the hand of the borderer, exclaiming, with an attempt at cheerfulness—

"Never mind, Simon; it is not so bad as you imagine; you'll soon get used to this darkness, and it will be light enough. Don't you see I have a window here to give me light and air?"

Kenton shuddered as he strained his eyes to pierce the gloom around him; for, although Bryan could see well enough, he, coming immediately from the light, could behold nothing distinctly—not even the person of his greeting friend.

"Come, sit down, Simon," repeated Bryan, leading the borderer to his truckle-bed, speaking in an encouraging voice, "for you will soon find it light enough, and see that everything is very comfortable."

"My God! Mr. Bryan," ejaculated Kenton, gasping, as if for breath, "is this 'ere the place they've put you? Why, I couldn't live in this hole an hour; I feel like chokin' now. Where do you get any fresh air?"

"O," said Bryan, cheerily, and dragging him to a narrow, iron-barred loophole, "don't you feel the nice fresh air coming in on you now? and don't it feel sweet, and cool, and refresh-

ing? and wouldn't it almost induce you to become a prisoner, just to enjoy it?"

Kenton groaned, as he looked sharply into the face of his friend; for the simple wanderer of the forest could not imagine why Bryan praised the warm and fetid atmosphere of that dreary place, unless, as he feared, he had, from horrid suffering, become deranged.

"Don't you find it more pleasant now?" asked Bryan.

"Pleasant!" exclaimed Kenton, with astonishment; "why I would as soon be buried alive! Blast me," he added, his sorrow and surprise giving place to anger, "if I'll ever agin call the redskins cruel! All thar cruelty, sich as runnin' the gauntlet, scalpin', burnin', and torturin', is jist nothin' when compared with this cussed dungeon, filled with darkness and suffocatin' air!"

"It goes harder with you, Simon, than it does with me and most other persons," replied Bryan, encouragingly; "you have been so long accustomed to sleeping out under the broad heavens, and wandering by day and night through the boundless forests of Kentucky, that you feel cramped for room and air even when you come into the largest houses, let alone a narrow cell like this."

"It may be so, Mr. Bryan; but I don't think I could ever get used to a place like this; for it ain't nat'ral, and feels jist like a grave! But drat the cussed hole; we won't say anything more 'bout it, for I guess, Mr. Bryan," continued the Scout, his face brightening, "you won't stay here long, for I bring you news that will jist make you walk outer this trap in a hurry; and blast me if you sha'n't lift an Ingen scalp yet, in spite of all of these locks and bars!"

"Have you seen Coma?" inquired Bryan, eagerly.

"I hain't done nothin' else," replied Kenton, triumphantly; "but it took old dodgin', and trailin', and scoutin' to come across the gal; and what's more, when I did start the white doe, I jist up and told her all 'bout the rascality of them darned judges and of the gineral; but we won't say anything

'bout him, for the gal says the old 'ristocrat's her daddy, though I don't 'zactly b'lieve it, and I told her so; and I told her all 'bout that 'tarnal yaller Frenchman; and cuss me if I didn't give him pertiklar goss, for I b'lieve he's got nigger blood in him—though the gal did laugh when I said so. And I didn't stop here, Mr. Bryan," added the Scout with breathless haste, "for I jist made a clean bosom of it while my hand wer' in, and told her you wer' carryin' on like a darned squaw, lyin' up here in this blamed old jail, waitin' for justice, when you know'd, as well as I did, that you wer'n't goin' to get it; and you needn't be gittin' mad, either, for the gal ar' a sensible critter, and 'greed with me 'zactly, sayin' you wer' a 'tarnal fool, sure enough! She didn't precisely use them ar' words, Mr. Bryan, but I did, and it wer' all the same, for she didn't say anything agin it; and what's more, she told me to say to you, if you could get outer this place (and I told her you could, if you wer'n't sich a squaw), to get out, and she would jist go with you to Kaintuck, or any other country, for that cussed devil of a Frenchman wer' pesterin' the life outer her, and she couldn't stand it any longer. That's the kind of a gal for a hunter's wife, Mr. Bryan; and darn me, if she don't make the Ingens stand outer the way when we git to Kaintuck, Simon Kenton ain't no judge of a spunky woman! If you are ready to leave this 'ere sink-hole, come on; for I'm prepared to take you outside of the gate, and the Sargeant and Titus are close about, to give us a helpin' hand in case of a scrimmage."

Bryan was so much astonished at the unexpected message sent him by the Scout that he never once interrupted his rambling speech; and indeed we don't know that he could have succeeded, had he made the attempt; for the borderer was one of those men (very frequently met with nowadays) who will never hear a reply until quite through with all he has got to say himself; and not even then, if not entirely satisfied he has floored you in the argument. But now that he had halted for breath, Bryan took advantage of the lull to say—

"I thank you, Simon, for your zeal; but did not Coma send me some written message?"

"Wall, darnation take me if I didn't jist forget all about it, though I promised the gal to hand it over the first thing I done," replied Kenton, drawing from his shot-pouch a letter; "but here's what she gin me, Mister Bryan, though drat me if I precisely see the use on it, for it tain't nothin' more than a little scrap of paper, with some wee black marks on it."

And there, sure enough, was a letter from Coma, in her own loved hand, which Bryan, seizing with more zeal than politeness, much to the amusement of the borderer, kissed over and over again as he hurried to the little loophole to decipher its contents. Nor did the ecstasy of the lover, or his devotion to the mute messenger sent him by Simon, seem to abate one jot or tittle as he perused it; for more than once did he stop to kiss some dear word, and give utterance to some broken exclamation of rapture and enthusiasm! And well might he be satisfied, for he had before him traced, by the hand of her he loved so well, assurances of unwavering devotion and affection, which fell like a soothing balm upon his sorrows and fears; coming to his doubting heart like the "Be not afraid—it is I!" of Christ to his trembling apostles.

In addition to the assurance of her continued affection, Coma made known her unhappy situation; the unceasing pressing of his hateful suit by Montlack; and the harsh commands of her father to prepare for immediate marriage with her detested cousin. But she assured her lover that death would be preferable to such a union; and die she would rather than call Montlack by the sacred name of husband! "My father calls my opposition to a marriage with my treacherous cousin," she continued, "stubborn infatuation, and swears (O Bryan! 'tis terrible to hear a father swear!) that, willing or not, I shall become his wife! But he does not yet know his Coma, for die I can, and will, ere I consummate this unholy connection!" "There is only one course left us, Bryan," she added, in another part of her letter, "and Captain Kenton presses me to

pursue it; and though my face burns at the thought of mentioning it, still, as my father harshly refuses to listen to my prayers and entreaties, I will declare it: and it is to fly, and fly at once, and together (for Kenton assures me you can escape without danger) to the beautiful lands beyond the mountains!"

