

**TRAITS**  
of  
**AMERICAN HUMOUR,**  
BY NATIVE AUTHORS.

**THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON, ED.**

**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I**

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TRAITS

OF

AMERICAN HUMOUR,

BY NATIVE AUTHORS.

EDITED AND ADAPTED  
BY THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK,"  
"THE OLD JUDGE," "THE ENGLISH IN AMERICA," &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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Most Europeans speak of America as they do of England, France, or Prussia, as one of the great countries of the world, but without reference to the fact that it covers a larger portion of the globe than all of them collectively. In like manner as the New England confederacy originally comprised the most enlightened and most powerful transatlantic provinces, and the inhabitants accidentally acquired the appellation of Yankees, so this term is very generally applied to all Americans, and is too often used as a national, instead of a provincial or a sectional sobriquet. In order to form an accurate estimate of the national humour, it is necessary to bear these two great popular errors constantly in view. The Eastern and Western, Northern and Southern States, though settled by a population speaking the same language, and enjoying the same institutions, are so distant from each other, and differ so widely in climate, soil, and productions, that they have but few features in common; while the people, from the same causes, as well as from habits, tastes, necessities, the sparseness or density of population, free soil, or slave labour, the intensity, absence, or weakness of religious enthusiasm, and many other peculiarities, are equally dissimilar.

Hence, humour has a character as local as the boundaries of these civil subdivisions.

The same diversity is observable in that of the English, Irish and Scotch, and in their mirthful sallies, the character of each race is plainly discernible.

That of the English is at once manly and hearty, and, though embellished by fancy, not exaggerated; that of the Irish, extravagant, reckless, rollicking, and kind-hearted; while that of the Scotch is sly, cold, quaint, practical, and sarcastic.

The population of the Middle States, in this particular, reminds a stranger of the English, that of the West resembles the Irish, and the Yankees bear a still stronger affinity to the Scotch. Among the Americans themselves these distinctions are not only well understood and defined, but are again subdivided so as to apply more particularly to the individual States.

Each has a droll appellation, by which the character of its yeomanry, as composed of their ability, generosity, or malignance on the one hand, and craft, economy, or ignorance of the world, on the other, is known and illustrated. Thus, there are the Hoosiers of Indiana, the Suckers of Illinois, the pukes of Missouri, the buck-eyes of Ohio, the red-horses of Kentucky, the mud-heads of Tennessee, the wolverines of Michigan, the eels of New England, and the corn-crackers of Virginia.

For the purpose of this work, however, it is perhaps sufficient merely to keep in view the two grand divisions of East and West, which, to a certain extent, may be said to embrace those spread geographically North and South, with which they insensibly blend.

Of the former, New England and its neighbours are pre-eminent. The rigid discipline and cold, gloomy tenets of the Puritans required and enforced a grave demeanour, and an absence from all public and private amusements, while a sterile and ungrateful soil demanded all the industry, and required all the energy of the people to ensure a comfortable support. Similar causes produce a like result in Scotland. Hence the striking resemblance in the humour of the two people. But though the non-conformist fathers controlled and modified the mirth of the heart, they could not repress it. Nature is more powerful than conventional regulations, and it soon indemnified itself in the indulgence of a smile for the prohibition of unseemly laughter.

Hypocrisy is short-lived:

“Vera redit facies, dissimulata peret.”

The Puritans, as one of their descendants has well observed,<sup>[1]</sup> emigrated “that they might have the privilege to work and pray, to sit upon hard benches, and to listen to painful preaching as long as they would, even unto thirty seventhly, if the Spirit so willed it. They were not,” he says, “plump, rosy-gilled Englishmen that came hither, but a hard-faced, atrabillious, earnest-eyed race, stiff from long wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and who had taught Satan to dread the new Puritan hug.” Add two hundred years’ influence of soil, climate, and exposure, with its necessary result of idiosyncrasies, and we have the present Yankee, full of expedients, half master of all trades, inventive in all but the beautiful, full of shifts, not yet capable of comfort, armed at all points against the old enemy, hunger, longanimous, good at patching, not so careful for what is best as for what *will do*, with a clasp to his purse, and a button to his pocket, not skilled to build against time, as in old countries, but against sore-pressing need, accustomed to move the world with no assistants but his own two feet, and no lever but his own long forecast. A strange hybrid, indeed, did circumstances beget here, in the New World, upon the old Puritan stock, and the earth never before saw such mystic-practicalism, such niggard-geniality, such calculating-fanaticism, such cast-iron enthusiasm, such unwilling-humour, such close-fisted generosity. This new ‘*Greeculus esuriens*’ will make a living out of anything. He will invent new trades as well as new tools. His brain is his capital, and he will get education at all risks. Put him on Juan Fernandez, and he will make a spelling-book first, and a salt-pan afterwards. In *caelum jusseris, ibit*, or the other way either, it is all one so as anything is to be got by it. Yet, after all, thin, speculative Jonathan is more like the Englishman of two centuries ago than John Bull himself is. He has lost somewhat in solidity, has become fluent and adaptable, but more of the original groundwork of character remains.

New England was most assuredly an unpromising soil wherein to search for humour; but, fortunately, that is a hardy and prolific plant, and is to be found in some of its infinite varieties, in more or less abundance everywhere.

To the well-known appellation of Yankees, their Southern friends have added, as we have seen, in reference to their remarkable pliability, the denomination of “Eels.” Their humour is not merely original, but it is clothed in quaint language. They brought with them many words now obsolete and forgotten in England, to which they have added others derived from their intercourse with the Indians, their neighbours the French and Dutch, and their peculiar productions. Their pronunciation, perhaps, is not very dissimilar to that of their Puritan forefathers. It is not easy to convey an adequate idea of it on paper, but the following observations may render it more intelligible:

“1.<sup>[2]</sup> The chief peculiarity is a drawing pronunciation, and sometimes accompanied by speaking through the nose, as *eend* for *end*, *dawg* for *dog*, *Gawd* for *God*, &c.

“2. Before the sounds *ow* and *oo*, they often insert a short *i*, which we will represent by the *y*; as *kyow* for *cow*, *vyow* for *vow*, *tyoo* for *too*, *dyoo* for *do*, &c.

“3.<sup>[3]</sup> The genuine Yankee never gives the rough sound to the *r*, when he can help it, and often displays considerable ingenuity in avoiding it, even before a vowel.

“4. He seldom sounds the final *g*, a piece of self-denial, if we consider his partiality for nasals. The same may be said of the final *d*, as *han*’ and *stan*’ for *hand* and *stand*.

“5. The *h* in such words as *while*, *when*, *where*, he omits altogether.

“6. In regard to *a*, he shows some inconsistency, sometimes giving a close and obscure sound, as *hev* for *have*, *hendy* for *handy*, *ez* for *as*, *thet* for *that*; and again giving it the broad sound as in *father*, as *hansome* for *handsome*.”

“7. *Au* in such words as *daughter* and *slaughter*, he pronounces *ah*.”

Wholly unconstrained at first by conventional usages, and almost before the reach of the law, the inhabitants of the West indulged, to the fullest extent, their propensity for fun, frolic, and the wild and exciting sports of the chase. Emigrants from the border States, they engrafted on the dialects of their native places exaggerations and peculiarities of their own, until they acquired almost a new language, the most remarkable feature of which is its amplification. Everything is superlative, awful, powerful, monstrous, dreadful, almighty, and all-fired. As specimens of these extravagancies four narratives of the Adventures of the celebrated Colonel Crockett are given, of which the humour consists mainly in the marvellous. As they were designed for “the million,” among whom the scenes are laid, rather than the educated class, they were found to contain many expressions unfit for the perusal of the latter, which I have deemed it proper to expunge. Other numbers in both volumes, liable to the same objection, have been subjected to similar expurgation, which, without affecting their raciness, has materially enhanced their value.

The tales of both West and South are written in the language of the rural population, which differs as much from the Yankee dialect as from that of the Cockney. The vocabulary of both is most copious. Some words owe their origin to circumstances, and local productions, and have hence been spread over the whole country, and adopted into general use; such as<sup>[4]</sup> *backwoods*, *breadstuffs*, *barrens*, *bottoms*, *cane-brake*, *cypress-brake*, *corn-broom*, *corn-shucking*, *clearing*, *deadening*, *diggings*, *dug-out*, *flats*, *husking*, *prairie*, *shingle*, *sawyer*, *salt-lick*, *savannah*, *snag*.

Metaphorical and odd expressions often originated in some curious anecdote or event, which was transmitted by tradition, and soon made the property of all. Political writers and stump speakers perform a prominent part in the invention and diffusion of these phrases. Among others may be mentioned: *To cave in*, *to*

acknowledge the corn, to flush in the pan, to bark up the wrong tree, to pull up stakes, to be a caution, to fizzle out, to flat out, to fix his flint, to be among the missing, to give him Jessy, to see the elephant, to fly around, to tucker out, to use up, to walk into, to mizzle, to absquatulate, to cotton, to hifer, &c.

Many have been adopted from the Indians; from corn, come, *samp*, *hominy*, and *sapawn*; from the manive plant, *mandioca*, and *tapioca*, and from articles peculiar to the aborigines, the words, *canoe*, *hammock*, *tobacco*, *moccasin*, *pemmican*, *barbecue*, *hurricane*, *pow-wow*.

The Spaniards have contributed their share to the general stock, as *canyon*, *cavortin*, *chaparral*, *piستareen*, *rancho*, *vamos*.

The French have also furnished many more, such as *cache*, *calaboose*, *bodette*, *bayou*, *sault*, *levee*, *crevasse*, *habitan*, *charivari*, *portage*.<sup>[5]</sup>

The "Edinburgh Review," for April, 1844, in an article on the provincialisms of the European languages, states the result of an inquiry into the number of provincial words which had then been arrested by local glossaries at 30,687.

"Admitting that several of them are synonymous, superfluous, or common to each county, there are nevertheless many of them which, although alike orthographically, are vastly dissimilar in signification. Making these allowances, they amount to a little more than 20,000; or, according to the number of English counties hitherto illustrated, to the average ratio of 1478 to a county. Calculating the twenty-six unpublished in the same ratio, (for there are supposed to be as many words collected by persons who have never published them,) they will furnish 36,428 additional provincialisms, forming in the aggregate, 59,000 words in the colloquial tongue of the lower classes, which can, for the chief part, produce proofs of legitimate origin."

The process of coinage has been far more rapid and extensive in America than in Europe. That of words predominates in the Western, and that of phrases in the Eastern States. The chief peculiarity in the pronunciation of the Southern and Western people, is the giving of a broader sound than is proper to certain vowels; as *whar* for *where*, *thar* for *there*, *bar* for *bear*.

In the following table of words, incorrectly pronounced, such as belong to New England are designated by the letters N.E.; those exclusively Western, by the letter W.; the Southern words by S.; the rest are common to various parts of the Union. In this attempt at classification, there are, doubtless, errors and imperfections; for an emigrant from Vermont to Illinois would introduce the provincialisms of his native district, into his new residence.

Arter	for	After.
Ary	"	Either.
Attackted	"	Attack'd.
Anywheres	"	Anywhere.
Bachelor	"	Bachelor.
Bagnet	"	Bayonet.
Bar	"	Bear, W.
Becase	"	Because.
Bile	"	Boil.
Cheer	"	Chair.
Chimibly	"	Chimney.
Cupalo	"	Cupola.
Cotch'd	"	Caught.
Critter	"	Creature.
Curous	"	Curious.
Dar	"	Dare, W.
Darter	"	Daughter.
Deu	"	Do, N.E.
Delightsome	"	Delightful.
Drown'd	"	Drown'd.
Druv	"	Drove, W.
Dubous	"	Dubious.
Eend	"	End.
Everywheres	"	Every where.
Gal	"	Girl.
Gin	"	Give.
Git	"	Get.
Gineral	"	General.
Guv	"	Gave.
Gownd	"	Gown.
Har	"	Hair, W.
Hath	"	Hearth, S.
Hender	"	Hinder.
Hist	"	Hoist.
Hum	"	Home, N.E.
Humbly	"	Homely, N.E.
Hull	"	Whole, W.
Ile	"	Oil.
Innemy	"	Enemy.
Jaunders	"	Jaundice.
Jest	"	Just.
Jeems	"	James.
Jine	"	Join.
Jist	"	Joist.
Kittle	"	Kettle.
Kiver	"	Cover.
Larn	"	Learn.
Larnin	"	Learning.
Lives	"	Lief.
Leetle	"	Little.
Nary	"	Neither.
Ourn	"	Ours.
Perlite	"	Polite.
Racket	"	Rocket.
Rale	"	Real.
Rench	"	Rince.
Rheumatiz	"	Rheumatism.
Ruff	"	Roof, N.E.
Saucer	"	Saucer.
Sarce	"	Sauce.

Sarve	"	Serve.
Sass	"	Sauce.
Sassy	"	Saucy.
Scace	"	Scarce.
Scass	"	Scarce, W.
Sen	"	Since, W.
Shay	"	Chaise, N.E.
Shet	"	Shut, S.
Sistern	"	Sisters, W.
Sich	"	Such.
Sot	"	Sat.
Sorter	"	Sort of.
Stan	"	Stand, N.E.
Star	"	Stair, W.
Stun	"	Stone, N.E.
Stiddy	"	Steady, N.E.
Spettacle	"	Spectacle.
Spile	"	Spoil.
Squinch	"	Quench.
Streech	"	Stretch, W.
Suthin	"	Something.
Tech	"	Touch.
Tend	"	Attend.
Tell'd	"	Told, N.E.
Thar	"	There, W.
Timersome	"	Timorous.
Tossel	"	Tassel.
Umberell	"	Umbrella.
Varmint	"	Vermin, W.
Wall	"	Well, N.E.
Whar	"	Where, W.
Yaller	"	Yellow.
Yourn	"	Yours.

Until lately, the humour of the Americans has been chiefly oral. Up to the period when the publication of the first American "Sporting Magazine" was commenced at Baltimore, in 1829, and which was immediately followed by the publication, in New York, of "The Spirit of the Times," there existed no such class of writers in the United States, as have since that recent day, conferred such popularity on this description of literature.

The New York "Constellation,"<sup>[6]</sup> was the only journal expressly devoted to wit and humour; but "The Spirit of the Times" soon became the general receptacle of all these fugitive productions. The ability with which it was conducted, and the circulation it enjoyed, induced the proprietors of other periodicals to solicit contributions similar to those which were attracting so much attention in that paper. Of the latter kind are the three articles from the pen of McClintock, which originally appeared in the "Portland Advertiser." The rest of the series by the same author, I have not been able to procure, as they have shared the fate of many others of no less value, that appeared in the daily press of the United States. To collect, arrange, and preserve these specimens of American humour, and present them to the British reader, in an unobjectionable shape, is the object of this compilation.

To such of the numbers contained in these volumes as I could trace the paternity, I have appended the names of the authors, and shall now conclude, by expressing to those gentlemen the very great gratification I have experienced in the perusal of their admirable sketches.

DECEMBER, 1851.

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- [1] See Introduction to Biglow's Papers, p. xix.
- [2] See Introduction to Dictionary of Americanisms, p. xxiv, and Biglow's Papers.
- [3] See Introduction to Biglow's Papers, p. xxiv.
- [4] Introduction to Dictionary of Americanisms.
- [5] See Dictionary of Americanisms.
- [6] See Porter's account of "The Spirit of the Times."

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TRAITS  
OF  
AMERICAN HUMOUR.

I.  
MY FIRST AND LAST SPEECH IN THE GENERAL COURT.

If I live a thousand years, I shall never forget the day I was chosen representative. Isaac Longlegs ran himself out of a year's growth to bring me the news; for I staid away from town-meeting out of dignity, as the way is, being a candidate. At first I could not believe it; though when I spied Isaac coming round Slouch's corner, with his coat-tails flapping in the wind, and pulling straight ahead for our house, I felt certain that something was the matter, and my heart began to bump, bump so, under my jacket, that it was a wonder it didn't knock a button off. However, I put on a bold face, and when Isaac came bolting into the house, I pretended not to be thinking about it.

"Lieutenant Turniptop!" says Isaac, "huh, huh, you've got the election!"

"Got what?" says I, pretending to be surprised, in a coolish sort of a way.

"Got the election," says he, "all hollow. You've got a majority of thirteen—a clear majority—clean, smack smooth, and no two words about it!"

"Pooh!" says I, trying to keep cool; though at the same time I felt all over—I can't tell how—my skin didn't seem to fit me. "Pooh!" says I again; but the idea of going into public life, and being called Squire Turniptop, was almost too much for me. I seemed to feel as if I was standing on the tip top of the north pole, with my head above the clouds, the sun on one side, and the moon on the other. "Got the election?" says I; "a hem! hem! hem!" And so I tried to put on a proper dignity; but it was hard work. "Got a majority?" says I, once more.

"As sure as a gun," says Isaac. "I heard it with my own ears." Squire Dobbs read it off to the whole meeting. "Tobias Turniptop has fifty-nine, and—is—chosen!"

I thought I should have choked! six millions of glorious ideas seemed to be swelling up all at one time within me. I had just been reading Doctor Growler's sermon on the end of the world; but now I thought the world was only beginning.

"You're representative to the General Court," said Isaac, striking his forefinger into the palm of his left hand, with as much emphasis as if a new world had been created.

I felt more magnanimous than ever.

"I shan't accept," says I. (The Lord pardon me for lying).

"Shan't accept!" screamed out Isaac in the greatest amazement, his great goggle eyes starting out of his head. "Shall I go back and tell them so?"

"I mean I'll take it into consideration," said I, trying to look as important as I could. "It's an office of great responsibility, Isaac," I said; "but I'll think of it, and after mature deliberation, if my constituents insist upon my going—Isaac, what'll you take to drink?"

I could not shut my eyes to sleep all that night, and did nothing but think of the General Court, and how I should look in the great hall of the State House, marching up to my seat to take possession. I determined right off to have a bran new blue coat with brass buttons; but on second thoughts, I remembered hearing Colonel Crabtree say that the Members wore their wrappers. So I concluded that my pepper and salt coat, with the blue satinet pantaloons, would do very well. I decided though, to have my drab hat new ironed, and countermanded the orders for the cow-hide boots, because kip skin would be more genteel. In addition to this, because public men should be liberal, and make a more respectable appearance than common folks, I didn't hesitate long in making up my mind about having a watch-chain, and an imitation breast-pin. "The check handkerchief," thinks I to myself, "is as good as new; and my pigtail queue will look splendidly if the old ribbon is a little scoured!"

It can't be described how much the affairs of the nation occupied my attention all the next day, and three weeks afterwards. Ensign Shute came to me about the Byfield pigs, but I couldn't talk of anything but my legislative responsibilities.