During the time consumed by Bryan in reading the letter from Coma, Kenton, in better spirits than he had been since he entered the dungeon, sat with praiseworthy silence upon the bed of the lover, minutely examining the furniture of the room, as if a civil officer making out an inventory of movables for a levy; but he was not so intent in his occupation as to forget Bryan, for, ever and anon, as the latter muttered some exclamation of pleasure, would he turn his eye with a knowing smile at the reader, and chuckle to himself, as if well satisfied with the influence of the silent messenger. But when Bryan had finished, and with impassioned vehemence had again and again pressed his lips upon the signature of Coma, the borderer, no longer able to control his impatience, interrupted this loving pantomime by quietly saying—

"Well, now, Mr. Bryan, I s'pose you are ready to go?"

"Ay!" replied Bryan, his countenance glowing with pleasure; "and to go with you, my brave Simon, to the broad valleys of the mighty Mississippi—the glorious pastures of the countless buffalo."

"Hurrah, boy! that's the way to talk it!" shouted the Scout, grasping Bryan's hand. "We'll have glorious times yet, and you shall lift the scalp-lock of a dodgin' Wyandotte before another moon, or my name ain't Sharp-Eye. But let's leave this 'ere cussed place, and go out at once into the woods, for I don't feel easy and nat'ral-like with them ar' doors and walls atween me and daylight."

"But how are we to go?" said Bryan.

"Nothin' easier," replied Kenton, examining the priming of his rifle. "When this 'ere lock-up feller opens the door for me, you jist walk out."

"The keeper will not allow it."



SIMON KENTON.

"I guess he won't have much to say in the matter; for if he opens his mouth, I'll knock him down; and if that ar'n't satisfactory, old Betsy and me will stand atween you and all danger till beyond the walls."

"That will never do," said Bryan, shaking his head. "I will not endanger the lives either of the jailers or yourself by attempting so open and rash an undertaking."

"Never mind 'bout me or the jailer. If he kills me, or I him, that's our look-out, and none of your'n," said the Scout, stubbornly.

"It can't be, Simon. I love you too well to put your life in jeopardy," said Bryan; "nor would I willingly injure one of my jailers; for they are but doing their duty, and, more than that, have been very kind, and have allowed me many privileges."

"Blasted kind, indeed!" exclaimed Kenton, in a sneering voice, glancing quickly around at the cheerless, unfurnished cell; "and they deserve a powerful chance of gratitude for this 'ere precious comfortable lodgin' they've given you."

"My keepers have nothing to do with the making or furnishing of these cells, Simon; but they might have made my imprisonment far less endurable, if they had been so disposed, and I owe them some gratitude, at least, for the many little favors they have granted me."

"Well, darn me if you ain't thankful for small favors!" said Kenton, with increased bitterness. "I'd think tomahawkin' a darned sight too good for sich treatment as you've had. But come, Mr. Bryan, don't be takin' the squeamy, and losin' all chance of escape by your 'tarnal nonsense. You know jist as well as I do that it's all right and proper to kill our enemies, and 'scape outer thar hands; and I look on these blasted jailers as so many Ingens."

"But the law?"

"Blame the law!" shouted Simon, interrupting him; "don't talk to me 'bout the law; for it has kept me in hot water ever

since I've been in the States. I'll never feel easy agin till I forget thar's any sich a thing."

"Hold, Simon!" exclaimed Bryan; "I hear the step of the jailer coming to lead me out into the prison yard. I cannot agree to your plan of escape, for it might result in death either to you or one of my keepers; but I have one of my own, equally certain, less dangerous; and, to accomplish it, I will need no assistance."

"What is it?" said Kenton, discontentedly.

"I have not time to explain now," replied Bryan; "and if I had, I fear, when you heard my scheme, you would not approve of it; but be you on the south side of the prison inclosure to-morrow about this time, and if I do not then make my escape, I promise you, on the day succeeding, to attempt your plan, which, from its boldness and unexpected daring, I have no doubt will prove success."

"I'll go my scalp on it," said Kenton, in a little better humor, now that he had the promise of Bryan. "They won't be 'specting sich a piece of impudence, and will neither be ready to prevent our escape, nor do us an injury. But remember, you've given me your word, and I'll 'spect you to try my plan, if you don't give them the dodge to-morrow."

"I will; for I have made up my mind to remain here no longer," replied Bryan, grasping the hand of the Scout as a pledge of his determination.

The entrance of the jailer put an end to further conversation.

Simon shook the hand of his friend, and, after a secret look of intelligence and encouragement, turned upon his heel and stalked boldly along the corridor, and down through the gate, neither turning his head to the right nor left; but with a quick roll of the eye making an accurate map in his own mind of the entire plan of the prison. His face, when he rejoined the Sergeant and Titus, wore a mingled expression of satisfaction and discontent, and so intimately combined and balanced were these two feelings, that Duffe, although a shrewd reader of faces, was totally unable to unravel the result of his meeting with Bryan,

or say which of these emotions preponderated. Nor did the stubborn borderer seem inclined to be very communicative; for he stalked along with the dogged determination of an Indian warrior undergoing torture, and made no reply to the inquiries of his companion, or, if any, only in muttered monosyllables.

With a light heart and bright face, Bryan followed the jailer to the prison yard. When there, contrary to his usual reserved course, he drew near to a little knot of prisoners engaged in the athletic sport of leaping the rope, and, for the first time during his confinement, exhibited an interest in their amusement.

The prison yard, or rather outer court, sloped gradually from the buildings to the wall, inclosing the prison area, leaving the jail standing on the highest point of a conical hill, with a broad green belt between it and the wall encircling its base; thus furnishing a most admirable place for the sport in which the prisoners were now engaged.

One of them, noticing the approach of our hero, and the seeming interest with which, for the first time, he regarded their amusement, exclaimed, with a mocking laugh—

"Heyday, boys! here's our fine jay. I wonder if he wouldn't like to risk his valuable neck over a three foot rope? Come! give him a trial! hold it up there, boys—that's it. Now try your activity, my young blood. Who'll take a bet that he don't get a tumble?"

This sally was greeted with a loud laugh; but Bryan, contrary to their expectation, met it with a good-humored smile, saying, pleasantly—

"I'll take your bet; but put the rope to five feet."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the first speaker; "let him have it so, boys; for he'll get a fine tumble to a certainty."