"The critters beat all natur for squealing," says he, "but they cut capitolly to pork."

"Ah!" says I, "there must be a quorum, before we can do business."

"The old grunter," says he, "will soon be fat enough to kill."

"Yes," says I, "the Speaker has the casting vote."

"Your new pig-pen," says he, "will hold 'em all."

"I shall take my seat," said I, "and be sworn in according to the Constitution."

"What's your opinion of corn-cobs?" says he.

"The Governor and Council will settle that," says I.

The concerns of the whole commonwealth seemed to be resting all on my shoulders, as heavy as a fifty-six; and everything I heard or saw made me think of the dignity of my office. When I met a flock of geese on the school-house green, with Deacon Dogskin's old gander at the head, "There," says I, "goes the Speaker, and all the honourable members."

This was talked of up and down the town, as a proof that I felt a proper responsibility; and Simon Sly said the comparison was capital. I thought so too. Everybody wished me joy of my election, and seemed to expect great things; which I did not fail to lay to heart. So having the eyes of the whole community upon me, I saw that nothing would satisfy them, if I didn't do something for the credit of the town. Squire Dobbs, the chairman of our select men, preached me a long lecture on responsibility:

"Lieutenant Turniptop," says he, "I hope you'll keep up the reputation of Squashborough."

"I hope I shall, Squire," says I, for I felt my dignity rising.

"It's a highly responsible office, this going to the General Court," says he.

"I'm altogether aware of that," says I, looking serious. "I'm aware of the totality and officially."

"I'm glad you feel responsible," says he.

"I'm bold to say, that I *do* feel the responsibility," says I; "and I feel more and more responsible, the more I think of it."

"Squashborough," says the Squire, "has always been a credit to the commonwealth."

"Who doubts it?" says I.

"And a credit to the General Court," says he.

"Ahem!" says I.

"I hope you'll let 'em know what's what," says he.

"I guess I know a thing or two," says I.

"But," says the Squire, "a representative can't do his duty to his constituents, without knowing the Constitution. It's my opinion that you ought not to vote for the dog-tax."

"That's a matter that calls for due deliberation," says I. So I went home and began to prepare for my legislative duties.

I studied the statute on cart-wheels, and the act in addition to an act entitled an act.

People may sit at home in their chimney-corners, and imagine it is an easy thing to be a representative; but this is a very great mistake. For three weeks I felt like a toad under a harrow, such a weight of responsibility as I felt on thinking of my duty to my constituents. But when I came to think how much I was expected to do for the credit of the town, it was overwhelming. All the representatives of our part of the country had done great things for their constituents, and I was determined not to do less. I resolved, therefore, on the very first consideration, to stick to the following scheme:

To make a speech.

To make a motion for a bank in Squashborough.

To move that all salaries be cut down one half, except the pay of the representatives.

To second every motion for adjournment.

And—*always* to vote against the Boston members.

As to the speech, though I had not exactly made up my mind about the subject of it, yet I took care to have it all written beforehand. This was not so difficult as some

folks may think; for as it was all about my constituents and responsibility, and Bunker Hill and heroes of Seventy-six, and dying for liberty; it would do for any purpose—with a word tucked in here and there. After I had got it well by heart, I went down in Cranberry Swamp, out of hearing and sight of anybody, and delivered it off, to see how it would go. It went off in capital style till I got nearly through, when just as I was saying: "Mr. Speaker, here I stand for the Constitution," Tom Thumper's old he-goat popped out of the bushes behind, and gave me such a butt in the rear, that I was forced to make an adjournment to the other side of the fence to finish it. After full trial, I thought best to write it over again and put in more responsibility, with something more about "fought, bled and died."

When the time came for me to set off to Boston, you may depend on it, I was all of a twitter. In fact, I did not altogether know whether I was on my head or my heels. All Squashborough was alive; the whole town came to see me set out. They all gave me strict charge to stand up for my constituents and vote down the Boston members. I promised them I would, for "I'm sensible of my responsibility," says I. I promised besides, to move heaven and earth to do something for Squashborough. In short, I promised everything, because a representative could not do less.

At last I got to Boston, and being in good season, I had three whole days to myself, before the Session opened. By way of doing business, I went round to all the shops, pretending I wanted to buy a silk-handkerchief. I managed it so as not to spend anything, though the shopkeepers were mighty sharp, trying to hook me for a bargain; but I had my eye-teeth cut, and took care never to offer within nincence of the first cost. Sometimes they talked saucy, in a joking kind of a way, if I happened to go more than three times to the same shop; but when I told them I belonged to the General Court, it struck them all up of a heap, and they did not dare do anything but make faces to one another. I think I was down upon them there.

The day I took my seat, was a day of all the days in the year! I shall never forget it. I thought I had never lived till then. Giles Elderberry's exaltation, when he was made hog-reeve, was nothing to it. As for the procession, that beat cock-fighting, I treated myself to half a sheet of gingerbread, for I felt as if my purse would hold out for ever. However, I can't describe everything. We were sworn in, and I took my seat, though I say it myself. I took my seat: all Boston was there to see me do it. What a weight of responsibility I felt!

It beats all natur to see what a difficulty there is in getting a chance to make a speech. Forty things were put to the vote, and passed, without my being able to say a word, though I felt certain I could have said something upon every one of them. I had my speech ready, and was waiting for nothing but a chance to say, "Mr. Speaker," but something always put me out.

This was losing time dreadfully, however I made it up seconding motions, for I was determined to have my share in the business, out of regard to my constituents.

It's true I seconded the motions on both sides of the question, which always set the other members a laughing, but says I to them:

"That's my affair. How do you know what my principles are?"

At last two great questions were brought forward, which seemed to be too good to lose. These were the Dog-town turnpike, and the Cart-wheel question.

The moment I heard the last one mentioned, I felt convinced it was just the thing for me. The other members thought just so, for when it came up for discussion, a Berkshire member gave me a jog with the elbow.

"Turniptop," says he, "now's your time, Squashborough for ever!"

No sooner said than done. I twitched off my hat, and called out:

"Mr. Speaker!"

As sure as you live I had caught him at last. There was nobody else had spoken quick enough, and it was as clear as preachen I had the floor.

"Gentleman from Squashborough," says he, I heard him say it.

Now, thinks I to myself, I must begin, whether or no. "Mr. Speaker!" says I, again, but I only said it to gain time, for I could hardly believe I actually had the floor, and all the congregated wisdom of the commonwealth was listening and looking on: the thought of it made me crawl all over. "Mr. Speaker!" says I, once more. Everybody looked round at me. Thinks I to myself, "there's no clawing off this hitch. I must begin, and so here goes!"

Accordingly I gave a loud henn! said, "Mr. Speaker!" for the fourth time. "Mr. Speaker, I rise to the question——" though it did not strike me I had been standing up ever since I came into the house. "I rise to the question, Mr. Speaker," says I. But to see how terribly strange some things work. No sooner had I fairly rose to the question, and got a chance to make my speech, than I began to wish myself a hundred miles off.

Five minutes before I was as bold as a lion, but now I should have been glad to crawl into a knot-hole. "Mr. Speaker, I rise to the question," says I again, but I am bound to say, the more I rose to the question, the more the question seemed to fall away from me. And just at that minute, a little fat round-faced man, with a bald head, that was sitting right before me, speaks to another member, and says:

"What squeaking fellow is that?"

It dashed me a good deal, and I don't know but I should have sat right down without another word, but Colonel Crabapple, the member for Turkeytown, gave me a twitch by the tail of my wrapper:

"That's right, Turniptop," says he, "give them the grand touch."

This had a mighty encouraging effect, and so I hemmed and hawed three or four times, and at last made a beginning.

"Mr. Speaker," says I, "this is a subject of vital importance. The question is, Mr. Speaker, on the amendment. I have a decided opinion on that subject, Mr. Speaker. I'm altogether opposed to the last gentleman, and I feel bound in duty to my constituents, Mr. Speaker, and the responsibility of my office, to express my mind on this subject. Mr. Speaker, our glorious forefathers fought, bled, and died for glorious liberty. I'm opposed to this question, Mr. Speaker—my constituents have a vital interest in the subject of cart-wheels.

"Let us take a retrospective view, Mr. Speaker, of the present condition of all the kingdoms and tribes of the earth.

"Look abroad, Mr. Speaker, over the wide expansion of nature's universe—beyond the blazing billows of the Atlantic.

"Behold Buonaparte going about like a roaring thunderbolt! All the world is a terrible topsy-turvy, and there is a terrible rousing among the sons of men.

"But to return to this subject, Mr. Speaker. I'm decidedly opposed to the amendment: it is contrary to the principles of freemen and the principles of responsibility. Tell it to your children, Mr. Speaker, and to your children's children, that freedom is not to be bartered, like Esau, for a mess of potash. Liberty is the everlasting birthright of the grand community of nature's freemen. Sir, the member from Boston talks of horse-shoes, but I hope we shall stand up for our rights. If we only stand up for our rights, Mr. Speaker, our rights will stand up for us, and we shall all stand uprightly without shivering or shaking. Mr. Speaker, these are awful times; money is hard to get, whatever the gentleman from Rowley may say about pumpkins.

"A true patriot will die for his country. May we all imitate the glorious example and die for our country. Give up keeping cows! Mr. Speaker, what does the honourable gentleman mean? Is not agriculture to be cultivated? He that sells his liberty, Mr. Speaker, is worse than a cannibal, a hottentot, or a hippopotamus. The member from Charlestown has brought his pigs to a wrong market. I stand up for cart-wheels, and so do my constituents. When our country calls us, Mr. Speaker, may we never be backward in coming forward; and all honest men ought to endeavour to keep the rising generation from falling. Not to dwell upon this point, Mr. Speaker, let us now enter into the subject."

Now it happened, that just at this moment the little fat, bald-headed, round-faced man wriggled himself round just in front of me, so that I could not help seeing him; and just as I was saying, "rising generation," he twisted the corners of his mouth into a queer sort of pucker on one side, and rolled the whites of his little, grey, twinkling eyes, right up in my face. The members all stared right at us, and made a kind of snickering cluck, cluck, cluck, that seemed to run whistling over the whole house.

I felt awfully bothered, I can't tell how, but it gave me such a jerk off the hooks, that I could not remember the next words, so that I felt in my pocket for the speech, it was not there; then in my hat, it wasn't there; then behind me, then both sides of me, but lo! and behold, it was not to be found. The next instant I remembered that I had taken it out of my hat in a shop in Dock Square that morning, while I was comparing the four corners of my check handkerchief with a bandanna. That was enough—I knew as quick as lightning that I was a gone goose. I pretended to go on with my speech, and kept saying "rising generation," "my constituents," "enter into the subject, Mr. Speaker." But I made hawk's-meat of it you may depend; finally, nobody could stand it any longer. The little fat man with the round face, put his thumb to the side of his nose, and made a sort of twinkling with his fingers; the Speaker began to giggle, and the next minute the whole house exploded like a bomb-shell. I snatched up my hat under cover of the smoke, made one jump to the door and was down stairs before you could say, "second the motion!"

## II.

### HOSS ALLEN, OF MISSOURI.

This celebrated gentleman is a recognised “*hoss*” certainly; and, we are told, rejoices as much at his cognomination as he did at his nomination for the chair gubernatorial, last election. He did not *run* well enough to reach the chair, though it appears, from his own account, that his *hoss* qualities, “any how,” fall considerable below those of the sure-enough animal. This is his story, which he is very fond of relating up by Palmyra.

“You see, boys, I came to old river, and found I had to swim. Had best clothes on, and didn’t know what to do. ‘What river?’ Why, Salt river. Our Salt, here in Missouri, darned thing: always full when don’t want it. Well, boys, you knows Hoss Allen—no back out in him, any how! Stripped to the skin, just tied clothes up in a bundle, strapped it on the critter’s head, and ‘cross we swum together. Well, don’t you think, while I was gittin’ up the bank, the wicked thing got away, and started off with my clothes on his head; and the more I ran, and hollered, and ‘whoa’d,’ the more I couldn’t catch the cussed varmint. ‘Way he’d go, and I arter—hot as tophit, too, all the way, and yaller flies about; and when I did get tol’ble near, he’d stop and look, cock his ears, and give a snuff, as if he never smelt a man afore; and then streak it off agin, as if I had been an Injin.

“Well, boys, all I had to do was to keep a follerin’ on, and keep flies off; and I did, till we came to a slough, and says I, ‘Now, old feller, I got you;’ and I driv him in. Well, arter all, do you know, fellers, the awful critter wouldn’t stick! He went in and in, and bimby came to a deep place, and swum right across. A fact—true as thunder! Well, you see, when I cum to the deep place, I swum too; and, do you know, that the darned beast just nat’rally waited till I got out, and looked at me all over, and I could act’ly see him laffin’; and I *was* nasty enough to make a hoss laugh, any how!

“Well, thinks I, old feller, recon you’ve had fun enough with me *now*; so I gits some sticks, and scrapes myself all over, and got tol’ble white again, and then begins to coax the varmint. Well, I ‘whoa’d’ and ‘old boy’d,’ and cum up right civil to him, I tell ye—and he took it mighty condescendin’ too; and jist when I had him sure, cussed if he didn’t go right back into the slough agin, swum the deep place, walked out, and stood on t’other side, waitin’ for me.

“Well, by this time, the yaller flies cum at me agin, and I jist nat’rally went in arter the blasted beast, and stood afore him, on t’other side, *just as nasty as before*—did, by thunder, boys! Well, he *laffed* agin, till he nearly shook the bundle off; and ‘way he went, back agin, three miles, to the river; and then he jest stopped dead, and waited till I cum up to him, and jest kind a axed me to cum and take hold of the bridle, and then guv a kick and a ‘ruction, and went in agin, laffin’ all the time; and, right in the middle, hang me! if he didn’t shake my clothes off; and ‘way they went, down stream, while he swum ashore; and I, jist nat’rally, lay down on the bank, and cussed all creation.

“Well, you see, boys, there I lays ‘bove a hour, when I sees a feller pullin’ up stream in a skiff, a-tryin’ on a coat, and says I: ‘Stranger, see here, when you’re done gittin’ my coat on, I’ll thank you for *my shirt!*’ And the feller sees how it was, and pulls ashore, and helps me.

“I tell you what, boys, you may talk of hoss lafs; but when you want a good one, just think of *Hoss Allen!*”

III.  
THE WIDOW RUGBY'S HUSBAND.

Some ten or twelve years ago, one Summeval Dennis kept the "Union Hotel," at the seat of Justice of the county of Tallapoosa. The house took its name from the complexion of the politics of its proprietor, he being a true-hearted Union man, and opposed, as I hope all my readers are, at all points, to the damnable heresy of *nullification*. In consequence of the candid exposition of his political sentiments upon his sign-board, mine host of the "Union" was liberally patronized by those who coincided with him in his views.

In those days, party spirit was, in that particular locality, exceedingly bitter and proscriptive; and had Summeval's chickens been less tender, his eggs less impeachable, his coffee more sloppy, the "Union Hotel" would still have lost no guest, its keeper no dinners. But, as Dennis was wont to remark, "The *Party* relied on his honour, as an honest man, but more especially as an honest *Union* man, he was bound to give them the value of their money."

Glorious fellow was Summeval! Capital landlady was his good wife, in all the plenitude of her *embonpoint*! Well-behaved children, too, were Summeval's, from the shaggy and red-headed representative of paternal peculiarities, down to little Solomon of the sable locks, whose "favour" puzzled the neighbours, and set at defiance all known physiological principles. Good people, all, were the Dennises. May a hungry man never fall among worse!

Among the political friends who had for some years bestowed their patronage, semi-annually, during Court-week, upon the proprietor of the "Union," was Captain Simon Suggs, whose deeds of valour and strategy are not known to the public. The Captain had "put up" with our friend Summeval, time and again; had puffed the "Union," both "before the face and behind the back" of its owner, until it seemed a miniature of the microcosm that bears the name of Astor; and, in short, was so generally useful, accommodating, and polite, that nothing short of long-continued and oft-repeated failures to *settle his bills*, could have induced Summeval to consider Suggs in other light than as the best friend the "Union," or any other house, ever had. But, alas! Captain Suggs had, from one occasion to another, upon excuses the most plausible, and with protestations the most profound, invariably left the fat larder and warm beds of the "Union," without leaving behind the slightest pecuniary remuneration with Summeval.

For a long time, the patient inn-keeper bore the imposition with a patience that indicated some hope of eventual payment; but year in and year out, and the money did not come. Mrs. Dennis at length spoke out, and argued the necessity of a tavern-keeper's collecting his dues, if he was disposed to do justice to himself and family.

"Suggs is a nice man in his talk," she said; "nobody can fault him, as far as that is concerned; but smooth talk never paid for flour and bacon," and so she recommended to her leaner half, that the next time, summary measures should be adopted to secure the amount in which the Captain was indebted to the "Union Hotel."

Summeval determined that his wife's advice should be strictly followed; for he had seen, time and again, that *her* suggestions had been the salvation of the establishment.

"Hadh'n't she kept him from pitchin' John Seagroves, neck and heels, out of the window for sayin' that nullification *warn't* treason, and John C. Calhoun warn't as bad as Benedict Arnok. And hadh'n't John been a good payin' customer ever since? That was what he wanted to know."

The next session of the Circuit Court after this prudent conclusion had been arrived at in Dennis's mind—the Circuit Court with all its attractions of criminal trials, poker-playing lawyers, political caucuses and possible monkey shows, found Captain Suggs snugly housed at the "Union."

Time passed on swiftly for a week. The judge was a hearty liquor-loving fellow; and lent the Captain ten dollars "on sight." The Wetumpka and Montgomery lawyers bled freely. In short, everything went bravely on for the Captain, until a man with small-pox pits and a fero-box came along. The Captain yielded to the temptation, yielded with a presentiment on his mind that he should be "skain." The "tiger" was triumphant, and Suggs was left without a dollar!

As if to give intensity to his distress, on the morning after his losses at the fero-bank, the friendly Clerk of the Court hinted to Suggs, that the grand jury had found an indictment against him for gaming. Here was a dilemma! Not only out of funds, but obliged to decamp before the adjournment of the Court—obliged to lose all opportunity of redeeming his "fallen fortunes," by further plucking the greenhorns in attendance.

"This here," said Simon, "is an everlastin' fix! a mile and a quarter square and fenced in all round. What's a *reasonable* man to do? Ain't I bin workin' and strivin' all for the best? Ain't I done my duty? Cuss that mahogany box. I wish the man that invented it had had his head sawed off with a cross-cut, *just* afore he thought on't. Now thar's the sense in *short cards*. All's fair, and cheat and cheat alike is the order; and the longest pole knocks down persimmon. But whar's the reason in one of your darned boxes, full of springs and the like, and the better *no* advantages, *except* now and then when he kin kick up a squabble, and the *dealer's* afraid of him.