Those holding the rope hoisted it to the required height; and Bryan, without delay or any apparent struggle, leaped lightly down the hill and sprang over it.

"Lost!" exclaimed the same speaker, with an oath; but struck with Bryan's graceful carriage and activity, he added, in

a more pleasant tone: "The boy is better stuff than I thought him."

"Put up the rope to six feet!" exclaimed Bryan, returning to the stand.

"Better stop, boy, at what you've done," said one.

"He wants to get a tumble," said another.

But Bryan insisting, the rope was placed at the required height; and again, with great ease, he cleared it, amidst the loud acclamations of his surprised companions.

"Try it at seven!" shouted a fellow dressed in a shooting-jacket, and who seemed to enjoy the sport amazingly.

"As you please," replied Bryan, coolly; "for I have jumped higher."

While the wondering rope-holders were adjusting it to the proper height, Bryan threw off his coat and shoes, and no sooner had they called out "all ready!" than, like a bounding stag, he again went safely over it.

"May old Nick take me if that can be beat!" exclaimed he that had first bantered Bryan to jump.

"I'll bet you a five he can go a foot higher!" exclaimed shooting-jacket, springing to his feet.

"Done!" replied the other.

Bryan expressing his willingness to make the trial, the jockey and his opponent hurried to make an accurate measurement.

Borrowing a belt from one of the bystanders, our hero buckled it tightly around his waist, and no sooner had the betters shouted "all fair and ready!" than, bounding forward, with a terrible effort, he again cleared the rope.

"Lost again! why, damn the fellow, I believe he can fly!" said the loser.

"Not fly," said Bryan, panting with the severe exercise he had taken; "but to-morrow I'll show you what I can do."

"You have done enough," said the other, "and there's no use of your bragging, for you can't do better."

"I'll bet you another five of that," said the elated sportsman.

"Done!" replied the other, sullenly; "for if he does, he must jump over the wall, and no living mortal can do that."

"I'm not so certain of that," said his opponent, as he quietly measured the wall with his eye; "and if I win this last bet, blast me if I don't go you a five on the wall."

Bryan smiled.

"There's no danger of your being called on to stand up to this offer," growled the loser; "for you'll never win the wager we have just made."

Again Bryan smiled.

"We'll see," said the jockey, with the confident look and tone of a veteran sportsman.

"Ay, we'll see!" muttered Bryan, as he walked away.

CHAPTER XV.

TO-MORROW had come, and Bryan had paced his narrow dungeon with uneasy rapidity, dreaming of escape.

Suddenly his attention was drawn to a footstep along the passage, the door of his cell was thrown open, and Montlack stood before him.

A flush of anger mantled the prisoner's brow as he beheld the person of his treacherous rival; but when the door had again closed, leaving them together, with a quick gesture of surprise and impatience, Bryan exclaimed—

"How now, sir! to what freak do I owe this unwelcome and unlooked-for visit?"

"To no freak!" replied Montlack, "but to an earnest hope and desire that this meeting would result in your liberty and my happiness."

"I have already had convincing proof of the honor and goodwill of Captain Montlack!" said Bryan, bitterly.

"You have also had some cause to know my power and determination," sneered the captain; "but I would now in a manner atone for my harshness and want of faith by setting you at

liberty, did you but have a grain of reason or common sense about you!"

"I acknowledge Captain Montlack greatly my superior in treachery and duplicity!" remarked Bryan, coldly; "but still I must flatter myself enough to believe that I have yet some reason left, at least a sufficient amount to know that Captain Montlack does not expect to give liberty unless for a valuable consideration."

"The most sensible remark I've heard from you yet, and it proves to me that you have still some brains left!" sneered Montlack, with a slight attempt at good-humor.

"Your company is not the most agreeable, and your remarks far from being pleasant," replied Bryan, haughtily; "and if Captain Montlack has no other design than to exult over the victim of his treachery, I would gladly be freed both from his presence and conversation!"

"No more of such nonsense, Mr. Head, I pray you!" replied Montlack, assuming a patronizing and familiar tone; "I came not here to boast of my superior cunning, or to exult over your present unfortunate condition, but purely on a matter of business; hoping that a little plain straightforward talk would set all things right between us, and result in your being freed from captivity, and myself from all fear of your presence in this part of the country. Eh! do you take?"

By assuming an air of cold politeness, Bryan had so far been able to restrain his anger and contempt for the captain; but the affected tone of patronizing familiarity, or rather community of baseness and criminality put on by the latter, was more than his patience or politeness could bear; and now, with a look and voice of scorn, he exclaimed—

"I wish you, Captain Montlack, to understand now, and at once and forever, that I have no feeling in common with you, and that I consider you a base, treacherous, and dishonorable man; and did I not know that you were a coward, and that I would disgrace myself by striking you, I would now take richly merited vengeance both for past and present insults!"

"Psha, man!" said Montlack, in his usual mocking voice, "I understand your feelings exactly, and have come prepared for all such outbursts! My visit, as I've already said, is purely one of business; and as to my bravery or cowardice, that is not the question; but I am most happy; I assure you, that you have determined to be peaceable; for," added the captain, significantly touching the handle of a pistol in his bosom, "I have come prepared either for peace or war, but would prefer the first, as I have no desire to add murder to my other little sins."

"Do not presume too much upon my patience!" said Bryan, sternly; "for by heavens a very little aggravation would make me dash out your brains in spite of your weapons!"

"I do not wish or intend to presume upon my being armed," said Montlack, hurriedly, for he was somewhat alarmed at the threatening look of his victim; "and only wish to make you a fair and advantageous offer, which I trust you will accept; but if you do not, then I will have no more to say, and will go away, regretting the ill success of my mission!"

"You may go on, sir! I am willing to hear you; but it may be well enough to add," replied Bryan, looking him steadily in the face, "that I place no confidence in anything you may say or do, for you have already proved yourself a base hypocrite and traitor; and, still more, with the design to incarcerate me in a dungeon, you have added to these the foul crime of perjury! You can no longer deceive me, for I have no faith either in your word or oath, and am therefore ready to hear what you may have to say!"

"I have outgeneralled you, I'll acknowledge," said Montlack, attempting to laugh off the heavy charges of Bryan; "but you know all stratagems are fair in love or war?"

"I don't know or admit any such rule of conduct," remarked Head, coldly; "for no mean or dishonorable action is admissible either in love or war, or at any time, or under any circumstance; and there is no trite adage of the world more groundless or untenable than the one you have just mentioned."

"Well, we won't discuss this matter now," replied Montlack;

"and as you are not disposed to give me credit for any feeling other than selfishness, I will at once to the design and intent of my present visit."

"Do so, and be as brief as possible," said Head, "for, to tell you the truth, I am getting weary of your pointless hints and allusions."

"Then to be candid" (Bryan smiled), "I have come," continued Montlack, "to liberate you, but upon condition that you swear to me to leave the country, and never again meet or correspond with my cousin, Coma De Lacy! Don't start, as if you thought my proposition a very grievous one; for, if you will but look at it a moment, you'll see that by accepting my offer you gain your freedom and lose nothing."

"Do you count the hand of your cousin nothing?"

"It can be nothing to you, and certainly you have no hope now of obtaining the hand of my cousin. Why, she looks upon you, after what has occurred, with the utmost contempt, and hates you all the more because she once loved; and, besides, if she loved you even as she did before she believed you a base criminal, the general would never consent to your nuptials."

"But what if she, rebelling against the unjust tyranny of her father, say she will be mine without his consent?" said Bryan.

"No danger of that; she has been too well drilled by the old general to disobey orders," laughed Montlack. "But even, for argument's sake, admitting what you say to be true, still, if you remain here in confinement, of which there is but little doubt if you do not accept my offer, then there is and can be no hope of your marriage."

"Hope is gone only with life," said Bryan.

"Bah!" continued Montlack; "a sentiment worthy only of a lovesick boy. Look at this matter rationally, and you will see at once that all hope of your success is now gone and forever."

"The past is beyond our reach; but no man can speak for the future," replied Bryan.

"In this case, the future will not be long," said Montlack, "for in a week, by the consent of herself, I marry Coma; so you might as well submit at once, agree to my terms, and hunt out some other sweetheart, since this one is beyond your reach."

"Have you anything more to say?" asked Bryan, calmly.

"Only," replied Montlack, with a well satisfied look—for, deceived by the calmness of Bryan, he considered success certain—"as you seem to be reasonable, and willing to do what is right, I will repay you the one thousand dollars borrowed, and which I never intended to retain."

"Nothing more?" asked Head.

"Well! I am disposed to be liberal with you," replied the captain, misunderstanding the tenor of Bryan's question; "and as I have been the cause of your imprisonment, won't stand on a few thousand more to put you all right with the world again."

"But my character?" suggested Bryan. "You know I rest under the charge of forgery?"

"Psha!" exclaimed Montlack; "nobody will ever inquire respecting your character so long as you have plenty of money. 'Tis the poor devils whose character is always hunted out, and not the rich."

"But why," asked Bryan, wishing to fathom, if possible, his enemy's designs, "are you so interested in my leaving the country? Would it not answer your purpose just as well for me to continue in prison?"

"Just as well, so far as my marriage is concerned," replied Montlack.

"Then why trouble yourself about my liberation?"

"Don't you think I have some heart left? and that I would naturally feel remorse at keeping an innocent man in prison, when I had gained my end? Besides," added Montlack, with a quick glance at the unmoved countenance of his rival, "Co-

ma has asked me, and I can deny her nothing, to use my influence in sending you away out of the country, as it would be very painful to her ever to meet you again."

"By heavens! captain," exclaimed Bryan, "you are indeed a deep and cunning scoundrel! But you have deceived me once, and can never do it again. I would be weak and foolish to insanity to place confidence in the word of a man that had willingly and intentionally committed perjury, and in every way proved himself a base and unprincipled traitor! Besides, I know all that you have just spoken to be false; and that Coma, at this very moment, hates and detests you; and, instead of remembering me with scorn and contempt, has for me the same esteem and confidence that she had before she had heard your reckless and groundless slander."

"You had better put some rein upon your tongue," said Montlack, menacingly, "or my patience may give way, and I will leave you to die like a miserable dog in this cell! For the last time, I now offer you liberty. Will you accept my proposition, and go free? or will you, like a maudlin fool, refuse it, and remain forever the tenant of a dungeon?"

"Neither," replied Bryan, emphatically; "I scorn your offers, and defy your hatred! I will yet go forth from this cell, and will again see Miss De Lacy, and trust, in spite of all your opposition, and in spite of your treachery and defamation some day to call her my own! You have my answer and my determination; and I beg now to be freed from your loathsome presence."

Chagrined at the defeat of his plans, and furious at the confident prophecy of his rival, Montlack was about to pour forth a volume of abuse and bitter mockery upon the head of Bryan, when he was interrupted by the appearance of the jailer, and compelled to remain silent.

At the command of the keeper, our hero, with his mind intent upon executing his determined plan of escape, left his cell and hurried away, scarcely noticing, as he passed out, the

scowling and malevolent countenance of his defeated and discomfited enemy.

Bryan was received with a shout, and soon surrounded by his fellow-prisoners, eager to behold another display of his wonderful activity. "Shooting-Jacket" and his opponent were clamorous for the immediate decision of their bet. Nothing loath, our hero gave his ready assent, and immediately the prison yard became boisterous with yells of applause and encouragement. Bryan quietly stripped himself for the trial; the jockey, after he had seen the rope placed at eight and a half feet, lending his assistance.

"Now, my young antelope," said "Shooting-Jacket," encouragingly, "a bold effort for the rope; and then," he added, in a lower tone, with a significant look, "a grand struggle for the wall and liberty!"

Bryan started with terror at this unexpected remark of his companion, and looked quickly around to see if any other had noticed it; but the jockey, divining his thoughts, soon quieted his fears by muttering, in a low voice—

"Don't be uneasy, for no one suspects you. I smelled out the game; but mum's the word, and blast me if I ever 'peach."

Bryan grasped his hand, but said nothing.

A group of citizens, drawn hither by the report of Bryan's wonderful activity, and of the trial to be made on this morning, stood inside the prison yard; and along with them, attracted by the same curiosity, were most of the turnkeys and officers of the establishment.

On his way out, Montlack's attention was drawn to this unusual group; and when informed by the jailer the cause of their presence, and of the excitement very apparent throughout the yard, stopped and joined their company. His only design in stopping was to exult over his victim, for he hoped that he would fail in his attempt; or, what would be still more pleasing to him, would break his neck, and thus free him forever of his hated presence.

But his hopes and wishes were destined alike to meet with

disappointment, for, at the word, Bryan bounded lightly forward, and with a desperate effort cleared the rope!