"I'm for doin' things on the square. What's a man without his honour? Ef natur give me a gift to beat a feller at 'old sledge,' and the like, it's all right! But whar's the justice in a thing like farrer, that ain't got but one side! It's strange what a horri I have for the cussed thing. No matter how I make an honest rise, I'm sure to 'back it off' at farrer. As my wife says, '*farrer's my besettin' sin*.' It's a weakness—a soft spot, it's a—a—let me see!—it's a way I've got of a runnin' agin Providence. But hello! here's Dennis."

When the inn-keeper walked up, Captain Suggs remarked to him, that there was a "little paper out," signed by Tom Garrett, in his *official capacity*, that was calculated to hurt feelins', if he remained in town, and so he desired that his horse might be saddled and brought out.

Summeval replied to this by presenting to the Captain a slip of paper containing entries of many charges against Suggs, and in favour of the "Union Hotel."

"All right," said Suggs; "I'll be over in a couple of weeks and settle."

"Can't wait; want money to buy provisions; account been standing two years, thirty-one dollars and fifty cents is money these days," said Dennis, with unusual firmness.

"Confound your ugly face," vociferated Suggs, "*I'll give you my note!* that's enough among gentlemen, I suppose?"

"Hardly," returned the inn-keeper, "hardly; we want the cash; your note ain't worth the trouble of writin' it."

"Dam you!" roared Suggs, "dam you for a biscuit-headed *nullifier!* I'll give you a mortgage on the best half section of land in the county; *south* half of 13, 21, 29!"

"Captain Suggs," said Dennis, drawing off his coat, "you've called me a nullifier, and that's what I won't stand from *no* man. Strip! and I'll whip as much dog out of you as'll make a full pack of hounds. You swindlin' robber!"

This hostile demonstration alarmed the Captain, and he set in to soothe his angry landlord.

"Sum, old fel," he said, in his most honeyed tones, "Sum, old fel! be easy. I'm not a fightin' man—" and here Suggs drew himself up with dignity, "I'm not a fightin' man *except* in the cause of my country! *Thar* I'm *allers* found! Come, old fellow—do you reckon ef you'd been a nullifier, I'd ever been ketched at your house? No, no! you *ain't* no part of a nullifier, but you are rather hard down on your Union friends that allers puts up with you. Say, won't you take the mortgage?—the land's richly worth a thousand dollars, and let me have Old Bill."

The heart of Dennis was melted at the appeal thus made. It was to his good-fellowship and his party feelings. So, putting on his coat, he remarked that he "rather thought he would take the mortgage. However," he added, seeing Mrs. Dennis standing at the door of the tavern watching his proceedings, "he would see his wife about it."

The Captain and Dennis approached the landlady and made known the state of the case.

"You see, Cousin Betsey,"—Suggs always *cosined* any lady whom he wished to *cozen*—"you see, Cousin Betsey, the fact is, I'm down just now, in the way of money, and you and Summeval bein' afraid I'll run away and never come back—"

"T'aint that I'm afraid of," said Mrs. Dennis.

"What then?" asked Suggs.

"Of your comin' back, eatin' us out of house and home, and *never payin' nothin'!*"

"Well," said the Captain, slightly confused at the lady's directness; "well, seain' that's the way the mule kicks, as I was sayin', I proposed to Sum here, as long as him and you distrusts an old *Union* friend that's stuck by your house like a tick even when the red-mouthed nullifiers swore you was feedin' us *soap-tails* on *bull-beef* and *blue collards*—I say, as long as that's the case, I propose to give you a mortgage on the south half of 21, 13, 29. It's the best half section in county, and it's worth forty times the amount of your bill."

"It looks like that ought to do," said Summeval, who was grateful to the Captain for defending his house against the slanders of the nullifiers; "and seem' that Suggs has always patronized the Union and *voted the whole ticket*—"

"Never *split in my life*," dropped in Suggs, with emphasis.

"I," continued Dennis, "am for takin' the mortgage, and lettin' him take Old Bill and go; for I know it would be a satisfaction to the nullifiers to have him put in jail."

"Yes," quoth the Captain, sighing, "I'm about to be tuk up and made a martyr of on account of the *Union*; but I'll die true to my prinispples, see if I don't."

"They shan't take you," said Dennis, his long, lank form stiffening with energy as he spoke; "as long as they put it on *that* hook, hanged ef they shall. Give us the mortgage and slope!"

"You ain't got no rights to that land; I jist know it, or you wouldn't want to mortgage it for a tavern bill," shouted Mrs. Dennis; "and I tell you and Summeval *both*, that Old Bill don't go out of that stable till the money's paid—mind, I say *money*—into *my* hand," and here the good lady turned off and called Bob, the stable-boy, to bring her the stable key.

The Captain and Summeval looked at each other like two children school-boys. It was clear that no terms short of payment in money would satisfy Mrs. Dennis. Suggs saw that Dennis had become interested in his behalf, so acting upon the idea, he suggested:

"Dennis, suppose *you loan me the money*?"

"Egad, Suggs, I've been thinkin' of that; but as I have only a fifty dollar bill, and my wife's key bein' turned on that, there's no chance. Drott it, I'm sorry for you."

"Well the Lord'll purvide," said Suggs.

As Captain Suggs could not get away that day, evidently, he arranged, through his friend Summeval, with the Clerk, not to issue a capias until the next afternoon. Having done this, he cast around for some way of raising the wind; but the fates were against him, and at eleven o'clock that night, he went to bed in a fit of the blues, that three pints of whiskey had failed to dissipate. An hour or two after the Captain had got between the sheets, and after every one else was asleep, he heard some one walk unsteadily, but still softly, up stairs. An occasional hiccup told that it was some fellow drunk; and this was confirmed by a heavy fall, which the unfortunate took as soon as, leaving the railing, he attempted to travel *suis pedibus*.

"Oh! good Lord!" groaned the fallen man; "who'd a thought it. Me, John P. Pullum, drunk and fallen down! I never was so before. This world's a turmin' over and over. Oh, Lord! Charley Stone got me into it. What will Sally say if she hears it? Oh, Lord!"

"That thar feller," said the Captain to himself, "is the victim of vice. I wonder ef he's got any money?" and the Captain continued his soliloquy inaudibly.

Poor Mr. Pullum, after much tumbling about, and sundry repetitions of his fall, at length contrived to get into bed, in a room adjoining that occupied by the Captain, and only separated from it by a thin partition.

"I'm very—very—oh, Lord!—drunk! Oh! me, is this John P. Pullum that—good Heavens! I'll faint—married Sally Rugby, oh! oh!"

"Ah! I'm so weak!—wouldn't have Sally—aw—owh—wha—oh, Lord!—to hear of it for a hundred dollars! She said when she agreed for me to sell the cotton, I'd be certain—oh, Lord! I believe I'll die!"

The inebriate fell back on his bed, almost fainting, and Captain Suggs thought he'd try an experiment. Disguising his voice, with his mouth close to the partition, he said:

"You're a liar! you didn't marry Widow Rugby; your some thief tryin' to pass off for something."

"Who am I then, if I ain't John P. Pullum, that married the widdow Sally Rugby, Tom Rugby's widow, old Bill Stearns's only daughter? Oh, Lord! ef it ain't me, who is it? Where's Charley Stone—can't he tell if it's John P. Pullum?"

"No, it ain't you, you lyn' swindler; you ain't got a dollar in the world, and never married no sich widow," said Suggs, still disguising his voice.

"I did—I'll be hanged if I didn't. I know it now; Sally Rugby with the red head, all of the boys said I married her for her money, but it's a—oh, Lord I'm very ill."

Mr. Pullum continued his maudlin talk, half asleep, half awake, for some time; and all the while Captain Suggs was analysing the man—conjecturing his precise circumstances, his family relations, the probable state of his purse, and the like.

"It's a plain case," he mused, "that the feller married a red-headed widow for her money—no man ever married sich for anything else. It's plain agin, she's got the property settled upon her, or fixed some way, for he talked about her 'agreein' for him to sell the cotton. I'll bet he's the very feller that's dropped in down thar by Tallassee, that Charley Stone used to know. And I'll bet he's been down to Wetumpka to sell the cotton—got on a bust thar—and now's on another here. He's afraid of his wife too; leastways, his voice trembled like it, when he called her red-headed, Pullum! Pullum! Pullum!" Here Suggs studied. "That's surely a Talbot county name—I'll venture on it, anyhow."

Having reached a conclusion, the Captain turned over in bed and composed himself for sleep.

At nine o'clock the next morning, the bar-room of the "Union" contained only Dennis and our friend the Captain. Breakfast was over, and the most of the temporary occupants of the tavern were in the public square. Captain Suggs was watching for Mr. Pullum, who had not yet come down to breakfast.

At length an uncertain step was heard on the stairway, and a young man, whose face showed indisputable evidence of a frolic on the previous night, descended. His eyes were bloodshot, and his expression was a mingled one of shame and fear. Captain Suggs walked up to him, as he entered the bar-room, gazed at his face earnestly, and slowly placing his hand on his shoulder, as slowly, and with a stern expression, said:

"Your name—is—Pullum!"

"I know it is," said the young man.

"Come this way then," said Suggs, pulling his victim out into the street, and still gazing at him with the look of a stern but affectionate parent. Turning to Dennis as they went out, he said:

"Have a cup of coffee ready for this young man in fifteen minutes, and his horse by the time he's done drinking it."

Mr. Pullum looked confounded, but said nothing, and he and the Captain walked over to a vacant blacksmith's shop across the street, where they could be free from observation.

"You're from Wetumpka last," remarked Suggs with severity, and as if his words charged a crime.

"What if I am?" replied Pullum, with an effort to appear bold.

"What's cotton worth?" asked the Captain, with an almost imperceptible wink.

Pullum turned white and stammered out:

"Seven or eight cents."

"Which will you tell your wife you sold yours—*hers* for?"

John P. turned blue in the face.

"What do you know about my wife?" he asked.

"Never mind about *that*. Was you in the habit of gettin' drunk before you left Talbot county, Georgy?"

"I never lived in Talbot; I was born and raised in Hanis," said Pullum, with something like triumph.

"Close to the line, though," replied Suggs, confidently relying on the fact that there was a large family of Pullums in Talbot; "most of your connexions lived in Talbot."

"Well, what of all that?" asked Pullum, with impatience; "what is it to you whar I come from, or whar my connexion lived?"

"Never mind—I'll show you—no man that married Billy Stearns's daughter can carry on in the way *you've been doin'*, without my interferin' for the intrust of the family!"

Suggs said this with an earnestness, a sternness, that completely vanquished Pullum. He tremulously asked:

"How did you know that I married Stearns's daughter?"

"That's a fact 'most anybody could have known that was intimate with the family in old times. You'd better ask how I knowed that you tuk *your wife's* cotton to Wetumpka—sold it—got on a spree—after Sally give you a caution too—and then came by here, *got on another spree*. What do you reckon Sally will say to you when you get home?"

"She won't know it," replied Pullum, "unless somebody tells her."

"Somebody *will* tell her," said Suggs, "I'm going home with you as soon as you've had breakfast. My poor Sally Rugby shall not be trampled on in this way. I've only got to borrow fifty dollars from some of the boys, to make out a couple of thousand. I need to make the last payment on my land. So go over and eat your breakfast quick."

"For God's sake, Sir, don't tell Sally about it; you don't know how unreasonable she is."

Pullum was the incarnation of misery.

"The devil I don't! she bit this piece out of my face," here Suggs pointed to a scar on his cheek, "when I had her on my lap a little girl only five years old. She was always game."

Pullum grew more nervous at this reference to his wife's mettle.

"My dear Sir, I don't even know your name."

"Suggs, Sir—Captain Simon Suggs."

"Well, my dear Captain, ef you'll just let me off this time, I'll lend you the fifty dollars."

"*You'll—lend—me—the—fifty—dollars! Who* asked you for your money, or rather *Sally's* money?"

"I only thought," replied the humble husband of Sally, "that it might be an accommodation. I meant no harm; I know Sally wouldn't mind my lending it to an old friend of the family."

"Well," said Suggs, and here he mused, shutting his eyes, biting his lips, and talking very slowly, "ef I knowed you would do better."

"I'll swear I will," said Pullum.

"No swearin', Sir!" roared Suggs, with a dreadful frown; "no swearin' in *my* presence!"

"No, Sir, I won't any more."

"Ef," continued the Captain, "I *knowed* you'd do better—*go right home*," (the Captain didn't wish Pullum to stay where his stock of information might be increased); "and treat Sally like a wife all the rest of your days, I might, *may be*, borrow the fifty, (secin' it's Sally's any way), and let you off this time."

"Ef you will, Captain Suggs, I'll never forget you; I'll think of you all the days of my life."

"I ginnarally makes my mark, so that I'm hard to forget," said the Captain, *truthfully*. "Well, turn me over a fifty for a couple of months, and go home."

Mr. Pullum handed the money to Suggs, who seemed to receive it reluctantly. He twisted the bill in his fingers, and remarked:

"I reckon I'd better not take this money; you won't go home, and do as you said."

"Yes, I will," said Pullum; "yonder's my horse at the door. I'll start this minute."

The Captain and Pullum returned to the tavern, where the latter swallowed his coffee and paid his bill.

As the young man mounted his horse, Suggs took him affectionately by the hand.

"John," said he, "go home, give my love to cousin Sally, and kiss her for me. Try and do better, John, for the futur'; and ef you have any children, John, bring 'em up in the way of the Lord. Good-bye!"

Captain Suggs now paid *his* bill, and had a balance on hand. He immediately bestrode his faithful "Bill," musing thus as he moved homeward:

"Every day I git more insight into things. It used to be, I couldn't understand the manna in the wilderness, and the ravens feedin' Elisha; now, it's clear to my eyes. Trust in Providence—that's the lick! Here was I in the wilderness, sorely oppressed, and mighty nigh despar, Pullum come to me, like a 'raven,' in my distress—and a *fat* one, at that! Well, as I've *allers* said, honesty and Providence will never fail to fetch a man out! Jist give me that for a *hand*, and I'll 'stand' agin all creation?"

IV.  
THE BIG BEAR OF ARKANSAS.<sup>[7]</sup>

A steam-boat on the Mississippi frequently, in making her regular trips, carries between places varying from one to two thousand miles apart; and as these boats advertise to land passengers and freight at "all intermediate landings," the heterogeneous character of the passengers of one of these up-country boats can scarcely be imagined by one who has never seen it with his own eyes.

Starting from New Orleans in one of these boats, you will find yourself associated with men from every state in the Union, and from every portion of the globe; and a man of observation need not lack for amusement or instruction in such a crowd, if he will take the trouble to read the great book of character so favourably opened before him. Here may be seen jostling together the wealthy Southern planter, and the pedlar of tin-ware from New England—the Northern merchant, and the Southern jockey—a venerable bishop, and a desperate gambler—the land speculator, and the honest farmer—professional men of all creeds and characters—Wolvereens, Suckers, Hoosiers, Buck-eyes, and Corncrackers, beside a "plentiful sprinkling" of the half-horse and half-alligator species of men, who are peculiar to "old Mississippi," and who appear to gain a livelihood simply by going up and down the river. In the pursuit of pleasure or business, I have frequently found myself in such a crowd.

On one occasion, when in New Orleans, I had occasion to take a trip of a few miles up the Mississippi, and I hurried on board the well-known "high-pressure-and-beat-every-thing" steam-boat "Invincible," just as the last note of the last bell was sounding; and when the confusion and bustle that is natural to a boat's getting under way had subsided, I discovered that I was associated in as heterogeneous a crowd as was ever got together. As my trip was to be of a few hours' duration only, I made no endeavours to become acquainted with my fellow passengers, most of whom would be together many days. Instead of this, I took out of my pocket the "latest paper," and more critically than usual examined its contents; my fellow passengers at the same time disposed of themselves in little groups.

While I was thus busily employed in reading, and my companions were more busily still employed in discussing such subjects as suited their humours best, we were startled most unexpectedly by a loud Indian whoop, uttered in the "social hall," that part of the cabin fitted off for a bar; then was to be heard a loud crowing, which would not have continued to have interested us—such sounds being quite common in that *place of spirits*—had not the hero of these windy accomplishments stuck his head into the cabin and hallooed out, "Hurra for the Big Bar of Arkansas!" and then might be heard a confused hum of voices, unintelligible, save in such broken sentences as "horse," "screamer," "lightning is slow," &c.

As might have been expected, this continued interruption attracted the attention of every one in the cabin; all conversation dropped, and in the midst of this surprise, the "Big Bar" walked into the cabin, took a chair, put his feet on the stove, and looking back over his shoulder, passed the general and familiar salute of "Strangers, how are you?" He then expressed himself as much at home as if he had been at "the Forks of Cypress," and "prehaps a little more so."

There was something about the intruder that won the heart on sight. He appeared to be a man enjoying perfect health and contentment: his eyes were as sparkling as diamonds, and good-natured to simplicity. Then his perfect confidence in himself was irresistibly dull.

"Prehaps," said he, "gentlemen," running on without a person speaking, "prehaps you have been to New Orleans often; I never made the *first visit before*, and I don't intend to make another in a crow's life. I am thrown away in that ar place, and useless, that ar a fact. Some of the gentlemen that called me *green*—well, prehaps I am, said I, *but I arn't so at home*; and if I ain't off my trail much, the heads of them perlite chaps themselves wern't much the hardest; for according to my notion, they were *real know-nothings*, green as a pumpkin-vine—couldn't, in farming, I'll bet, raise a crop of turnips; and as for shooting, they'd miss a barn if the door was swinging, and that, too, with the best rifle in the country. And then they talked to me 'bout hunting, and laughed at my calling the principal game in Arkansas, poker, and high-low-jack.

"'Prehaps,' said I, 'you prefer chickens and rolette;' at this they laughed harder than ever, and asked me if I lived in the woods, and didn't know what *game* was? At this I rather think I laughed. 'Yes,' I roared, and says, 'Strangers, if you'd asked me *how we got our meat* in Arkansas, I'd a told you at once, and given you a list of varminnts that would make a caravan, beginning with the bar, and ending off with the cat; that's *meat* though, not game.'

'Game, indeed, that's what city folks call it; and with them it means chippen-birds and bitterns; maybe such trash live in my diggins, but I arn't noticed them yet; a bird any way is too trifling. I never did shoot at but one, and I'd never forgiven myself for that, had it weighed less than forty pounds. I wouldn't draw a rifle on anything less than that; and when I meet with another wild turkey of the same weight I'll drap him.'