A wild shout of applause greeted his success.

Montlack muttered an oath.

"Now for the wall!" whispered the jockey, drawing near to Bryan.

"Ay! now for the wall and liberty," was the low, but firm reply.

"Don't try it," said one of the prisoners, looking at the rope, now raised a half foot higher.

Bryan smiled; the jockey looked around knowingly; the crowd of citizens and keepers drew nearer, and along with them Montlack, now so confident of his hated rival's failure as to offer a bet of fifty dollars, which was immediately taken by one of the bystanders.

The signal given, Bryan raised his cap, and, looking with a smile into the scowling countenance of Montlack, shouted, "*Au revoir, Monsieur le Capitaine*;" then springing forward, passed under the rope, and with a mighty effort, to the amazement of every one but the jockey, cleared the wall, and was gone!

There was a moment of stupid wonder; then loud cries of "Catch him!" mingled with the laughter and exultation of the prisoners, and hurried movements of the keepers in pursuit; but Montlack, furious at the escape of his hated rival, had already sprung upon his horse, and was urging him onward with whip and spur, hoping to ride down the fugitive before he had reached the woods.

It was an open, level space, some four hundred yards in width, between the wall of the prison yard and the forest; and the spectators, standing near the jail on the top of the cone-shaped hill, could witness the entire chase—the flight and pursuit.

"Go it, my brave fellow!" shouted the jockey, throwing up his hat; "once in the forest, and you are safe!"

"The captain is gaining on him!" exclaimed one of the keepers.

"I hope he'll escape," replied a citizen; "for he's too gallant a fellow to be cooped up in a dungeon."

"The captain is within fifty yards of him, and there's a hundred to go yet!" exclaimed the jailer, exultingly.

"Damn that captain!" shouted one of the prisoners; "he has drawn a pistol, and will fire at the boy."

"I hope not," said the jailer, "for I would rather see him escape."

"If he does, I'll see that he is punished," exclaimed the same citizen, in an excited tone, "for it will be a base and cowardly murder."

But at this moment, when Montlack, with extended arm and flashing eye, was levelling his pistol, the spectators around the jail beheld a light puff of smoke sweep up from the skirt of the forest, followed by the sharp report of a rifle; and simultaneously with the smoke and report, the gallant steed of the pursuer dropped lifeless to the ground, hurling the person of his rider far over his head.

"A good shot, that, by the devils!" exclaimed the jockey. "I'm sorry for the horse, but blast me if I don't hope the damned captain has got his quietus!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the prisoners; "he has escaped!"

"And I trust will never find his way back," said the sympathizing citizen, preparing to follow the footsteps of the jailer, now hurrying to the assistance of the luckless captain.

"Faith! and may your honor live a thousand years, and never be without whiskey or praters!" shouted a merry Irishman.

"Why not wish him in heaven at once?" laughed a bystander.

"I know all about whiskey and praters," said the Irishman, good-humoredly, "but divil the bit about heaven; so I jist made for him an Irish prayer; and may he never hear worse!"

"I'll take that five!" said the jockey, in a quiet tone, as he turned his eyes from the forest where the person of Bryan had just vanished, to the countenance of his unlucky opponent.

"Just drop me a line if you get it before I do," replied the other, turning upon his heel and walking away.

"Shooting-Jacket" looked a little confounded at this unexpected reply; but seeing no help for it, like a wise man, joined in the laugh of his fellow-prisoners against himself, and said nothing more.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WEEK had passed since the escape of Bryan. During this period, Duffe had been busily engaged preparing to move west. The jailer, urged on by De Lacy and Montlack, had made some slight effort to ferret out the fugitive; but had met with no success. Satisfied at length that Bryan, along with Kenton, had fled the country, all parties rested at ease save the discomfited captain. The latter, sorely bruised in person, and mortified in spirit, tossed about upon his weary bed, cursing his rival; warning the general to keep a strict watch over Coma; and greatly troubled in mind lest the lovers might meet again, and perhaps (that was the most galling thought of the schemer!), without waiting the consent of her father, put an end to all of his hopes and designs by a clandestine marriage.

But the captain was now so far recovered from his bruises as to leave his bed, and so restless and uneasy had he become that, in spite of the pain it gave him, had called for his horse and ridden to the village, to make inquiries himself respecting the fugitive. Better satisfied by personal examination than he had been by the reports of his uncle, Montlack was now on his return to the mansion; when, at a sudden bend in the path he was slowly pursuing, much to his astonishment, and with no little trepidation, he found himself in the unwelcome presence of Kenton. Touching his horse lightly, Montlack would have

passed on without so much as a salutation; but Simon, with a pleasant smile, barred his way, at the same time good-humoredly exclaiming—

"'Mazin' glad to see you, captin'; have been on the look-out ever since I hearn you had made up your mind to git well agin; for blast me if I liked the idea of leavin' this 'ere blessed country without tellin' you good-by, and gittin' a lock of your hair to 'member you when I got among the savages."

"I have had quite enough of your pleasantry, Mr. Kenton, and would thank you to step out of the path, and let me pass," replied Montlack, surlily.

"If it ar' all the same to you, captin'," said the Scout, without moving, "I am very well satisfied, and if you ain't, and want to pass afore I say the word, then you'll jist have to ride over me, that's all!"

"Which I'll soon do," exclaimed Montlack, becoming enraged at the cool indifference of Kenton, "unless you give me the road."

"This ar' a free country," said Kenton, with a low laugh, as if amused at the thought, "and may-be you will—and may-be you won't; but darn me, if you try it, if I don't spile the figure-head of your horse like I did that ar' one the tother day!"

"And to you I owe the death of my fine gray, and my own bruises, do I?" said Montlack, savagely.

"Not 'zactly to me, but to old Betsy," said Kenton, tapping his rifle; "but you ought to be darned glad, captin', that I'm sich a good shot; for if it had been any other, the bullet might have been in your head 'stead of your horse's; and cuss me if I think it would have been much harm if it had. I thought first, darn me if I didn't, captin', when I saw you draw your pistol on Mr. Bryan, of aimin' at you, but 'eluded it wer'n't right, as you didn't 'spect it, and so took the horse; and you ought to be powerful much obliged to me, instead of gittin' in a passion."

"Clear the road, sir!" exclaimed Montlack, in a fury, at the

same time urging his horse a few paces nearer the unflinching borderer; "my course is in that direction, and I don't wish to bandy further words with you."

"I reckon you've taken the wrong path, captin'," said Kenton, quietly, at the same time presenting his rifle, "for blast me, if you come another step nearer, though I'd be darned sorry to kill so fine a critter, I'll have to give you another tumble!"

"What do you mean by thus stopping me on the highway?" exclaimed Montlack, drawing back his horse. "I cannot conceive your intention, unless you design robbery."

"It wouldn't be much wrong if I did, as you robbed Mister Bryan; but Simon Kenton is no robber, and you need have no fears for your purse."

"If you have anything to say to me, do so at once, and let me pass."

"I hain't got much to say, captin', for I ain't pertickler anxious to talk with a feller what's got nigger blood in him, and a darned parjured scamp at that! All I want jist now is for you to right 'bout face, as the Sargeant would say, and keep that ar' path till I say stop. Jist be turnin' your horse, will you?" added the Scout sternly, at the same time glancing his eye up at the sun; "for we ain't got no time to spare, and go you shall, for I'm 'terminated on that!"

"Why do you wish me to turn back?" said Montlack, glancing uneasily at the stern and determined countenance of Simon.

"Never mind 'bout that," replied Kenton; "you'll find it out soon enough. You made me stand like a fool behind a tree t'other day; while you, like a 'tarnal nigger, slipped away! I'm goin' to have my revenge now, captin', and am after takin' you to a weddin' whar thar'll be no dancin'. So right 'bout face! March! For Sharp-Eye ain't goin' to be fooled twice by a cussed yaller Frenchman without takin' satisfaction!"

Seeing that Kenton was in earnest, Montlack had no other course left him but to obey, which he did with fear and trembling; for he felt in his own heart that he deserved the severest

punishment at the hands of Bryan and his friends, and doubted not he was now about to receive it. But the captain had not ridden a hundred paces, followed closely by Kenton, before he began turning over in his own mind the chances of escape by a rapid and sudden flight; and it seemed that Simon had fears very near akin to the hopes of his captive, for suddenly, just as the captain had fully made up his mind to the dangerous undertaking, Kenton called out in a quick and peremptory voice—

"Halt, Mister Captin'! I'm of the 'pinion that we had better change our plan of march."

Coming up to the side of Montlack, who had silently obeyed this command, Simon drew from his shot-pouch a strong cord, at the same time sternly ordering him to cross his hands; but the captain, divining at once his intention, refused to submit to so degrading a request, and it was not until Kenton, levelling his rifle, ordered him in a threatening voice to do as he was bid, that he could bring himself to yield.

But between death and dishonor, the worthy captain, with a worldly care for his person, had no thought of hesitating, so, crossing his hands as he was bid, he quietly submitted to be bound. His prisoner, secured to his entire satisfaction, Kenton, drawing the bridle-rein over his own arm, once more stalked rapidly onward. Ever and anon, as he walked swiftly along through the woods, the borderer would glance over his shoulder at the rueful countenance of Montlack, giving utterance, as he did so, to a low chuckle of delight. His secret cogitations, judging from the expression of his face, were decidedly of an amusing character. But, without again halting, for, from his frequent glances at the declining sun, he seemed to be in a hurry, Kenton pursued the most direct route to the house of Duffe, and very soon commanded a halt in front of the farmhouse.

Montlack, as he rode up, noticed several horses, fully equipped, as if for a long journey; but he was not allowed much time for observation; for Kenton, aiding him to dismount,

hurried him to the house, and, pushing in the door, exclaimed, with a roguish look at the company—

"I hope the thing ain't over, for Captin' Montlack is powerful anxious to see the weddin'."

The company addressed by Simon consisted of Duffe and his wife, Bryan and Coma, a minister, and old Titus; and they were on the eve of celebrating the rites of marriage, making Bryan and Coma husband and wife, when they were interrupted by the voice of Kenton and the unexpected appearance of Captain Jean!

It would be difficult to say who was the most surprised at this unwelcome meeting—Bryan, Coma, or the captain; and for a moment each of them stood eyeing the other in silent confusion, the Scout during the time greatly enjoying their amazement.

"Why this intrusion?" at length Bryan asked, looking first at Montlack, and then at Kenton.

"May the devil take me if I know!" muttered Montlack, sullenly.

"Jist go on, Mr. Preacher; it ar' all right," said Simon, still laughing; "this 'tarnal Frenchman fooled me t'other day, and laughed at me; and I'm takin' my revenge! Go ahead! I axed him to the weddin'! He's been parjurin' himself, and doin' us all the harm he wer' able, and I'm now fulfillin' the Scripture on him, old chap. You see I'm jist shovellin' hot coals on his head, by retarnin' good for evil; for, to pay him for all his enmity, I've jist kindly invited him to the weddin', and as he didn't like to come, have brought him along anyhow!"

"*Sacre!*" exclaimed Montlack, grinding his teeth, and stamping with rage, "I'll have revenge if it takes me a lifetime to obtain it!"

"Be easy, or you'll hurt your teeth!" said Kenton, with a provoking smile.

"*Mon Dieu!*" groaned Montlack.

"Don't be savage, captin'," said the Scout, "for I'm jist

gittin' even with you for that little trick you played me t'other day. I reckon I felt a little of the cheapest when I crept round that ar' darned tree backwards, spectin' every moment to hear from you, and found that you were gone. But I guess now you jist feel a dratted sight cheaper, when you find, after all your lyin', and swearin', and cussed rascality, that Mister Bryan is goin' to marry Miss Coma!"

No pen could describe the rage and fury of the baffled and defeated schemer, when he fully discovered the intention of the parties now gathered in the house of Duffe; and Bryan, feeling that the harmless revenge of Simon was no more than a righteous punishment for his treachery, with a smile at the borderer's strange manner of taking satisfaction, ordered the minister to proceed with the ceremony.

Amidst the curses and revilings of the captain, Bryan and Coma were pronounced man and wife; and when the ceremony had been fully completed, Kenton, stepping forward, with a low mocking bow to Montlack, exclaimed—

"I guess, captin', he's *Head* this time?"

"And I swear, by the eternal God, shall yet be *Headless!*" shouted Montlack, his countenance distorted with fury and malevolence.

Bryan and Coma heard this ominous prophecy of Captain Jean; but thought nothing of it then, for they considered it only a harmless and senseless threat of their disappointed enemy; but in after years this last greeting of her treacherous cousin was brought back sadly and horribly to the memory of poor Coma, and the consequences of honest Simon's harmless revenge were bitter and terrible indeed!

But they were married; and their worst foe had been an unwilling witness to their happiness. They could not, and did not wish him a severer punishment.