"A wild turkey weighing forty pounds!" exclaimed twenty voices in the cabin at once.

"Yes, strangers, and wasn't it a whopper? You see, the thing was so fat that it couldn't fly far; and when he fell out of the tree, after I shot him, on striking the ground he bust open, and the way the pound gobs of tallow rolled out of the opening was perfectly beautiful."

"Where did all that happen?" asked a cynical-looking Hoosier.

"Happen! happened in Arkansas: where else could it have happened, but in the creation state, the finishing-up country—a state where the *sile* runs down to the centre of the 'arth, and Government gives you a title to every inch of it? Then its airs—just breathe them, and they will make you snort like a horse. It's a state without a fault, it is."

"Excepting mosquitoes," cried the Hoosier.

"Well, stranger, except them; for it ar a fact that they are rather *enormous*, and do push themselves in somewhat troublesome. But, stranger, they never stick twice in the same place; and give them a fair chance for a few months, and you will get as much above noticing them as an alligator. They can't hurt my feelings, for they lay under the skin; and I never knew but one case of injury resulting from them, and that was to a Yankee: and they take worse to foreigners, any how, than they do to natives. But the way they used that fellow up! first they punched him until he swelled up and busted; then he sup-per-a-ted, as the doctor called it, until he was as raw as beef; then he took the ager, owing to the warm weather, and finally he took a steam-boat, and left the country. He was the only man that ever took mosquitoes at heart that I know of. But mosquitoes is natur, and I never find fault with her. If they ar large, Arkansas is large, her varminnts ar large, her trees ar large, her rivers ar large, and a small mosquito would be of no more use in Arkansas than preaching in a cane-brake."

This knock-down argument in favour of big mosquitoes used the Hoosier up, and the logician started on a new track, to explain how numerous bear were in his "diggins," where he represented them to be "about as plenty as blackberries, and a little plentifuler."

Upon the utterance of this assertion, a timid little man near me inquired if the bear in Arkansas ever attacked the settlers in numbers.

"No," said our hero, warming with the subject, "no, stranger, for you see it ain't the natur of bar to go in droves; but the way they squander about in pairs and single ones is edifying. And then the way I hunt them—the old black rascals know the crack of my gun as well as they know a pig's squealing. They grow thin in our parts, it frightens them so, and they do take the noise dreadfully, poor things. That gun of mine is a perfect *epidemic among bar*: if not watched closely, it will go off as quick on a warm scent as my dog Bowie-knife will: and then that dog—when! why the fellow thinks that the world is full of bar, he finds them so easy. It's lucky he don't talk as well as think; for with his natural modesty, if he should suddenly learn how much he is acknowledged to be ahead of all other dogs in the universe, he would be astonished to death in two minutes. Strangers, that dog knows a bar's way as well as a horse-jockey knows a woman's: he always barks at the right time, bites at the exact place, and whips without getting a scratch. I never could tell whether he was made expressly to hunt bar, or whether bar was made expressly for him to hunt: any way, I believe they were ordained to go together as naturally as Squire Jones says a man and woman is, when he moralizes in marrying a couple. In fact, Jones once said, said he:

"'Marriage, according to law, is a civil contract of divine origin; it's common to all countries as well as Arkansas, and people fake to it as naturally as Jim Dogget's Bowie-knife takes to bar.'"

"What season of the year do your hunts take place?" inquired a gentlemanly foreigner, who, from some peculiarities of his baggage, I suspected to be an Englishman, on some hunting expedition, probably at the foot of the Rocky mountains.

"The season for bar-hunting, stranger," said the man of Arkansas, "is generally all the year round, and the hunts take place about as regular. I read in history that varminnts have their fat season, and their lean season. That is not the case in Arkansas: feeding as they do upon the *spontaneous* productions of the sile, they have one continued fat season the year round; though in winter, things in this way is rather more greasy than in summer, I must admit. For that reason, bar with us run in warm weather, but in winter they only waddle. Fat, fat! it's an enemy to speed; it tames everything that has plenty of it. I have seen wild turkeys, from its influence, as gentle as

chickens. Run a bar in this fat condition, and the way it improves the critter for eating is amazing; it sort of mixes the ile up with the meat, until you can't tell t'other from which. I've done this often. I recollect one perty morning in particular, of putting an old he fellow on the stretch, and considering the weight he carried, he run well. But the dogs soon tired him down, and when I came up with him, wasn't he in a beautiful sweat—I might say fever; and then to see his tongue sticking out of his mouth a feet, and his sides tinking and opening like a bellows, and his cheeks so fat he couldn't look cross. In this fix I blazed at him, and pitch me naked into a briar patch if the steam didn't come out of the bullet-hole ten foot in a straight line. The fellow, I reckon, was made on the high-pressure system, and the lead sort of bust his biker."

"That column of steam was rather curious, or else the bear must have been *warm*," observed the foreigner, with a laugh.

"Stranger, as you observe, that bar was *warm*, and the blowing off of the steam show'd it, and also how hard the varmint had been run. I have no doubt if he had kept on two miles farther, his insides would have been stewed; and I expect to meet with a varmint yet of extra bottom, who will run himself into a skinful of bar's grease: it is possible; much onlikelier things have happened."

"Whereabouts are these bears so abundant?" inquired the foreigner, with increasing interest.

"Why, stranger, they inhabit the neighbourhood of my settlement, one of the prettiest places on old Mississippi—a perfect location, and no mistake; a place that had some defects, until the river made the 'cut-off' at 'Shirt-tail Bend;' and that remedied the evil, as it brought my cabin on the edge of the river—a great advantage in wet weather, I assure you, as you can now roll a barrel of whiskey into my yard in high water from a boat, as easy as falling off a log. It's a great improvement, as toting it by land in a jug, as I used to do, *evaporated* it too fast, and it became expensive. Just stop with me, stranger, a month or two, or a year, if you like, and you will appreciate my place. I can give you plenty to eat; for, beside hog and hominy, you can have bar-ham and bar-sausages, and a mattress of bar-skins to sleep on, and a wildcat-skin, pulled off hull, stuffed with corn-shucks, for a pillow. That bed would put you to sleep, if you had the rheumatics in every joint in your body, I call that ar bed a *quietus*. Then look at my land—the government ain't got another such a piece to dispose of. Such timber, and such bottom land! why, you can't preserve anything natural you plant in it, unless you pick it young; things that will grow out of shape so quick. I once planted in those diggins a few potatoes and beets: they took a fine start, and after that an ox-team couldn't have kept them from growing. About that time, I went off to old Kentuck on business, and did not hear from them things in three months, when I accidentally stumbled on a fellow who had stopped at my place, with an idea of buying me out. 'How did you like things?' said I. 'Pretty well,' said he: 'the cabin is convenient, and the timber land is good; but that bottom land ain't worth the first red cent. 'Why?' said I. 'Cause,' said he. 'Cause what?' said I. 'Cause it's full of cedar stumps and Indian mounds,' said he, 'and it *can't be cleared*.' 'Lord!' said I, 'them ar "cedar stumps" is beets, and them ar "Indian mounds" ar tater hills.'

"As I expected, the crop was overgrown and useless: the sile is too rich, and *planting in Arkansas is dangerous*. I had a good-sized sow killed in that same bottom land. The old thief stole an ear of corn, and took it down where she slept at night to eat. Well she left a grain or two on the ground, and lay down on them: before morning, the corn shot up, and the percussion killed her dead. I don't plant any more: natur intended Arkansas for a hunting-ground, and I go according to natur."

The questioner who thus elicited the description of our hero's settlement, seemed to be perfectly satisfied, and said no more; but the "Big Bar of Arkansas" rambled on from one thing to another with a volubility perfectly astonishing, occasionally disputing with those around him, particularly with a "Iv'e Sucker" from Illinois, who had the daring to say that our Arkansas friend's stories "smelt rather tall."

In this manner the evening was spent; but, conscious that my own association with so singular a personage would probably end before morning, I asked him if he would not give me a description of some particular bear-hunt; adding, that I took great interest in such things, though I was no sportsman. The desire seemed to please him, and he squared himself round towards me, saying that he could give me an idea of a bar-hunt, that was never beat in this world, or in any other. His manner was so singular, that half of his story consisted in his excellent way of telling it, the great peculiarity of which was, the happy manner he had of emphasizing the prominent parts of his conversation. As near as I can recollect, I have italicized them, and given the story in his own words.

"Stranger," said he, "in bar-hunts I *am numerous*; and which particular one, as you say, I shall tell, puzzles me. There was the old she-devil I shot at the Hurricane last fall—then there was the old hog thief I popped over at the Bloody Crossing, and then—Yes, I have it! I will give you an idea of a hunt, in which the greatest bar was killed that ever lived, *none excepted*; about an old fellow that I hunted, more or less, for two or three years; and if that ain't a *particular bar-hunt*, I ain't got one to tell.

"But, in the first place, stranger, let me say, I am pleased with you, because you ain't ashamed to gain information by asking and listening; and that's what I say to Countess's pups every day, when I'm home; and I have got great hopes of them ar pups, because they are continually *nosing* about; and though they stick it sometimes in the wrong place, they gain experience any how, and may learn something useful to boot.

"Well, as I was saying about this big bar, you see, when I and some more first settled in our region, we were drivin' to hunting naturally; we soon liked it, and after that we found it an easy matter to make the thing our business. One old chap, who had pioneered afore us, gave us to understand that we had settled in the right place. He dwelt upon its merits until it was affecting, and showed us, to prove his assertions, more marks on the sassafras-trees than I ever saw on a tavern door 'lection time. 'Who keeps that ar reckoning?' said I. 'The bar,' said he. 'What for?' said I. 'Can't tell,' said he; 'but so it is: the bar bite the bark and wood too, at the highest point from the ground they can reach; and you can tell by the marks,' said he, 'the length of the bar to an inch.' 'Enough,' said I; 'I've learned something here a ready, and I'll put it in practice.'

"Well, stranger, just one month from that time I killed a bar, and told its exact length before I measured it, by those very marks; and when I did that, I swelled up considerable—I've been a prouder man ever since. So I went on, larning something every day, until I was reckoned a buster, and allowed to be decidedly the best bar-hunter in my district; and that is a reputation as much harder to earn than to be reckoned first man in Congress, as an iron ramrod is harder than a toadstool. Did the varmint go over-cunning by being fooled with by green-horn hunters, and by this means get troublesome, they send for me as a matter of course; and thus I do my own hunting, and most of my neighbours'. I walk into the varmint's thought, and it has become about as much the same to me as drinking. It is told in two sentences—a bar is started, and he is killed. The thing is somewhat monotonous now—I know just how much they will run, where they will tire, how much they will grow, and what a thundering time I will have in getting them home.

"I could give you this history of the chase, with all the particulars at the commencement, I know the signs so well—*Stranger, I'm certain*. Once I met with a match though, and I will tell you about it; for a common hunt would not be worth relating.

"On a fine fall day, long time ago, I was trailing about for bar, and what should I see but fresh marks on the sassafras-trees, about eight inches above any in the forests that I knew of. Says I, 'Them marks is a hoax, or it indicates the d—t bar that was ever grown.' In fact, stranger, I couldn't believe it was real, and I went on. Again I saw the same marks, at the same height, and I *knew the thing lived*. That conviction came home to my soul like an earthquake. Says I, 'Here is something a-purpose for me: that bar is mine, or I give up the hunting business.' The very next morning what should I see but a number of buzzards hovering over my corn-field. 'The rascal has been there,' said I, 'for that sign is certain;' and, sure enough, on examining, I found the bones of what had been as beautiful a hog the day before, as was ever raised by a Buck-eye. Then I tracked the critter out of the field to the woods, and all the marks he left behind, showed me that he was *the bar*.

"Well, stranger, the first fair chase I ever had with that big critter, I saw him no less than three distinct times at a distance: the dogs run him over eighteen miles and broke down, my horse gave out, and I was as nearly used up as a man can be, made on my principle, *which is patent*. Before this adventure, such things were unknown to me as possible; but, strange as it was, that bar got me used to it before I was done with him; for he got so at last, that he would leave me on a long chase *quite easy*. How he did it, I never could understand. That a bar runs at all is puzzling; but how this one could tire down and bust up a pack of hounds and a horse, that were used to overheating everything they started after in no time, was past my understanding. Well, stranger, that bar finally got so sassy, that he used to help himself to a hog off my premises whenever he wanted one; the buzzards followed after what he left, and so, between *bar and buzzard*, I rather think I was *out of pork*!

"Well, missing that bar so often took hold of my vitals, and I wasted away. The thing had been carried too far, and it reduced me in flesh faster than an ager. I would see that bar in everything I did: *he hunted me*, and that, too, like a devil, which I began to think he was. While in this fix, I made preparations to give him a last brush, and be done with it. Having completed everything to my satisfaction, I started at sunrise, and to my great joy, I discovered from the way the dogs run, that they were near him; finding his trail was nothing, for that had become as plain to the pack as a turnpike road. On we went, and coming to an open country, what should I see but the bar very leisurely ascending a hill, and the dogs close at his heels, either a match for him this time in speed, or else he did not care to get out of their way—I don't know which. But wasn't he a beauty, though? I loved him like a brother.

"On he went, until he came to a tree, the limbs of which formed a crotch about six feet from the ground. Into this crotch he got and seated himself, the dogs yelling all around it; and there he sat eyeing them as quiet as a pond in low water. A green-horn friend of mine, in company, reached shooting distance before me, and blazed away,

hitting the critter in the centre of his forehead. The bar shook his head as the ball struck it, and then walked down from that tree as gently as a lady would from a carriage. 'Twas a beautiful sight to see him do that—he was in such a rage that he seemed to be as little afraid of the dogs as if they had been sucking-pigs; and the dogs warn't slow in making a ring around him at a respectful distance. I tell you, even Bowie-knife, himself, stood off. Then the way his eyes flashed—why the fire of them would have singed a cat's hair; in fact that bar was in a *wrath all over*. Only one pup came near him, and he was brushed out so totally with the bar's left paw, that he entirely disappeared; and that made the old dogs more cautious still. In the meantime, I came up, and taking deliberate aim, as a man should do, at his side, just back of his foreleg, *if my gun did not snap*, call me a coward, and I won't take it personal. Yes, stranger, it *snapped*, and I could not find a cap about my person. While in this predicament, I turned round to my fool friend—says I, 'Bill,' says I, 'you're an ass—you're a fool—you might as well have tried to kill that bar by barking the tree under his belly, as to have done it by hitting him in the head. Your shot has made a tiger of him, and blast me, if a dog gets killed or wounded when they come to blows, I will stick my knife into your liver, I will—'

"My wrath was up. I had lost my caps, my gun had snapped, the fellow with me had fired at the bar's head, and I expected every moment to see him close in with the dogs, and kill a dozen of them at least. In this thing I was mistaken, for the bar leaped over the ring formed by the dogs, and giving a fierce growl, was off—the pack, of course, in full cry after him. The run this time was short, for coming to the edge of a lake the varmint jumped in, and swam to a little island in the lake, which it reached just a moment before the dogs.

"'I'll have him now,' said I, for I had found my caps in the *lining of my coat*—so, rolling a log into the lake, I paddled myself across to the island, just as the dogs had cornered the bar in a thicket. I rushed up and fired—at the same time the critter leaped over the dogs and came within three feet of me, running like mad; he jumped into the lake, and tried to mount the log I had just deserted, but every time he got half his body on it, it would roll over and send him under; the dogs, too, got around him, and pulled him about, and finally Bowie-knife clenched with him, and they sunk into the lake together. Stranger, about this time I was excited, and I stripped off my coat, drew my knife, and intended to have taken a part with Bowie-knife myself, when the bar rose to the surface. But the varmint staid under—Bowie-knife came up alone, more dead than alive, and with the pack came ashore.

"'Thank God!' said I, 'the old villain has got his deserts at last.'

"Determined to have the body, I cut a grape-vine for a rope, and dove down where I could see the bar in the water, fastened my queer rope to his leg, and fished him, with great difficulty, ashore. Stranger, may I be chewed to death by young alligators, if the thing I looked at wasn't a *she-bar*, and not the old critter after all. The way matters got mixed on that island was unaccountably curious, and thinking of it made me more than ever convinced that I was hunting the devil himself. I went home that night and took to my bed—the thing was killing me. The entire team of Arkansaw in bar-hunting, acknowledged himself used up, and the fact sunk into my feelings like a snagged boat will in the Mississippi. I grew as cross as a bar with two cubs and a sore tail. The thing got out 'mong my neighbours, and I was asked how come on that individ-u-al that never lost a bar when once started? and if that same individ-u-al didn't wear telescopes when he turned a she-bar, of ordinary size, into an old he one, a little larger than a horse?

"'Prehabs,' said I, 'friends'—getting wrathy—'prehabs you want to call somebody a liar?'

"'Oh, no!' said they 'we only heard such things as being *rather common* of late, but we don't believe one word of it; oh, no,'—and then they would ride off and laugh like so many hyenas over a dead nigger.

"It was too much, and I determined to catch that bar, go to Texas, or die,—and I made my preparations accordin'. I had the pack shut up and rested. I took my rifle to pieces, and led it. I put caps in every pocket about my person, *for fear of the lining*. I then told my neighbours, that on Monday morning—naming the day—I would start *that bar*, and bring him home with me, or they might divide my settlement among them, the owner having disappeared. Well, stranger, on the morning previous to the great day of my hunting expedition, I went into the woods near my house, taking my gun and Bowie-knife along, *just from habit*, and there sitting down also from habit, what should I see, getting over my fence, but *the bar!* Yes, the old varmint was within a hundred yards of me, and the way he walked *over that fence*—stranger, he loomed up like a *black mist*, he seemed so large, and he walked *right* towards me. I raised myself, took deliberate aim, and fired. Instantly the varmint wheeled, gave a yell, and *walked through the fence* like a falling tree would through a cobweb. I started after, but was tripped up by my inexpressibles, which, either from habit, or the excitement of the moment, were about my heels, and before I had really gathered myself up, I heard the old varmint groaning in a thicket near by, like a thousand sinners, and by the time I reached him he was a corpse. Stranger, it took five niggers and myself to put that carcass on a mule's back, and old long-ears waddled under his load, as if he was foundered in every leg of his body, and with a common whopper of a bar, he would have trotted off, and enjoyed himself. 'Twould astonish you to know how big he was: I made a *bed-spread of his skin*, and the way it used to cover my bar-mattress, and leave several feet on each side to tuck up, would have delighted you. It was in fact a creation bar, and if it had lived in Samson's time, and had met him, in a fair fight, it would have licked him in the twinkling of a dice-box. But, stranger, I never liked the way I hunted him, and *missed him*. There is something curious about it, I could never understand,—and I never was satisfied at his giving in so *easy at last*. Prehabs, he had heard of my preparations to hunt him the next day, so he jist come in, like Capt. Scott's coon, to save his wind to grunt with in dying; but that ain't likely. My private opinion is, that that bar was an *unhunnable bar*, and died when his time come."

When the story was ended, our hero sat some minutes with his auditors in a grave silence; I saw there was a mystery to him connected with the bear whose death he had just related, that had evidently made a strong impression on his mind. It was also evident that there was some superstitious awe connected with the affair,—a feeling common with all "children of the wood," when they meet with anything out of their everyday experience. He was the first one, however, to break the silence, and jumping up, he asked all present to "liquor" before going to bed,—a thing which he did, with a number of companions, evidently to his heart's content.

After my sleigh-ride last winter, and the slippery trick I was served by Patty Bean, nobody would suspect me of hankering after the woman again in a hurry. To hear me rave and take on, and rail out against the whole feminine gender, you would have taken it for granted that I should never so much as look at one again, to all eternity. Oh, but I was wicked! "Damn their 'ceitful eyes," says I, "blame their skins, torment their hearts, and drot them to damnation!"

Finally, I took an oath, and swore that if I ever meddled, or had any dealings with them again—in the sparking line I mean—I wish I might be hung and choked. But swearing off from woman, and then going into a meeting-house chockfull of gals, all shining and glistening in their Sunday clothes and clean faces, is like swearing off from liquor and going into a grog-shop—it's all smoke.

I held out and kept firm to my oath for three whole Sundays, forenoons, a' temoons, and intermissions complete: on the fourth there were strong symptoms of a change of weather. A chap, about my size, was seen on the way to the meeting-house, with a new patent hat on, his head hung by the ears upon a shirt-collar, his cravat had a puddling in it, and branched out in front into a double-bow knot. He carried a straight back, and a stiff neck, as a man ought to when he has his best clothes on; and every time he spit, he sprung his body forward like a jack-knife, in order to shoot clear off the ruffles.

Squire Jones's pew is next but two to mine, and when I stand up to prayers, and take my coat-tail under my arm, and turn my back to the minister, I naturally look quite straight at Sally Jones. Now Sally has got a face not to be grinned at in a fog. Indeed, as regards beauty, some folks think she can pull an even yoke with Patty Bean. For my part, I think there is not much boot between them. Anyhow, they are so well matched that they have hated and despised each other like rank poison, ever since they were school-girls.

Squire Jones had got his evening fire on, and set himself down to read the great Bible, when he heard a rap at his door.

"Walk in. Well, John, how der do? Git out, Pompey!"

"Pretty well, I thank you, Squire; and how do you do?"

"Why, so as to be crawling. Ye ugly beast will ye hold yer yop! Haul up a chair and set down, John."

"How do you do, Mrs. Jones?"

"Oh, middlin'. How's yer marn?"

"Don't forget the mat there, Mr. Beedle."

This put me in mind that I had been off soundings several times in the long muddy lane, and my boots were in a sweet pickle.

It was now old Captain Jones's turn, the grandfather, being roused from a doze by the bustle and racket; he opened both his eyes, at first with wonder and astonishment. At last, he began to halloo so loud that you might hear him a mile; for he takes it for granted that everybody is just exactly as deaf as he is.

"Who is it, I say? Who in the world is it?"

Mrs. Jones, going close to his ear, screamed out:

"It's Johnny Beedle!"

"Ho, Johnny Beedle; I remember he was one summer at the siege of Boston."

"No, no, father; bless your heart, that's been dead and gone this twenty years!"

"Ho! But where does he come from?"

"Daown taown."

"Ho! And what does he foller for a livin'?"

And he did not stop asking questions after this sort, till all the particulars of the Beedle family were published and proclaimed in Mrs. Jones's last screech. He then sunk back into his doze again.

The dog stretched himself before one andirion, the cat squat down before the other. Silence came on by degrees, like a calm snow-storm, till nothing was heard but a cricket under the hearth, keeping time with a sappy, yellow-birch forestick. Sally sat up, prim as if she were pinned to the chair-back, her hands crossed genteely upon her lap, and her eyes looking straight into the fire. Mammy Jones tried to straighten herself too, and laid her hands across in her lap. But they would not lay still. It was full twenty-four hours since they had done any work, and they were out of all patience with keeping Sunday. Do what she would to keep them quiet they would bounce up now and then, and go through the motions, in spite of the Fourth Commandment.

For my part, I sat looking very much like a fool. The more I tried to say something, the more my tongue stuck fast. I put my right leg over the left, and said, "Hem!" Then I changed, and put the left over the right. It was no use, the silence kept coming on thicker and thicker. The drops of sweat began to crawl all over me. I got my eye upon my hat, hanging on a peg, on the road to the door, and then I eyed the door. At this moment, the old Captain all at once sung out:

"Johnny Beedle!"

It sounded like a clap of thunder, and I started right up an eend.

"Johnny Beedle, you'll never handle sich a drumstick as your father did, if you live to the age of Methuseler. He would toss up his drumstick, and while it was whirin' in the air, take off a gill er rum, and then ketch it as it come down, without losin' a stroke in the tune. What d'ye think of that, ha? But scull your chair round close alongside er me, so you can hear. Now, what have you come arter?"

"I arter? Oh, jist takin' a walk. Pleasant walkin', I guess. I mean, jist to see how ye all do."

"Ho, that's another lie! You've come a courtin', Johnny Beedle; you're a'ter our Sal. Say, now, d'ye want to marry, or only to court?"

This is what I call a choker. Poor Sally made but one jump, and landed in the middle of the kitchen; and then she skulked in the dark corner, till the old man, after laughing himself into a whooping-cough, was put to bed.

Then came apples and cider, and the ice being broke, plenty chat with Mammy Jones about the minister and the "sarmon." I agreed with her to a nicety upon all the points of doctrine, but I had forgot the text and all the heads of the discourse, but six. Then she teased and tormented me to tell who I accounted the best singer in the gallery, that day. But, marn! there was no getting that out of me.

"Praise to the face, is open disgrace," says I, throwing a sly squint at Sally.

At last, Mrs. Jones lighted tother candle, and after charging Sally to look well to the fire, she led the way to bed, and the Squire gathered up his shoes and stockings, and followed.

Sally and I were left sitting a good yard apart, honest measure. For fear of getting tongue-tied again, I set right in, with a steady stream of talk. I told her all the particulars about the weather that was past, and also made some pretty 'cute guesses at what it was like to be in future. At first, I gave a hitch up with my chair at every full stop; then, growing saucy, I repeated it at every comma and semicolon; and at last, it was hitch, hitch, hitch, and I planted myself fast by the side of her.

"I swore, Sally, you looked so plaguy handsome to-day, that I wanted to eat you up!"

"Pshaw! get along you," said she.

My hand had crept along, somehow, upon its fingers, and begun to scrape acquaintance with hers. She sent it home again, with a desperate jerk. Try it again—no better luck.

"Why, Miss Jones, you're gettin' upstropulous; a little old-maidish, I guess."

"Hands off is fair play, Mr. Beedle."

It is a good sign to find a girl sulky; I knew where the shoe pinched—it was that are Patty Bean business. So I went to work to persuade her that I had never had any notion after Patty, and to prove it, I fell to running her down at a great rate. Sally could not help chiming in with me; and I rather guess Miss Patty suffered a few. I now not only got hold of her hand without opposition, but managed to slip an arm round her waist. But there was no satisfying me; so I must go to poking out my lips after a buss. I guess I rued it. She fetched me a slap in the face, that made me see stars, and my ears rung like a brass kettle for a quarter of an hour. I was forced to laugh at the

joke, tho' out of the wrong side of my mouth, which gave my face something the look of a gridiron. The battle now began in the regular way.

"Ah, Sally, give me a kiss, and ha' done with it, now."

"I won't, so, there: nor tech to—"

"I'll take it, whether or no."

"Do it if you dare!"

And at it we went, rough and tumble. An odd destruction of starch now commenced: the bow of my cravat was squat up in half a shake. At the next bout, smash went shirt-collar; and at the same time, some of the head fastenings gave way, and down came Sally's hair in a flood, like a mill-dam broke loose, carrying away half a dozen combs. One dig of Sally's elbow, and my blooming ruffles wilted down to a dish-cloth. But she had no time to boast. Soon her neck tackling began to shiver; it parted at the throat, and whorah came a whole school of blue and white beads, scampering and running races, every which way about the floor.

By the hookey, if Sally Jones is not real grit, there's no snakes. She fought fair, however, I must own, and neither tried to bite or scratch; and when she could fight no longer, she yielded handsomely. Her arms fell down by her sides, her head back over her chair, her eyes closed, and there lay her little plump mouth, all in the air. Lord, did ye ever see a hawk pounce upon a young robin, or a bumble-bee upon a clover top? I say nothing.

Consums it, how a buss will crack of a still, frosty night! Mrs. Jones was about half way between asleep and awake.

"There goes my yeast bottle," says she to herself, "burst into twenty hundred pieces; and my bread is all dough agin."

The upshot of the matter is, I fell in love with Sally Jones, head over ears. Every Sunday night, rain or shine, finds me rapping at Squire Jones's door; and twenty times have I been within a hair's breadth of popping the question. But now I have made a final resolve, and if I live till next Sunday night, and I don't get choked in the trial, Sally Jones will hear thunder.

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[8] By W. J. McClintoch.

VI.  
THE MARRIAGE OF JOHNNY BEEDLE.<sup>[9]</sup>

Since I came out in print about my sleigh-riding, and frolicking, and courting, I have entered into the matrimonial state, and left off dabbling in the newspapers: for a married man has a character to take care of. But folks tease and torment me so much to let 'em know the particulars about my marriage, that I don't know that I had best sit down once for all, and tell the rest of my experience.

When I left off, I believe I was spunking up to Sally Jones like all vengeance, and threatening to give her the butt-end of my sentiments, wasn't I? Well, I was as good as my word. The next Sabbath-day I went right to work, after meeting, upon the outer man, as Deacon Carpenter says, and by sundown, things looked about right. I say nothing; but when I stood up to the glass to finish, and thought of titivating hair and wiskers, and so forth, I saw a little fellow there that looked wicked, and says I, "If Sally Jones knows which side her bread is buttered—but no matter, she shan't say I didn't give a chance."

"Well, I went over to the Squire's, pretty well satisfied in my own mind; so, after flattering and crowing about her a little while, I up and shew the cloven foot.

"Sally," says I, "will you take me for better or worse?"

This put her to considering, and I gave a flourishing about the room, and cut a carly-cue with my right foot, as much as to say, "Take your own time."

At last, says she, "I'd as liv's have you as anybody in the world, John, but—I declare I can't."

"You can't, ha! And why?"

"Cause—"

"Cause what?"

"Cause I can't, and that's enough. I would in a minute, John, but for only one reason, and that I'm afraid to tell ye."

"Poh, poh!" says I, "don't be bashful. If there's only one stump in the way, I guess here's a fellow—"

"Well, then, look tother way, John; I can't speak if you look at me."

"O, yes; there, now's your time," says I, with a flert.

"The reason is—Joe Bowers, the stage-driver. Now, you shan't tell nobody, John, will ye?"

Who would have thought this of Sally Jones!

It seemed to me the very Old Boy had got into the women: they fairly put me to nonplush! All this time, my popularity with the ladies was amazing. To see them flattering and soft-soaping me all at once, you would have sworn I had nothing to do but pick and choose. I had as much gallantry to do as I wanted everywhere; and for politeness and gentility I never turned my back to no man. Then they were so thick and familiar with me, that they didn't care what they said or did before me; and, finally, whenever they had errands or chores to, who but I was the favourite bird to fetch and carry? I was for ever and ever racing and cantering from post to pillar, to do their bidding. Rain or shine, snow or mud, nothing stopping me; and, I may say, I fairly earned their smiles by the sweat of my brow. Then it was, "O, Mr. Beedle! what should we do without Mr. Beedle!" But when I caught one alone, and began to touch upon the matrimonial sentiments, then how quick the tune was changed! O, the ways of women are curious!

Patty Bean was not the first I run against, by a long short. I never lost anything for the want of asking; and I was playg apt to talk turky always when I get sociable, if it was only out of politeness. Now and then one would promise, and then fly off at the handle; but most all contrive some reason or other for giving me the bag to hold. One had taken a firm resolve never to marry—"No, never, never!" and the next Sunday morning she was published! Another chicken thought she was a great deal too young to undertake to manage a family. At last, I took a great shine to the school-marm, Huldah Hornbeam, though she was ten years older than I, and taller by half a yard of neck; and when I offered her heart and hand, she fixed up her mouth, and, says she, "I've a great respect and esteem for you, Mr. Beedle, but—" and so forth. Nothing will cool a man quicker than respect and esteem, unless it is a wet blanket. But let Huldah alone, she had her eyes upon Deacon Carpenter all the time.

Well, as I was going moping along home, from Squire Jones's, I fell in with Doctor Dingley. The Doctor saw in a minute that something was the matter, and he went to work and pumped the whole secret out of me. Then he seemed so friendly, that I up and told him all my experience with the women, from the beginning to the end.

"Well, John," says he, "I advise you now to wait till the twenty-ninth of February, when the gals turn round and courted the fellows. It's none of my business, but, I wouldn't let the women make a fool of me any more."

Well, I took a resolution, and I stuck to it firm; for when I once set up my ebenezzer, I am just like a mountain. I stuck to it along pretty well into January, when I had to go to singing school. I must go to singing school, for I was leader in treble, and there was no carrying on the parts without me. But this was nothing, if it hadn't fell to my lot to go home with Hannah Peabody, four times running. Politeness before everything. Well, she kept growing prettier and prettier every time, but I only grit my teeth and held on the harder.

By and by, Sabbath-day night came round, and I felt a sort of uneasy, moping about home; and, says I, this resolution will never set well on my stomach without air and exercise; and before I had done thinking of this, I was more than half way to Captain Peabody's. It was about daylight down as I was passing by the kitchen; but hearing a sort of snickering inside, I slipped up and peeped into the window, just out of curiosity.

There was no candle burning, for Mrs. Peabody is saving of tallow, but I could see Hannah and Pol Partridge, the help, telling fortunes in the ashes by firelight. I turned round to go off, and run right against Jack Robinson. Jack was come to sit up with the help, and would insist upon it, I should go in and see Hannah—"She hasn't had a spark this month," says he, "and in you shall go, or I'll lick ye."

Well, there was no dodging here, and all I had to do was to grin and bear it. So in I went, and once in, good bye to resolution. The short and the long of it, I was soon as deep in the mud as I had been in the mire. But I had another guess chap to deal with than Sally Jones now. And here was now the difference between them. Where you got a slap in the chops from Sal, Hannah kep ye off with a scowl and a cock up of the nose. And Madam couldn't bear handling. With her, it was talk is talk, but hands off, Mister.

But I rather guess I had cut my eye-teeth by this time. If I hadn't learnt something about the nature of the women, the kicks I had taken from all quarters fell upon barren ground. There is no way to deal with them but to coax and flatter; you gain nothing, let me tell ye, by saving of soft soap; and you must be sly about it. It is no way to catch a wicked devil of a colt, in a pasture, to march right up, bridle in hand; you must sort of sidle along as if you was going past, and whistle, and pretend to be looking tother way; and so round and round, till at last you corner him up; then jump and clench him by the forelock. O! I'm not so great a fool as I might be.

But it was a long tedious business before Hannah and I could come to any sort of understanding. There was old Captain Peabody was a stump in my way. He was a man that had no regard for politeness; he travelled rough-shod through the town, carrying a high head and a stiff upper lip, as much as to say: "I owes nobody nothing, by —." He had been a skipper and sailed his schooner all along ashore, till he had got forehanded; then went back, up country, and set down to farming. But I never tuckle to man, if he's as big as all out-doors. And after he poked his fist in my face, one 'lection, we never hitched horses together.

Well, as I was afeard to go to the house, and court Hannah in the regular way, I had to carry on the war just when and where I could; sometimes of a dark night, I could steal into the kitchen. But my safest plan was, to track her to the neighbour's house, where she went to spend the evenings; skulk about till she started home, then waylay her on the road. Pretty poor chance this, you'll say. But if this wasn't enough, Hannah herself must join in to plague me half to death.

You see I wanted to let her know what I was after in a sort of a delicate under-hand way, and keep myself on the safe side of the fence all the time, if there was to be any kicking. But Hannah had no notion of riddles; she would not understand any sort of plain English. I hinted plagy suspicions about true love, and Cupid's darts, and all that. Then I would breathe a long sithe, and say: "What does that mean, Hannah?" But no, she couldn't see, poor soul; she looked as simple an' innocent all the while as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.

She was plagy close, too, as to her goings and comings; and if she happened any time by accident to let drop the least word that show'd me where to find her next time, she was so mad with herself that she was ready to bite her tongue off.

One day she was going to her Aunt Molly's to spend the evening, and she went all the way round to Dr. Dingley's to tell Mrs. Dingley not to tell me. "For," says she, "I don't want him to be dodging me about everywhere." Well, Mrs. Dingley, she promised to keep dark, but she told the Doctor, and what does the Doctor do, but

comes right straight over and tells me, "Gone all stark alone," says he, "but it's none of my business."

This is the day that I have marked with a piece of chalk. Hardly was daylight down before I was snug in my skulking nest, in Aunt Molly's barn. It was on the hay-mow, where there was a knot-hole handy to look through and see all that went in or out of the house. I had a scheme in my head that Hannah little dreamt of; and I lay and I thought it over till she came out; and when I got her under my arm, and walking down the lane, thinks I, I'll set the stone a-rolling anyhow, let it stop where it will.

So I set on to talking about this and that and tother thing, and happened (by mere chance, you know) to mention our old hatter shop, that stands at the corner, that my father used to work in when he was alive. "And," says I, "speaking of the shop, always puts me in mind of you, Hannah."

"Of me, John?" says she. "Why?"

"O! it's just the thing for a store," says I.

"Well?"

"Sweep out the dirt, and old hat pairings, and truck—"

"Well?"

"Take the sign; rub out 'Hatter,' and put in 'Merchant,' and that spells 'John Beetle, Merchant!'"

"Well, John?"

"Then get rum and molasses, and salt-fish, and ribbons and calicoes—"

"O!" says she, "it's my new calico gown'd you was a-thinking of. Ain't it pretty?"

"Oh!" says I "'tis a sweet pretty gown'd," says I. "But—I finally concluded to set up store and get married, and settle myself down as a merchant for life—"

At this, Hannah hung down her head and gave a snicker. "And how does all that put you in mind of me, John?" says she.

"Guess."

"I won't guess to touch to, so there now—I never!"