Prepared for immediate departure, Bryan and Coma, the Sergeant and his wife, and old Titus and the minister, made no unnecessary delay, but mounting their horses, after a lingering look at old scenes, turned their faces towards the setting sun.

They were gone! Bryan sought a new home in the West; and Coma, trusting in his love, deserted father and home, and followed her husband!

There were no steamboats then; and no railroads, not even wagon-tracks, leading west; and where thousands and thousands hurry along now, in carriages, wagons, stages, railcars and steamers, all speeding with eager cares or hopes to the great valley of the Mississippi—then, only here and there, and at very rare intervals, would you meet with brave and hardy pioneers, slowly winding their dangerous and toilsome way, on foot, or at best mounted on horseback, to the bloody hunting-grounds of the Indian!

The little party, now but started upon their perilous journey, fully knew the danger and hardships they would be compelled to undergo ere they reached the beautiful cane lands described by Kenton. Yet, they had made up their minds to risk and dare all, hoping at last to find a happy home! All their worldly goods were packed on a few led horses; and Coma, the child of fortune and luxury, rich in the love of him she had chosen, forgot all the comforts of civilization; while she hurried with a glad smile, and buoyant with glorious hopes, through the sombre forest, to embrace all the privations and perils of a semi-savage land! Hers was a love, not of sunshine, and plenty, and wealth; but the rich confiding outpourings of an artless, a trusting, and devoted heart. And Bryan felt and fully appreciated the inestimable value of the rich jewel he had gathered. He knew the sacrifice she was making, and with a glistening eye looked proudly upon her graceful person as she rode by his side; vowing, in his own heart, that she should never know sorrow, or danger, or want, so long as he had a tongue to soothe, a heart to love, or an arm to defend and support.

Kenton stood in the deserted doorway of Duffe's cottage, watching the departure of his friends; and when they were about to glide from his sight, with a loud cheer he waved them onward to his loved "Kaintuck."

The Sergeant, drawing rein, returned the borderer's shout with a military touch of the cap; Coma greeted it with a wave of her snowy hand; Mrs. Duffe wept in silence; Bryan, rising in his stirrups, took off his hat; old Titus gave an answering shout; and the minister, with a devout look to heaven, murmured—"Amen!"

They were gone!

* * * * *

"I guess, captin'g," said the Scout, moving from the door, and standing before Montlack, "that was about the beautifulest sight I ever saw. I wish you had seen her, and how bravely she turns her face west, and how loving she rides by the side of Mister Bryan, and how proud he looks. Blast me if it wouldn't cure sore eyes just to see 'em!"

"She'll be sick enough of her bargain before another year rolls round," sneered Montlack, "and will have but few sweet words for him that persuaded her to so silly a step. How do you think she'll enjoy the privation of a rough frontier life? Eh! Captain Kenton, I guess she won't think you then as good, and honest, and truthful as you and your snivelling friend would have her now believe."

"Don't trouble yourself 'bout Miss Coma," replied the Scout, eyeing the captain anything but pleasantly; "I guess she'll be happy enough, as much so, at any rate, as if she had remained here with that grand old daddy of her'n; and your own beautiful self. She won't have sich a great house out in Kaintuck, and so many servants, and sich fine furniture, and all sich stuffs, but she'll never want venison, and bear-meat, and buffalo so long as Sharp-Eye can raise old Betsy; and blast me if I don't jist make her carpets and beds of furs every bit as costly and comfortable as the cussed stuck-up consarns you've got in this 'ere country."

"A very inviting home, indeed," said Montlack, mockingly, for he discovered that Simon was somewhat touchy on this point, and wished to aggravate him as much as possible. "She will be highly delighted, I have no doubt, eating fat bear-meat,

and sleeping on greasy bear-skins, and will never think of linen sheets and feathers again! Ha! ha!" he laughed; "to what a glorious home your friend will carry his daintily-raised bride! How happy she'll be in her nice log cabin, with the interesting and refined society she will meet there."

"She'll not be so bad off for comforts as you think," retorted Simon, "for Sally and Mr. Bryan have managed to take with them many of them ar' little woman contraptions you speak on; and thar's Titus and me who'll fix up all things snug, and gather flowers, and grapes, and fruits, and make Miss Coma happy enough in her new home. If we ain't so high larnt and refined out thar as you folks in the old country, we are honest and kind, and that ar' a darned sight more than can be said of you. And if the worst comes, and Miss Coma has to sleep on a bear-skin bed," added the borderer with dignity, "she'll not be the first fair damsel that has done it, and will be happier thar in her log cabin, with the love of an honest and brave man, than she would have been in the big house, with silks and satins, forever parsecuted by sich a cowardly sneakin' villain as you are."

"Oh, no doubt of it," replied Montlack, no little ruffled by the unpolished bluntness of his captor, at the same time moving uneasily in his seat, for his hands were confined uncomfortably tight, and pained him; "but let her go, and to the devil, for aught I care."

"Don't forgit your edication, captin', and that ar' refinement you wer' talkin' about just now," said Simon, recovering his good-humor with the increasing uneasiness and passion of Montlack.

"A thousand devils take you!" exclaimed Montlack, furiously. "How long do you intend to keep me here tied in this manner?"

"One devil will do," replied Kenton, enjoying Montlack's ill-humor; "and I guess I'll jist keep you till Mister Bryan is beyond all pursuit; then I'll take a lock of your hair to give to your friend Simon Girty for the scalp-lock I intend to

take from him, and then, with your permission, captin', I'll jist leave you to be hunted out by the general."

"You are a devil incarnate," hissed Montlack, "and have it all your own way now; but my time will come, and I'll have revenge."

"Don't be a cussin' so, for it ar' wrong, captin'; and be patient, for thar's nothin' like patience," said Simon, philosophically. "I wer' once jist like you; had no patience in the world; wer' always breakin' out in a passion, and fightin', and cussin', and doin' all sorts of foolish things; but I got cured at last, and I'll tell you how it wer' foted about, for it will help us to pass off the time, and may be of some benefit to you, captin'. I wer' a young man at the time, and all fire and passion, like most young fellers, and it wer' my first trip West. I got on one of them ar' flatboats at Pittsburgh, and wer' goin' down the Ohio River in it; and when I got to my landin'-place, they were sendin' me out in a canoe; and to push clear of the boat, I jist cotched hold of one of them long sweep oars, lying out in the water, when a wag on board, seein' I had hold on it, placed his hands on t'other end, and without a word lifted me plump out into the water."