What I said, and what she said next, is all lost, for I'll be shot if I can remember. It's all buz, buz, in my head, like a dream. The first thing I knew, we were right again Captain Peabody's barn, walking as close together as we could with comfort, and our arms crossed round each other's waist. Hannah's tongue had got thawed out, and was running like a brook on a freshet, and all one steady stream of honey. I vow, I was ready to jump out of my skin.

It was a mile and a half from Aunt Molly's to Captain Peabody's, and I thought we had been about a minute on the road. So says I: "Hannah, let's go set down under the great apple-tree and have-a little chat, just to taper off the evening." We now sat down and began to talk sensible. We settled all the predicaments of the nuptial ceremony, and then talked over the store till we thought we saw ourselves behind the counter; I weighing and measuring, and dickering and dealing out, and she, at the desk, pen in hand, figuring up the accounts. "And mind, John," says she, "I'm not a-going to trust everybody at the corner, I tell ye." But just as we were beginning to get sociable, as I thought, Hannah looks up, and says she: "What can that 'ere great red streak be, in the sky, away down there beyond Sacarrap?"

"I rather guess," says I, "it's a fire in the woods."

"Fire in the woods! I'll be skinned if it isn't daylight a-coming. Quick, John, help me into the window before father's a-stirring, or here'll be a pretty how d'ye do."

The next job was to tell the news to Captain Peabody. Hannah had settled it that she should speak to her mother, and said she could manage her well enough, and it was my business to ask her father. This was a thing easier said than done. It stuck in my crop for days, like a raw onion. I tried to persuade Hannah to marry fist, and ask afterwards. Says I: "You are twenty-four, and free according to law." But she wouldn't hear to it. She had no notion of doing anything clandestinely. Then I asked Doctor Dingley to go and break the ice for me. But no: he would not meddle with other folks' business—he made it a point.

"Well," says I, "if I have got to come to the scratch, the less I consider on it the better." So one stormy day I put my head down against a north-easter, and set my feet a-going; and the next thing I was standing right before Captain Peabody. He was in his grain-house, shelling corn, sitting on a tub, with an old frying-pan stuck thour the handles; and he made the cobs fly every which way, hit or miss—he didn't care. But it tickled him so to see me dodge 'em, that he got into uncommon good humour.

"Well, Johnny Beetle, what has bro't you up here, right into the wind's eye, this ere morning?"

"Why, Cap'm, I've got an idea in my head."

"No! how you talk!"

"Ye see, the upshot of the matter is, I've a notion of setting up a store, and getting a wife, and settling myself down as a merchant."

"Whoorah, John, there's two ideas—a store and a wife."

"But I want a little of your help," says I.

"Well, John," says he, "I'll do the handsome thing by ye. If you keep better goods than anybody else, and sell cheaper, you shall have my custom, and welcome, provided you'll take pay in sauce and things. Isn't that fair?"

"O, yes, Cap'm"

"And I wish you success, on the other tack. No fear of that, I'll warrant. There's lots of silly girls afloat; and such a fine, taught-rigged gen'man as you are, can run one down in no time."

"O, yes, Cap'm, I have run down Hannah already."

"My Hannah?"

"O, yes, Cap'm, we have agreed, and only want your consent."

With this the old Cap'm ris right up on end, upset the tub and frying-pan, and pointed with a great red ear of corn in his hand, towards the door, without saying a word; but his eyes rolled like all creation!

This raised my blood, that I felt so stuffy, that I marched right straight off, and never turned my head to the right or left, till I was fairly home and housed.

"Well now," says I, "my apple-cart is upset in good earnest." And when I went to Doctor Dingley for comfort, says he, "John, I wash my hands of this whole affair, from beginning to end. I must support my character. I am a settled doctor in this town; and the character of a doctor, John, is too delicate a flower to go poking round, and dabbling into everybody's mess. Then," says he, "Mrs. Dingley, I warn you not to meddle nor make in this business. Let everybody skin their own eels. Hold your tongue, you fool, you. Did you ever hear of me burning my fingers?"

Howsomever, there was some under-hand work carried on somewhere, and by somebody. I don't tell tales out of school. I had no hand in it, till one day, Dr. Dingley, says he, "John, if you happen to be wanting my horse and shay, this afternoon, about three o'clock, go and take it. I never refused to lend, you know. And I hope Captain Peabody will gain his law-suit with Deacon Carpenter, that he has gone down to Portland to see to. But that's none of my business."

Somebody, too—I don't say who—there was a certain Squire Darling, living in a certain town, about ten miles off, that did business, and asked no questions. Well, in the said town, just after sundown, a young man, named Joseph Morey, was walking near the meeten-house, with a sort of cream-coloured book under his arm; and he heard something in the woods, this side, that, if it wasn't a hurricane, he'd give up guessing. Such a cracking, and squeaking, and rattling!—such a thrashing, and grunting, and snorting!—you never! He stopped, and looked back, and all soon came to light. There was an old white-faced horse came scrabbling along out of the woods, reeling and foaming, with an old woodshed shay at his tail, and a chap about my size flourishing a small beach-pole, pretty well boomed up at the end. And, says I, "Mister, can you tell me where one Squire Darling lives?"

"Which Squire Darling?" says he; "there's two of the name."

"His name is John," says I.

"Faith," says he, "they are both Johns too; but one is a lawyer, and the other a cooper."

"O, it must be the lawyer that I want," says I.

With this, the young man gave a squint at Hannah, and a wink at me; and "Come along," says he, "I am going right there now, and I'll show you the Squire, and fix things for ye."

"Hannah," says I, "that's lucky."

Well, he carried us into a small, one-story house, a little further on, full of books and dust, and smelling of strong, old dead tobacco-smoke. Here we sat down, while he went out about our business. We waited and waited, till long after dark, and were glad enough to see him come back at last with a candle. "The Squire is very sick," says he, "but I have over-persuaded him." And the next minute, Squire came grunting along in, all muffled by in a great-coat, and spectacles on, and a great tall woman, as witness for the bride.

Well, he went to work, and married us, and followed up with a right down sensible sermon, about multiplying and increasing on the earth; and I never felt so solemn and serious. Then followed kissing the bride all round, the certificate; and then I gave him two silver dollars, and we got into the shay again, and off.

After this, nothing happened, to speak of, for about a month. Everything was kept snug, and Captain Peabody had no suspicion; but one morning, at break of day, as I was creeping softly down Captain Peabody's back-stairs, with my shoes in my hand, as usual, I trod into a tub of water, standing on the third step from the bottom, and down I came, slam bang. The Captain was going to kill his hogs, and had got up betimes; put his water to heat, and was whetting his butcher-knife in the kitchen.

The first thing I saw, when I looked up, there stood Captain Peabody, with a great butcher-knife in his hand, looking down upon me like a thundercloud! I want to know if I didn't feel streaked! He clinched me by the collar, and stood me up; and then raised his knife over me, as far as he could reach. I thought my last moment was come. Blood would have been shed, as sure as rats, if it hadn't been for Mrs. Peabody. She stepped up behind, and laid hold of his arm; and says she, "It's no matter, Mr. Peabody; they are married."

"Married to that puppy?" roared the Captain.

"Yes, Sir," said I; "and here's the certificate."

And I pulled it out of my jacket-pocket, and gave it to him; but I didn't stay for any more ceremony. As soon as I felt his gripe loosen a little, I sid ed off like an eel, and backed out-doors, and made track home, about as fast as I could leg it. I was in a constant worry and stew all the forenoon, for fear the Captain would do anything rash; and I could neither sit still, nor stand still, eat, drink, or think.

About the middle of the afternoon, Dr. Dingley came bouncing in, out of breath, and says he, "John, you have been cheated and bamboozed. Your marriage ain't worth that. It was all a contrivance of Jack Darling, the lawyer, and his two imps, Joe Morey and Peter Scamp." This was all he could say, till he had wiped his face, and taken a swig of cider, to recover his wind; and then he gave me all the particulars.

When Captain Peabody had read my certificate, he could not rest, but tackled up, and drove right down, to let off his fury upon his old friend, Squire Darling. The moment he got sight of the Squire, he turned to and called him all the foul names he could lay his tongue to, for half an hour.

The Squire denied everything. The Captain downed the certificate, and says he, "There's black and white against ye, you bloody old sculpen."

The Squire knew the hand-writing was his nephew's, as soon as he saw it, and the truth was brought to light; but as the storm fell in one quarter, it rose from the other. Squire Darling had smelt tar in his day, and hadn't forgot how to box the compass; and as soon as the saddle was on the right horse, he set in and gave the Captain his own back again, and let him have it about nor-nor-west, right in his teeth, till he was fairly blown out. They shook hands then, and seeing Hannah and I had got underweigh together, they said we must go to the Vice, and no time must be lost in making all fast in the lashings, with a good, fine square knot, before a change in the weather. So the Squire slicked up a little, got into the shay, and came home with the Captain, to hold the wedding that very night.

How Dr. Dingley happened to be in town, just at the time, I don't know. It was his luck; and as soon as he saw which way the wind was, he licked up and cantered home in a hurry. After he had got through with the particulars, says he, "Now, Mr. Beedle, it's none of my business; but if I had such a hitch upon Captain Peabody, I would hang back like a stone dray, till he agreed to back my note for two hundred dollars, in the Portland Bank, to buy goods with, enough to set you up in the store."

I thought strong on this idea, as I was going over to Captain Peabody's; but the moment I show the least symptoms of packing, such a storm was raised as never was seen. Father, and mother-in-law, and Squire Darling, set up such a yell altogether; and, poor Hannah, she sat down and cried. My heart failed me, and I made haste to give in and plead sorry, as quick as possible; and somehow, in my hurry, I let out that Dr. Dingley had set me on; and so was the innocent cause of his getting a most righteous licking, the first time Captain Peabody caught him. It wasn't settled short of thirty dollars.

Well, Squire Darling stood us up, and married us about right, and here was an end of trouble. Mother-in-law would not part with Hannah, and she made father-in-law give us a settling out in the north end of his house. He could not stomach me very well for a while, but I have managed to get on the blind side of him. I turned right in to work on his farm, as steady and industrious as a cart-horse. And I kept on pleasing him in one way and another, more and more, till he has taken such a liking to me, that he wouldn't part with me for a cow. He owns that I save him the hire of a help—out and out—the year round.

There—now I have done. I can't patronise the newspapers any more. I have enough to do that is more profitable about home. Betwixt hard work in the fields, and chores about house and barn, and hog pens, I can't call a minute my own, summer nor winter. And just so sartain as my wife sees me come in and set down to take a little comfort, just so sartain is she to come right up and give me a baby to hold.

Noty Binny. The stories that are going the rounds, from mouth to mouth, about my fust marriage, are all packs of lies, invented by Joe Morey and Peter Scamp, jest to make folk laugh at my expense.

"I says," says I, "Hannah, sposin we keep thanksgivin' to home this year," says I, "and invite all our hull grist o' cousins, and aunts and things—go the hull figure, and do the thing genteel."

"Well, agreed," says she, "it's just what I was a thinkin', only I consate we'd better not caqlikate too far ahead, for I didn't never no it to miss somethin' happenin' so sure as I laid out for the leashest thing. Though it's as good a time now, far's I know, as any—for I've just weanen Moses, and tend to take comfort a spell, 'cause a troublesomer cryner critter niver come into life."

"Exactly so," says I, "and if I'd a known everything afore I was married that I do now," says I—

"Hold your tongue for a goney, Johnny Beedle," says she, "and mind your thanksgivin'."

"Poh!" says I, "Hannah, don't be miffy; I was only jeestin'—and you jist go and put on a kittle of water, and I'll go out and stick a pig for you; two if you like." So away I went and murdered the pigs out o' love and good-will to Hannah. I rather guess the critters wished I warn't so good-natured.

Well, things went on swimmingly, and what was best of all, we had the luck to invite the minister and deacon afore anybody got a chance; for the very moment the proklimation was read, I watched for em comin' out of meeting, and nailed 'em both. But as I was a tellin', Hannah, she went at it—she got some of her galls to help her, and they made all smoke. In the first place she went to work reg'lar, and turned the house inside out, and then t'other side in again, all the same as darmin' a stocking. Hannah is a smart willin' gail, and a rael worker, and a prime cook into the bargain; let her alone in the doughnut line, and for pumpkin pies—lick! So the day afore the thanksgivin' she called me into the t'other room, that Marm Peabody christened the parlour, to see what a lot o' pies and cakes, and sausage-meat and doughnuts she'd got made up, and charged me not to lay the weight of my finger upon one o' em. I telled her I guessed she cackelated to call in the whole parish, paupers and all, to eat up sich a sight of vittles; so I grabbed a handful of doughnuts, and went out to feed the hogs, and to see to things in the field. I was gone all the fore part o' the day, and when I went home I found Hannah all hoity toity, in a livin' pucker cryin', and taken on to kill, and poor little Moses totting arter her and cryin' too. I declare if I didn't feel streaked.

"What in the name o' natur," says I, "is the matter? who's dead, and what's to pay now?"

With that she fetched a new screech, and down she whopped into a cheer.

"Johnny Beedle, Johnny," says she, and with that she boohood agin.

"What ails the woman?" says I, "are you possedet, or what?"

"The child is ruined!" says she, "Moses Beedle is ruined."

I kitched up the child, and turned him eend for eend, every which way, but I couldn't see nothin' extraordinary. I began to think that the woman was bewitched, and by this time was a good mind to feel mad. I don't know of nothin' that'll raise a feller's dander quicker than to skeer him out of his seven senses. So I giv Hannah a reg'lar breezin', for actin' so like a raven distracted beat bug; and what with jarrin' a spell and coaxin' a spell, at last I got the whole on't out of her.

It appears that about an hour or thereabouts arter I'd gone out, there was a man rid up to the door a horseback, got down, and come in and asked for a drink o' water or beer, I ain't sartin which—but anyhow he was a rael dandified chap, and dreadful civil spoken withal. So my wife and he soon got into a chat about the weather and sich things. Well, while he set, the young one squaled in the room; he'd been asleep, you know, with his mornin's nap; my wife went and fetched him into the room, and she observed that the man looked considerable hard at him, as if he see'd somethin' queer; tho' she didn't think nothin' of it at the time, but recollected arterwards.

She was quite tickled to see the man take him and set him on his knee; but while he was a playin' with him—for Moses is a rael peeler, he ain't afeered of the biggest stranger that ever was—directly he fell to pawin' about his head in sich a comical style, and talking to himself, and withal acted so curious, that Hannah got skeery, and went to take him away, but he wouldn't let her take him jist then; he said, "he wanted to examine his head."

"His head!" says Hannah, "nothin' ails his head."

"Nothin' ails it?" says he, "why it's the most remarkable head that I've ever seen." And then he went on with sich a string of long words, there was no memberin' or understandin' half—then he clapped his hand on the side of the little fellow's scone-box, "there," says he, "do you see that *divilpment*;" or some sich word that sounded awful.

"That's what?" says Hannah.

"Vulgarly called a bump," continued he.

"It ain't a bump too, nyther," says his mother. "It's his nat'ral shape."

"No doubt of that," said the villin.

"Well now, if ever I heard the beat o' that," says she, "that bump's come nat'ral."

So he told her they was only called bumps, 'cause they looked like 'em; and the bigger they were, and the more there was on 'em, the more different sorts of capacities and idees folks had—and so on.

At first she thought the man was stark mad; but he seemed entirely harmless, and so she let him go on with his stuff, and somehow he e'en a most persuaded her it was all gospel. He said little Moses had got the bump of destruction to an all-fired degree, tho' it was in the mother's power to help it considerable. But when Hannah asked him if she must swathe up his head he snorted right out; and then went on to say, that Moses had jist got sich a shaped head as the man had that was hung down to Boston last September. He finally talked her into a livin' fidget—polite as a stage-driver, all the time too, and so larnt, besides, that Hannah couldn't do nothin' but paraphrase. So arter he'd dranked a quart o' beer, and Hannah cut a mince-pie for him, he cleared, leaving Hannah in such a stew, that kept workin' up and workin' up till she heered me comin' into the house, and then it all burst out to once. A tempestical time there was, I tell you.

Now, by the time Hannah had finished her lockrum, you may depend I was in an almighty passion; and it was amazin' lucky for the feller that he was out of arm's length that mink. But then I understood it all better than she, for I'd seen, in the prints, pieces about Franelogy or Cranology, or some such stuff that seemed to explain to my mind what the feller meant. But poor Hannah don't get much time to read newspapers, so that she hadn't hearn a word. No wonder she took the man for a crazy critter.

Yet, somehow, when I looked at Moses, I couldn't help consatin' that his head looked sort o' queer, tho' I wouldn't say nothin' nyther; but, says I, "Hannah, look here, that feller that's been treatin' you to sich a rigmarole of nonsense is a rotten fool, and you're another. If Iwer I should light 'pon him, I gess I would give his head a bump that would save him from the gallows. All is, if you think anything is the matter with the young one, why I'll go arter the doctor, and that'll settle it."

"Do, John," says she.

So off I starts for Doctor Eldrich; but by the time I got to the house, I begun to think what a tarnation goose I was to go on such a tomfool's arrent. By good luck, howsomever, the doctor was out; so I jist left word for him to come to our house in the course iv the day, if he had nothin' else to do.

Thinks I, as I trudged back, here's an end to thanksgivin'. Well, to rights, Doctor Hosannah Eldrich, he's a deacon of our church, and sings thro' his nose a few. I declare, when I see him ridin' up the lane I couldn't help feelin' like a thunderin' calf; so I jist made excuse to split up some kindlin', and left Hannah to give him the chapter and the varse. Our wood-house is short of a mile from the house; but I could hear the doctor's haw-haw clear out there. So I droppeded axe, and in I went. S'niver the Doctor see me he giv' me a hunch.

"Ain't yew a pretty considerable queer chap," sez he, "to send for me on such a beautiful bizness as this?" With that he haw-haw'd agin; and my wife she laughed till she cried, jist to see the figer the Doctor cut, for he's as long as the moral law, and couldn't stand up for laughin'.

Then I laughed tu, till the house rung; luckily our nearest neighbour lives a half a mile off, and is stone deaf into the bargain. So I tipt the wink to Hannah, and telled Hosannah 'twas all a joke of our'n to send for him; (for I thought I should look corner ways and skwywoniky if he should tell the company about us next day. Besides, I know'd the Deacon liked a joke pretty well, even if he got rubbed sometimes). So, says I, "How did Hannah carry it out?" Consarn it, if he didn't jump right into the

trap.

“Capital! capital!” said he. “Botheration, if I didn’t think she was in raal arnest!”

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[10] By W. L. McClintock.

VIII.  
AUNT NABBY'S STEWED GOOSE.

It was my Aunt Nabby's birthday, and she was bent upon having a stewed goose, stewed in onions, and with cabbage and salt pork to match.

"Pollijah," said she to me, "ain't we got a goose 'bout the farm?"

"No," said I, "we eat the old gander at Christmas, and he was the last of the patriarchs."

Aunt Nabby went down to Sue, who was getting breakfast.

"Susanna," said she, "the boy tells how we ain't got a goose in creation. Now what shall we do?"

"Go without," replied Susanna, with that amiable tone which father said had worn off her teeth to the gums.

But Aunt Nabby was bent upon a goose, and when such a stiff and straight person gets bent upon anything, you may consider the matter settled, and I saw that a goose of some kind would be had at some rate or other.

"Here, you crittur," cried Aunt Nabby to the little black specimen of the human family which was digging potatoes in the garden, "here, I want you to go along to the neighbours, and borra a goose." Cato laid down his hoe, got over the fence, and shovelled off on his broad pedestals to get a goose.

The first house that Cato came to was that of Sam Soap, the tailor, commonly called Soft Soap. Into the shop went the Yankeeified negro, and making a leg to Mr. Soap, who sat like a Hindoo idol, busily employed in patching an old blue coat with still older brown rags, and humming most mournfully the air of "Ye banks and braes of bonny Doon," giving it a nasal twang that came direct from Jedediah Soap, who was a member of the Long Parliament.

"Soap," says Cato, "you haan't got no goose, nor nothin', haan't ye, for Aunt Nabby?"

Soap was a literal (not literary) man, who as he called his daughter Propriety, and having but one eye, was likewise called Justice, that is by some that were classical. "Priety," says he, "gin Cato the largest goose."

Priety, like a good girl, went into the other room, and arter some time returned with one, well enveloped and carefully wrapped up in paper, telling Cato to be as careful as everlastin' not to get it wet; and away went the web-footed mortal to deliver his charge to Susanna.

"My gracious!" said Sue, "if that are nigger ain't brought me a tough feller to stew!"

But nevertheless, as her business was to stew the goose and ask no questions, at it she went, and pretty soon the tailor's treasure was simmering among onions, and carrots, and cabbages, and turnips, and spices, all as nice as need be. After breakfast, Aunt Nabby had gone abroad to ask in the neighbours, and when she came home, she went of course directly into the kitchen to see how the goose came on.

"Is it tender, Susanna?" said she.

Susanna smiled so sweetly, that the old house-clock in the corner next the cupboard stopped and held up its hand. "Oh, Ma'am," replied Susanna, "it's so tender, that I guess it won't be the more tender arter being biled."

"And fat?"

"Oh, bless you! it's so broad across the back."

My Aunt's mouth watered so, that she was forced to look at Susanna, to correct the agreeable impression.

Well, noon came and the neighbours began to drop in. First came the parson, who being a man of vast punctuality, took out his watch as soon as he came in, and for the purpose of seeing how it chimed, as he said, with the old clock, walked into the kitchen, bade Miss Susanna good day, hoped she continued well in body, and sniffed up the sweet flavours of the preparing sacrifice with expanded nostrils. Next to the Minister came the Squire, he opened the front door, and seeing no one but me.

"Pollijah," he said, "when 'ill that are goose be done? 'cause I'm everlastin' busy, settlin' that hay-mow case, and I'd like to know—"

"Ready now, Squire," answered the Parson, opening the kitchen-door; "and I guess it's an uncommon fine one too, so walk in and let's have a chat."

The Squire entered, and he and the Minister had a considerable spell of conversation about the hay-mow case. The case was this: Abijah Biggs got leave to carry his hay across Widow Stokes's field to the road; well, this hay-mow had dropped off the poles, and Widow Stokes claimed it as a waif and stray.

"Now," says the Squire, "I conceit the chief pint in the case is this here; has Widow Stokes a right to this hay? Now this 'ill depend, ye see, 'pon t'other point, to wit, *videlicet*, does the hay belong to Bijah? Now the Widow says, says she, 'every man in this country's free, and therefore every man in this country is a king, jist as far as his farm goes. Now the king, all allow, has a right to waifs and strays; and so,' says Widow Stokes, 'that are hay is mine.' 'But,' says Bijah—and by jinks, it's a cute argument; 'but,' says he, 'tho' every man in this land of liberty is a free man, yet that doesn't prove that every woman is, and *per contra*, we know that women don't vote, and of course ain't free; so,' says he, 'the Widow Stokes ain't a king; so,' says he, 'the hay ain't hern.' But's a puzzlin' case, ain't it?"

"Well, now," answered the minister, "it strikes me that hay ain't astray."

"Well," said the Squire, "there's a pint I never thought of."

Just then in came the Deacon, and after him the sexton, and so on till pretty much all the aristocratic democracy of the village had assembled. And then in bustled Aunt Nabby, awful fine I tell you; and then Susanna and Cato began to bring in dinner. And while they were doing that, the company all took a stiff glass of grog by way of appetite, and then stroked down their faces and looked at the table, and there was a pig roast and stuffed, and a line of veal, and two old hens, and an everlastin' sight of all kinds of sarce, and pies, and puddins, and doughnuts, and cider, and above all, at the head of the table, the dish in which lay the hero of the day—that are goose, smothered in onions, and utterly hid beneath the load of carrots and cabbages. The seat next the goose was assigned to the Minister, and all sat down.

The Squire flourished his fork, and pounced upon the pig: the Deacon he tacked to at the veal, while the sexton went seriously to work to exhume a piece of pork from amid an avalanche of beans. The Minister, with a spoon, gently stirred away a few carrots and onions, in hopes of thus coming at the goose.

"It smells remarkably fine," says he, to Aunt Nabby.

"It's particularly fine and tender," says she; "I picked it myself from a whole heap."

And still the Minister poked, till at last his spoon grated upon a hard surface.

"A skewer, I guess!" and plunging his fork into the onion mass, he struggled to raise the iron handle with which he had joined issue.

"Bless me!" cried Aunt Nabby, "what's that are?"

"I should judge," said the Squire, "that are was an old goose."

"Gracious me!" exclaimed the Deacon.

Still the Minister struggled, and still the goose resisted. Aunt Nabby grew nervous, and the more the Minister struggled, the more the goose would not come. I saw my Aunt's eye dilating, her hand moved ugly, and then pounce, just when the Minister thought he had conquered the enemy, my Aunt drove the round steel through the onions into the eye of the skewer as she thought, and dragging forth the tailor's goose, held it at arm's length before the company. The Squire had just raised the pig upon his fork, when seeing my Aunt's discovery, he dropped it and the dish was knocked all to smash. The sexton had drawn his beans to the edge of the table, another pull as he saw the goose, and over it went. My Aunt dropped the cause of all this evil, and there went another plate. The company dined elsewhere, and the next Sunday the Minister declined preachin', on account of a domestic misfortin. My Aunt Nabby died soon arter, and the sexton buried her, observing as he did so, that she departed, the poor critter, in consequence of an iron goose, and broken crockery!

IX.  
DECLINE AND FALL OF THE CITY OF DOGTOWN.

Dogtown is a beautiful place, in the interior of this State. There is plenty of land around it, so that nothing can hinder it from growing in every direction, and thus becoming a great city. In fact, Dogtown has already a one-story church, part of a school-house, and an elegant garden. Nobody can see Dogtown without being reminded of that celebrated town in France, named Grandville, of which we have the following description:

Grandville, grand vilain,  
Une église et un moulin  
Voilà Grandville tout à plein.

Which we may translate thus:

Grandville, great Grandville,  
Has a meeting-house and mill.  
Nothing else in all Grandville.

Dogtown is finely and advantageously situated. It stands on Eel River, a stream of water which runs into another stream, and that into a third, which runs into Connecticut River, which running into Long Island Sound, finally reaches the Atlantic. Who does not see, therefore, that Dogtown may become a great sea-port?

The territory in the neighbourhood of Dogtown is remarkable for its fertility, bating that part of it which is covered with rocks, the salt meadow, the pine woods, the clay-ponds, and the swamps. It is past a doubt, therefore, that the territory, if well cleared, drained, peopled, and cultivated, would become a perfect garden, abounding with the richest productions of nature, and affording a mine of wealth to the country. As to the facilities of communication with the great Atlantic cities and commercial marts, they are admirable.

Dogtown has Boston on one side, and New York on the other: Montreal and Quebec are in the north, while in the east is the rich and thriving State of Maine, with Bangor and Owl's Head to boot. Rail-roads can be made to connect Dogtown with all these places, and they will certainly form such a connection, *when they are built*. That the place will be a great focus of trade, when this is done, nobody, I think, will deny.

The neighbourhood of Dogtown has all the advantages that can be desired in a young country. There will be as many large towns within thirty miles of the place, as people choose to build. The population cannot fail to increase rapidly for a man can get married for seventy-five cents, town clerk's fees included. The attraction for settlers must, therefore, be considered very great.

The Dogtowners are remarkably industrious, for they get a living, although constantly grumbling of hard times. They are moreover ingenious, for they manufacture axe-handles, wooden bowls, birch brooms, and white oak cheese, and invent mousetraps and washing machines. Last of all, the inhabitants of Dogtown are literary and intellectual; for they talk a great deal of the march of improvement, and the minister and the lawyer take the "Penny Magazine" between them.

All these attractions together, form a combination truly wonderful; but the reader will be astonished when I inform him, that the inhabitants of this favoured spot lived a great many years without the smallest suspicion of what I have been describing. They thought very little of themselves, or of the town they lived in, and continued to vegetate from year to year without imagining they were better off than other folks. In fact, the world might have continued to this day in utter ignorance that Dogtown was such a wonderful place, but for an accident—an accident I call it—for the Dogtowners having lived for so many years without opening their eyes, the fact that they *did* open them of a sudden, on a certain day, in the year of grace 1834, must be considered purely accidental. Some people are inclined to ascribe it to the approach of the comet, which had a powerful influence in opening people's eyes, to say nothing of its effect in driving them stark mad. But that is neither here nor there. The people of Dogtown opened their eyes, and *saw*; that was enough: they saw in an instant their immense advantages, and were astonished that they never had seen them before. They saw their advantages, I say, and were determined to turn them to account.

Straightway Dogtown was all alive: everybody was confident that Dogtown must become a great place; and as everybody told everybody else so, there was no doubt about the matter. Every man went to buying land who could pay for it; and those who could not pay, bought upon credit, sure of selling it at ten times the cost within the year. Nothing was talked of but the immense advantages of the place. The riches of Dogtown were indeed immense; and how they could have been overlooked so long, was a mystery that no one could understand. The land within the limits of the town was computed at seven hundred and twenty million square feet, which, at only one cent per square foot, which is cheap enough in all conscience, would amount to seven million two hundred thousand dollars. What a sum! But this was not all. Half of this land was covered with trees, at the rate of one tree to every five feet square, or quadrangle of twenty-five feet: this gave a computation of ten million four hundred thousand trees; and as each tree, on an average, contained seventy-five cubic feet of timber, it followed that there was actually within the town seven hundred and eighty million feet of timber, worth, on the lowest calculation, five cents per foot, which would amount to thirty-nine million dollars. This, added to the value of the land, as above, made a grand total of *forty-six millions two hundred thousand dollars!*

The mention of these sums almost drove the good people of Dogtown distracted with joy; they could hardly believe their eyes or ears, but there it was in black and white; figures could not lie. They were amazed to think of their own stupidity and that of their ancestors in letting forty-six millions two hundred thousand dollars lie totally idle and unproductive; but they were determined not to allow their wealth to be neglected any longer. A grand scheme of speculation and improvement was started, and all rushed headlong into it. Every man in Dogtown was now rich, or, what was the same thing, was sure of being so before long. Immense tracts were laid out in building lots, and speculators flocked in from all quarters; from Catsville and Wazelton and Buzzardsborough, and Ganderfield and Crow Corner and Upper Bugbury and East Punkinton, and Black Swamp and the Bottomless Bogs. Such a busy time as the Dogtowners had of it! Nothing was talked of but buying land, building houses, laying out roads, streets, squares, avenues, railroads, canals, &c. &c. &c. People left off ploughing and hoeing, because agriculture was too slow a method of making money; for who would think of raising turnips to sell, at twenty cents a bushel, when he could make a hundred times the profit by speculating in land?

First of all, it was determined that Dogtown should be a city. The want of population was found to be the serious obstacle here; the constitution of the state requires ten or twelve thousand inhabitants for a city; and as Dogtown, including the suburbs of Puppyville and Skunk's Misery, contained a population of only six hundred and thirty-one, it was thought there might be some difficulty in getting a charter without anticipating the returns of the next census. However, a city it must be, some time or other, in this all were agreed, and it might as well have the name first as last, so they concluded to *call* it a city. It is astonishing what a spirit of enterprise these prospects infused into the people of Dogtown. The school-house door was painted green; uncle Joe Stubbins mended the top of his chimney; and it was voted in town-meeting to purchase three wheel-barrows for the public use;—and all in consequence of these projected improvements. Nay, so widely did their views of business expand, that Aminidab Figgins, the grocer, determined to give up retailing, and declared he wouldn't split crackers nor cut candles any longer.

Such was the thriving condition of the City of Dogtown when I left the place in the autumn of that year. I continued to hear of it through the medium of the Dogtown Daily Advertiser, a newspaper established there by an enterprising printer from Connecticut at the first dawning of the commercial prosperity of the city. It appeared to go ahead rapidly. The newspaper spoke of the Exchange, the Town Hall, the Bank, the New Post Office, the Railroad, Canal, &c. Horse lots were advertised in Washington Square, Merchants Row, State Street, Market Street, &c. Contracts were proposed for building churches, manufactories, &c. This was Dogtown in all its glory.

Last August I determined to make a visit to this celebrated place, in order to feast my eyes with the splendour of a city that had sprung up as it were by enchantment. When I reached the foot of Blueberry Hill, which overlooks the whole place, I walked eagerly to the top, in order to catch a view, at a single glance, of the city in all its magnificence. To my utter astonishment, instead of spires and domes, I saw nothing but Deacon Stumpy's old mansion, with five other ragged and dingy-looking edifices, which stood exactly where I had always known them. I entered the city through State Street, but discovered nothing new except a small house without a chimney. Not a living thing was to be seen in Washington Square, but three geese, who were lazily picking a mouthful of grass among the mud-puddles. I inquired for the Exchange, and found it in use by the Deacon as a cow-pen. The new church, however, I was told had actually proceeded as far as the raising of the timbers; but it was subsequently sold

by auction to pay for digging the cellar.

I had a cheque upon the Dogtown Bank for three dollars, and wishing to draw the money, I was directed to No. 19, Tremont Street. This turned out to be the identical building formerly occupied by old Kit Cobble, the shoemaker. It was bank hours, but the bank was shut, and there was not a soul to be seen. Just as I was going away, I spied a tin horn by the door, with a paper hanging over it, on which was written, "Persons having business at the bank, are requested to blow the horn." I put the horn to my lips and blew a blast both long and loud. After waiting about ten minutes, I spied Isaac Thumper coming slowly down the road: he proved to be cashier of the Dogtown Bank, and after some difficulty I convinced him of the safety of cashing the cheque.

Upon inquiring of Isaac what use had been made of the forty-six millions two hundred thousand dollars, he informed me that most of it remained invested in notes of hand. Money was scarce, and was expected to continue so until the onion crop had been got in. It was easy to see that the city had sadly declined from its meridian splendour. In fact, Dogtown has suffered a complete downfall, for hardly anybody now speaks of it as a city. They have as much land as ever, and so long as it continued to be valued at their own price, they were as rich as Jews; but, unfortunately, it fell in value the moment they expected the purchasers to pay for it. The Dogtowners are poor enough at present, but they are not the first, and probably will not be the last people who have ruined themselves by building a city on speculation.

'Tis really astonishin' what a monstrous sight of mischief there is in a pint of rum! If one of 'em was to be submitted to an analization, as the doctors call it, it would be found to contain all manner of devilment that ever entered the hed of man, from cussin' and stealin', up to murder and whippin' his own mother, and nonsense enuff to turn all the men in the world out of their senses. If a man's got any badness in him, it'll bring it out, jest as sassafra-tea does the measles, and if he's a good-for-nothin' sort of a feller, without no bad traits in pertekeler, it'll bring out all his greenness. It affects different people in different ways—it makes some men monstrous brave and full of fight, and some it makes cowards; some it makes rich and happy, and some poor and miserable; and it has a different effect on different people's eyes—some it makes see double, and some it makes so blind that they can't tell themselves from a side of bacon. One of the worst cases of rum-foolery that I've heard of for a long time, tuk place in Pineville last fall.

Bill Sweeney and Tom Culpepper is the two greatest old coveys in our settlement for 'coon-huntin'. The fact is, they don't do much of anything else, and when *they* can't ketch nothin' you may depend 'coons is scarce. Well, one night they had everything reddey for a regular hunt, but owin' to some extra good fortin', Tom had got a pocket-pistol, as he called it, of reglar old Jimmakey, to keep off the rumatices. After takin' a good startin' horn, they went out on their hunt, with their lite-wood torch a-blazin', and the dogs a-barkin' and yelpin' like forty thousand. Ev'ry now and then stoppin' to wait for the dogs, they would drink one another's helth, till they begun to feel very comfortable, and chatted away 'bout one thing and another, without mindin' much which way they was gwine. Bimeby they cum to a fence. Well, over they got, 'thout much difficulty.

"Who's fence is this?" ses Bill.

"'Taint no matter," ses Tom, "let's take suthin' to drink."

After takin' a drink they went on, wonderin' what on yearth had cum of the dogs. Next thing they cum to was a terrible muddy branch. After pullin' through the briers and gettin' on tother side, they tuck another drink, and after gwine a little ways they cum to another branch, and a little further they cum to another fence—a monstrous high one this time.

"Whar upon yearth is we got to, Culpepper?" ses Bill, "I never seed sich a heap of branches and fences in these parts."

"Why," ses Tom, "it's all old Sturin's doins—you know he's always bildin' fences and making infernal improvements, as he calls 'em. But never mind, we's through them now."

"Guess we is," ses Bill; "here's the all-firedest tall fence yet."

Shure enuff, thar they was right agin another fence. By this time, they begun to be considerable tired and limber in the gints, and it was sich a terrible high fence!—Tom drapped the last piece of the torch, and thar they was in the dark.

"Now you is done it," ses Bill.

Tom know'd he had, but he thought it was no use to grieve over spilled milk, so ses he, "Never mind, old hoss, cum a-head, and I'll take you out," and the next minit kerslash he went into the water.

Bill hung on to the fence with both hands, like he thought it was slewin' round to throw him off.

"Hellow, Tom!" ses he, "whar in the world is you got to?"