"And I wish he had left you there," thought Montlack; but he did not give expression to his thoughts.

"I had on my best togs, captin'," continued Simon, "and maybe I wer'n't mad, and cussed, and raved, hangin' on to that ar' oar up to my neck in water. But it wer'n't no use at all; for the villain, when I wer' about half drowned, jist bore down on the oar agin, and then up he raised me to drip; and as I wer' in a pertickler bad humor, and continued to cuss and rave, and threaten him, without more ado he jist let me down in the water agin, and when I sorter cooled off, for it were plaguy cold in January, then he would hoist me up agin to dry. It wer' darned provokin', captin', and no mistake, and tried my patience 'mazin'ly. But no sooner would I drip a little than my patience would give way, and once more I'd commence cussin' and swearin' like mad, and down he'd drop

me into the water, and blast me, captin', if he didn't keep up his dippin' and drippin' till I got as cool as a cucumber, had no more spunk than a 'possum, lost my passion altogether, and become as patient as a lamb, and they do say it ar' the most all-fired patient critter livin'. I hain't been the same man since that duckin'; never git into a passion now, and have lots and squares of patience. Cuss me if I wer'n't cured effectually; and I'd recommend you, captin', if you ever go a flatboatin', to jist try the 'speriment. It works like a charm, this *cold water cure*, both on dogs and men."

"I want none of your advice," said Montlack, surlily; "but if you have one spark of humanity left in your brutal breast, you will loose this cord from my hands. It is very painful."

"Not in the least; you must be mistaken, captin', for I'm jist up to all sich things as that, and with my hands tied as beautiful as your'n could lay down and sleep like a baby. Why, darn me if the Ingens didn't once keep me a week stretched out at full length upon my back, with my arms bound down to a pole, put under my head for a pillar, and my legs spread out and tied to two saplin's, like a coon-skin put out to dry. I 'knowledge it wer' pretty hard at first, but I soon got used to it, and spent my time lookin' up at the stars, or sleepin' like a turtle on a log. Blame me if it wer'n't rather good for me, for I thought more of heaven then than I ever did afore or since."

"My God! you are a fiend thus to torture me!" exclaimed Montlack, with a groan, and struggling to burst his bonds.

"Torture you, captin'? Why, you're jokin'. If the Shawanees had you tied to a stake, like they had me once, and wer' to 'muse themselves throwin' tomahawks at your head, and touchin' you up with burnin' coals, and shootin' arrows into you, thar might be some sense in your talkin' 'bout torture! But to hear a feller sittin' comfortably in a house, jist 'cause his hands ain't in his lap, 'stead of bein' behind his back, talk of torture—it's enough to make a dog laugh! Ain't it, Bang?"

Bang showed his teeth, as if highly amused with such an

absurdity; and his master, as if struck with the silliness of Montlack's complaints, laughed outright.

Stepping to the door, the Scout looked out a moment on the gathering night, then, as if satisfied with the result of his observation, returned again to the presence of his prisoner, saying—

"Well, Mister Montlack, we'll have to part company now! I guess by this time Mr. Bryan is far enough on his way, and nobody will be huntin' you to-night. The ginerall thinks Miss Coma at Hillsborough, and, I dare say, 'spects you are thar too: so I'll be off, and leave you here to cogitate over your defeated schemes, and to come to the conclusion 'that honesty ar' the best policy after all.'"

"You will not leave me bound in this manner?" said Montlack, beseechingly.

"Not 'zactly; for I intend to put your feet in the same fix; and then fasten them to that ar' post! I wouldn't do it, captin'," added Kenton, with some appearance of commiseration, "but I don't want you to be rousin' the neighborhood, and comin' after us afore we git outer all danger."

"Loose my hands, and let me go, and I swear to you I will alarm no one, and make no pursuit," exclaimed Montlack, at the same time ruefully eyeing the cord Kenton had just taken from his pouch.

"Can't trust you, captin'; for you've parjured yourself already, and ar' 'bout the darndest liar I ever met with."

Finding his captor immovable, Montlack submitted to his fate; pouring forth, however, a stream of impotent oaths and threats, which the borderer received very quietly, merely remarking, when about to depart—

"To tell the truth, captin', it goes agin my natur' to leave you in this 'ere pickle; and you might go, if my own safety wer' all that wer' at stake; but as it tain't, you'll jist have to take your fate and look for liberation to the ginerall. I've no doubt he'll be huntin' after you and Miss Coma, to-morrow. The gal he won't find; but you can tell him whar she's gone;

and you, capting, I guess he'll find right here, 'less you do like that ar' Mister Samson I once hearn tell on, and he wer' a powerful strong one—jist walk off with that ar' post! But afore I go, capting, I must say that this 'ere what you suffer now ain't no more than you deserve for your treachery; and I'm a hopin' it may be a lesson to you, and that you'll never agin 'tempt to ruin the character of an innocent man to git his sweetheart!"

Montlack groaned with pain and despair, and could not, for the life of him, determine whether the Scout intended this homily for a joke or a sermon.

"I'm even with you now, capting," continued Simon, with a slight twinkle of humor about the eye, "for that ar' little trick you played me; and if you'll now jist tell me," he added, with much apparent gravity, "whether you've got any nigger blood in you, I'll be eternally obligated!"

Montlack muttered an oath.

"Good-by!" shouted Kenton, and, whistling Bang, the wild borderer was gone! The semi-savage had turned his face towards the perilous, but loved hunting-grounds of the west. His was a soul of bravery, and honesty, untutored, unrestrained, and unpolished, it is true; scorning the law and its formalities, but not lawless; despising the refinements and luxuries of civilization, but nevertheless kind, and gentle, and noble; ignorant of hypocrisy and treachery, and drawing all of his wild notions and emotions from the grand works of Nature alone!

But the child of fortune and refinement—the offspring of education and civilization, corrupted and degraded by vice and selfishness—remained behind, bound hand and foot, cursing himself, his God, and the world; and during the weary hours of that long and dreary night, pouring forth his blasphemies and impotent threats, and dreaming, as the hot blood flowed through his heated brain, of bloody and horrible vengeance! We leave him, a prey to his own wicked thoughts! If he has not already suffered sufficiently, he will do so ere he beholds

the welcome light of another day, or catches the still more welcome tread of those coming to liberate him from his painful bondage.

Au revoir, Captain Jean Montlack!

Adieu to Civilization!

Farewell to the Farm-house!

"O'er thy walls

A joyless, sunless, darkness falls,
And horror holds his hateful reign."

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