"Here I is," ses Tom, spoutin' the water out of his mouth, and coffin' like he'd swallowed something. "Look out, thar's another branch here."

"Name o' sense, whar is we?" ses Bill. "If this isn't a fency country, dad fetch my buttons."

"Yes, and a branchy one, too!" ses Tom; "and the highest, and deepest, and thickest that I ever seed in my born days."

"Which way is you?" ses Bill.

"Here, rite over the branch."

The next minit in Bill went, up to his middle in the branch.

"Cum a-head," ses Tom, "let's go home."

"Cum thunder! in such a place as this, whar a man hain't more'n got his cote tail unhitched from a fence, fore he's over his head and ears in the water."

After gettin' out and feelin' about in the dark a little, they got together agin. After takin' another drink, they sot out for home, denouncin' the fences and the branches, and helpin' one another up now and then; but they hadn't got more'n twenty yards fore they brung up all standin' in the middle of another branch. After gettin' thro' the branch and gwine about ten steps, they was brung to a halt by another fence.

"Dad blame my pictur," ses Bill, "if I don't think we is bewitched. Who upon yearth would bild fences all over creation this way?"

It was but a ower's job to get over this one; but after they got on the top, they found the ground on tother side 'thout much trouble. This time the bottle was broke, and they come monstrous near having a fight about the catastrophe. But it was a very good thing, it was; for, after crossin' two or three more branches, and climbin' as many more fences, it got to be daylight, and they found out that they *had been climbin' the same fence all night*, not more'n a hundred yards from whar they first cum to it.

Bill Sweeney ses he can't account for it no other way but that the lickor sort o' turned their heads; and he says he does really believe, if it hadn't gin out, they'd been climbin' the same fence, and wadin' the same branch, till yet. Bill promised his wife to jine the Temperance Society, if she won't never say no more 'bout that coon-hunt.

Our old friend, Kit Kuncker, as he put us to bed on the night of a big frolic at his house, exacted a promise that we would visit him again, shortly thereafter; promising us, on his part, that he would ride all over the settlement with us; and more especially, that he would go with us to the house of Jim Kent, whose sister, Beck, was so ugly "that the flies wouldn't light on her face," and about whose going to mill, he assured me, there was a very pleasant story to be told.

Poor old Kit! But the other day we saw him—and how altered by the lapse of a few years! His head has become white, his figure more bent, and his laughing old face—merely still!—was furred with an hundred additional wrinkles. His eye, too, was dull—had lost the twinkle that used so mischievously to light up his countenance. And then, too, he walked with a staff; and when he went to mount "Fiddler Bill," he said, "Help me, Squire," instead of vaulting into the saddle, as of yore! "Thank you, Squire. God bless your Union heart—old Hickory and the Union for ever! I'm gittin' old now, Squire, and can't git about, like I used to"—the old man sighed—"Fiddler Bill is old, too—notice how gray his face is—we're all gittin' old—yer Aunt Hetty as well's the rest; and, God bless yer soul, Squire," (here the old man warmed into animation), "*she's uglier than ever—uglier than the devil!*—he! he! ya! ya! It's wuth while coming, jist to take a look at her! With that old long bonnet on"—here the old fellow bent down on his horse's neck, in a paroxysm of laughter—"he! he! he! he! he! ya! ya! and her mouth skrooched up, ya! ya! the go-to-meetin' way; I'll be cust, ef she ain't so bad to look at, it's enuff to fctch sickness in the family! But," he added, wiping the tears from his eyes, "Squire, I'm old now, yer Aunt Hetty's old, and Fiddler Bill is old—all old! old! old! Ah, me!"

But we are digressing. It was of our Ride with old Kit, in 1840, that we began to write—and not of his chattering in 1849.

We went to old Kit's house on the day appointed, at a very early hour, and found the old fellow waiting for us, with "Fiddler Bill" hitched at the gate.

"You can't see yer Aunt Hetty, Squire," he said, "for she's laid up with a pain in her jaw. It's swelled mighty bad, enny how, and makes her look so much better, 'twouldn't be no curiosity to see her now—so we may as well ride. Another time when she's at herself—and her 'ugly' out in *full bloom*, I'll show her to you—he! he! ya! That bonnet o' hern, too, hit's some. 'Tain't like nothin' ever growed, except the baskets the Injin wimmin makes to tote their young ones in!" And the old rascal laughed at his wife and her bonnet, until the woods rang again.

Walking our horses leisurely along the road leading down the creek to the river, Uncle Kit, tapping his steed lightly across the neck with his switch, began, as he had promised, to tell us how he obtained him.

"You see, Squire, me and my Jim was a haulin' a load of whiskey up from Wetumpky, in the spring of '36, and we had a mighty dull old horse under the saddle. The like of him never was on the yeth for hard trottin'. He was *powerful* hard. You've set and watched a saw-mill gate jerk up and down, havn't you—up and down, and down, like it was goin' into fits? Well, that was his *motion adacty*. Ses Jim, one day, 'daddy I'm gwine to swop 'old Hoss' off, fust chance I git.' Ses I, 'Nobody's fool enough to give you anything better'n an old cow for him.' Ses he, 'You'll see.' Well 'twarn't long afore we ketched up with a traveller—it was in the piney woods 'twixt Oakfuskee and Dudleyville—walkin' and leadin' his horse, which was Fiddler Bill. I'll tell you, Squire,"—old Kit raised his voice and gesticulated vehemently—"he was a horse then—none o' your little gray—as Homer Hinds ses—but a reg'lar horse, with head and legs like a deer, a body like a barrel, and put up like a jack-screw. He was jist risin' four year old, fat, and *hilt his head like the Queen of Sheby!*

"So Jim bantered the stranger purty quick for a swop—but fust we found out he was walkin' 'bekase he was afeard of his horse. He was a Norrud raised man and talked mighty proper—he said his horse was 'very rested'—which you might see he had been layin' by corn and fodder for some time—and had throwed him and disculpated his shoulder a'most! Then he axed us about the Injuns—this was jist afore the infernal devils began their devilment, and the thing had leaked out and was talked of, all over the country—and Jim seein' he was *afeared of them* too, let on like they was mighty thick and hostile in them woods.

"'Stranger,' says he, 'what would you do ef you was to see a red-skin peepin' from behind that big pine yonder—and you afeared o' your horse?'

"'God only knows,' ses the Yanky,

"'Well now I'll tell you,' ses Jim, '*thar's a crittur under that saddle!*—p'inin' to 'old Hoss'—'that could take you outen the way like goose-grease! How'll you trade?'

"The Yanky let on like he tho't his horse was the most vallyble, but Jim out-talked him to deth. He praised old one, 'twell I had to go behind the wagon and laugh. Bimeby ses he, 'ain't that a *Injun holler*?' and with that the stranger looked white, and axed Jim how *he'd* trade?

"'You must give me ten dollars to boot,' ses Jim.

"'But my horse is the most vallyble,' ses the Yanky.

"'He ain't half-broke,' ses Jim, 'and I'd be most afeard to ride him—let's see!'

"With that Jim gits on the roan, and tetched him in the flank with the heel that was on t'other side from the stranger, and the horse bein' naterally playful, you see, went to kickin' up and rearin' and squealin'; Jim hoklin' on to the mane, and the Yanky hollerin' 'wo! wo!' Presently Jim come to the ground, ca-whop! And with that he riz from the ground, complainin' mighty 'bout his side, and 'lowed he wouldn't have the horse on no terms—that ef the Injuns was to come on us of a sudden, we shouldn't have but one horse that got to be rid; and then he axed me ef I had enny opydlock in the wagon box, that he could rub his side with! he! he! Jim is a rascal, that's a fac, but I can't tell whar he got it from, unless it's a judgement on his mammy for bein' so cussed ugly! yah! yah!

"'Seein' the stranger was aggravated 'bout the Injuns, I draps in then, myself, and tells him I'd give him 'old Coon,' even drag, for the roan; and we made the trade mighty quick, for he had the Injun ager 'twell his eyes was big as sassers! Well, we changed saddles and bridles, and while I was gearin' up Fiddler Bill, he couldn't—but, Squire, what *do* you reckon it was he couldn't do?'

"'Can't guess,' we replied.

"'Well, bust me wide open, *ef he knowed how to put the bridle on his horse!* I've seen men that was ig'nant before, but he was the wust off with it I ever seed. He didn't know whether the bits went behind the ears, or into the mouth—blamed ef he did!

"'Finally, at last, he got mounted, and jogged off—you remember what I told you 'bout the saw-mill gate—well that's the way old Cuss rattled his buttons. He was the most *lonesome-lookin'* critter, a-settin' on that old horse, with his new saddle and bridle, that ever I seed! As soon as he got cleverly out o' sight, Jim git two or three Injun whoops, and people did say in Dudleyville, whar he stopped that night, that he got thar in mighty reasonable good time! So that's the way, Squire, I come by Fiddler Bill. . . . ain't it, Bill?" whereupon Fiddler pricked up his ears, but said nothing.

About this time, we arrived at a mean-looking shanty, and calling, were answered by a man who came out to us. It was Jim Blake.

"Here's the *sensis-taker*," said Uncle Kit.

"Hang the *sensis-taker*," was the blunt reply.

"Don't say that, Jim," returned Uncle Kit; "he's a good little Union Squire Mr. Van Buren's sent round to take 'count of the cloth and chickens, jist to see ef the wimmin's sprightly."

"I don't care a dried apple for him nor Mr. Van Buren nother," said Mr. Blake; "Mr. Van Buren is gittin' too cussed smart, enny way—my opinion is, he's a *measly hog!*"

"Son! son!" exclaimed old Kit, deprecatingly, "don't talk that way. Van Buren's the *Union* President, and old Hickory says he'll do!"

"I don't care who says he'll do—I'm gwine to vote for Harrison—see ef I don't!"

Uncle Kit was struck dumb, and after obtaining a list of the family with much difficulty, we rode away.

"Squire," said the old man, after a long silence, "that fellow's talk goes to my heart. *A little more, and he'd a cussed old Hickory!* and ef he had, I'd a tore his liver out!"

Old Kit was highly excited—he continued:

"To think that a boy I've raised in a manner, that I've told all about old Hickory, and the Union, and New Orleans, and the Horse-Shoe, should 'a turned round and come to be a *Nullifier!* Ain't thar no way," he asked, as if musing, "we could fix to git that poor fool boy straight agin'?"

We soon got into the thickest of the Union Creek settlement, and from house to house, through the Smiths, the Hearn, the Folsoms, the Narons, the Dabbes and the Rollinses, Uncle Kit carried us with a speed that was most gratifying. He joked the old women, kissed the girls and fondled the children; and where the slightest indisposition was manifested to give the desired information, he settled the difficulty at once, by the magic words, "Union—old Hickory."

"It's a blessed thing, Squire," he said, "to have a man's friends all of the right sort. Here's my people that I brought from Georgy—confound that boy Blake, I'll give him a reg'lar talk next Sunday; and ef that don't do I'll make his wife quit him—all my people, as I was sayin', love the Union and vote like one man! I tell you, it's old Union Crick that keeps the Nullifiers down in Tallapoosy!"

As old Kit was indulging in these pleasant reflections and remarks, we reached the ford of the creek, where we were to cross to get into the river settlement.

"Right here," said the old man, as we reached the middle of the stream, "was where Becky Kent ketched it; but she lives right up thar, a piece, and I'll see ef I can't devil her into tellin' you 'bout it. She's as old and as ugly—mighty nigh—as yer Aunt Hetty; but she has a mighty notion of courtin', and ef you'll side up to her, it'll please her so well, her tongue will git to goin', and she couldn't hold that story back ef she wanted to."

A very few minutes brought us to the residence of Mr. James Kent, the brother of the spinster Becky. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately for our heart—the presiding goddess was not at home; and having made the proper entries on our books, from information furnished by Mr. Kent, we again mounted and pursued our way.

"Did you see," asked Uncle Kit, "that old snuff-bottle and them nasty breshes, stickin' in the cracks of the logs? Well, it's on the 'count of sich, that Becky got in the crick, that time. I'll tell you 'bout it myself, 'long as we didn't see her.

"See, I had allers 'cused Becky of snuff, but the lyn' heifer never would own to it. So one day, as I was ridin' 'long the road, t'other side of the crick, I hearn a noise betwixt the bray of the jack and the squeal of the pea-fowl, and in a minit I knowed it was somebody in distress—so I hurried on. When I got to the crick, what should it be but scrawny Becky Kent, settin' on a bag o' corn, on her old blind horse, and him a standin' stock-still in the middle of the ford."

"'Becky,' ses I, 'what in natur are you doin' thar? Why don't you come along out?'"

"Ses she, '*I can't*—don't you see how I'm fixed?'"

"Then I looked more pertickler, and seed how 'twas. The horse had stopped to drink, and Becky had let go the bridle, and when she tried to git it agin, the bag slipped furdur over to the side she warn't a settin' on—so when I got thar, she had let all go *but the bag*, and she was a settin' on one eend o' that, leanin' forward, and with her hands behind her, one to each side o' the bag, a pullin' agin the weight of the big eend, 'twell her face was as red as a gobbler's snout. 'Twas a reg'lar *dead strain*—the weight of Beck and the *little eend* of the bag, agin the *big eend*—and, I tell you, she had to lean *well* forward to keep from goin' over backwards!"

"I bulged into the crick and got purty close to Becky; but it was so funny, I couldn't fetch myself to help her, but tho't I'd devil hur a little, as she set. So ses I, making a fine bow:

"'My honey, my love,  
My turkle-dove,  
Will you take it amiss,  
Ef I give you a kiss?'"

"But I hadn't no idee of kissin' of her—but only wanted to devil her a little. At last, I seen an old mustard-bottle stickin' from out her bosom; and ses I, Miss Becky, will you give your Uncle Kit a pinch of snuff? Ses she, 'help me for the Lord's sake—I'm mighty nigh gin out'—and Squire, she was on a *tremenjus* strain! But I tho't I'd plague her some: and after cutting of some few shines, I made a motion to snatch at the bottle o' snuff! She gin a little jerk back!—the *big eend* got a start!—still she hilt her grip with both hands!—and the next thing, *somethin' riz in the air, like a small cloud of calico and dry corn-stalks!* and the dumdest *ca-slosh* on t'other side o' the horse, that ever you heerd! A—WAUGH! *What sloshin'!*?"

"'Horraw, Becky! rise gall! I was lookin' t'other way!' ses I, *for I knowed she was shamed!* I laughed, however, and she *mighty nigh* cursed!"

"'Oh! you're a sweet little *mare-maid* now,' ses I.

"'You're a drotted old hog,' ses she.

"'My honey, my love, my turkle-dove; don't git mad with yer Uncle Kit,' ses I; but it all wouldn't do, and the heifer never got in a good humour with me 'twell I met her in the road one Sunday, and persuaded her I was goin' to send Jim to see her."

"Did you send him?'"

"Yes, and the fust thing the fool said to her was: *he'd a gin his years to 'a seen her somerset that time, in the crick!* he! he! yah! yah! That busted things to pieces again, and me and Becky ain't more'n half friendly now!"

After going through the entire settlement, with great ease and celerity—thanks to Uncle Kit's assistance—we took the back-track to Mr. Kuncker's. It was quite dark when we arrived. As Uncle Kit threw down our saddles in his porch, said he: "Come in, and we'll take a sip of *branch-water*. Hello! old woman—is yer face swelled *emny better* yet?—Here's the Squire—the little blessed Union Squire—come to see you! Ef you can't git out'n bed to come yerself, make one of the gals fetch yer *old bonnet* out—that'll be *some amusemen!* Walk in, Squire, and take a seat in yer old Union Uncle's house!"

In the spring of 1845, after the close of a long, tiresome session of the Pennsylvania Legislature, the writer was invited by Colonel A——, then Clerk of the House of Representatives, to accompany him to his home in the backwoods of Elk—a new county, that had been partitioned off from Jefferson, Clearfield, and McRean, that session. The object of the visit was twofold; first, to enjoy the fine trout fishing of that prolific region; and secondly, to assist the Colonel in getting the seat of justice where he wanted it.

The Colonel owned a mill and store at Caledonia, on one edge of the county, and a very fine mill at Ridgeway, but was not inclined to pay anything for it, as Mr. John Ridgeway, a millionaire of Philadelphia, owned nearly all the land about it, and the county seat would greatly increase its value. My friend's plan was to put in strong for Caledonia; and he did. He offered to build the court-house and gaol, and gave bonds therefore, if Caledonia should be chosen.

Ridgeway became frightened, and made a similar proposition, for his town; which was of course accepted by the commissioners, who were all personal friends of the Colonel.

It was long before the *ruse* was discovered, and Ridgeway found he was sold.

One day, the Colonel and myself rode over to Caledonia, to see how things flourished there, and eat some of Aunt Sally Warner's pumpkin pies, and venison steaks; and on arriving at the store, found a justice's court in full blast. The suit grew out of a lumber speculation; and as near as I could tell by the testimony of the witnesses generally, the matter stood about six for one, a half-dozen for the other. One of the parties was a man of considerable ready cash, while the other was not worth a continental dime. Harris, the man of means, had not been long in these parts, and little was known of him except what had dropped from Seth Willet one night at Warner's store. He was rather in for it at the time; but enough was said to make the good people of Elk form a bad opinion of Harris.

As the time of the trial drew nigh, some who were in the store when Seth was "blowing" about Harris, began to try to recollect what he said, and the other party in the case was informed that he had a first-rate witness in the green lumberman, as Seth was generally called.

Seth was forthwith waited upon, and pumped by a young man named Winslow, who acted as attorney for the prosecutor. All the information he possessed of Harris was freely and unsuspectingly given, and Winslow noted it down as correctly as he could.

The day previous to the trial, the prosecutor and Harris met at the store.

"Well, you're goin' on with the law-suit, I s'pose?" asked Harris.

"Tu be sure I am; and I'll make you smell cotton."

"Bah!" said Harris; "you can't touch bottom."

"Tech bottom? Ca—ant hey? Jest you wait till I git Seth Willet on the stand, an' swore on the Bible, and see if I ca—ant. P'raps I ha'n't heer'd nothin' about them sheep over tu Tiog county, and the robbin' of Jenkinse's store, down tu Painted Post, hey?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Harris, apparently perfectly in a fog as to the purport of the language he had heard.

"I know, an' that's 'nuff;" said the plaintiff, "but let's lick'er, anyheow."

Harris lost no time in finding out Seth.

"Did you ever live in Tioga county?"

"Anything about sheep—?"

"No, no, I mean Painted Post."

"Oh! Jenkinse's store!" said Seth, with great gravity.

"Two hundred wouldn't be a bad pile, Seth, here in Elk?"

"No—o, t'wouldn't, that's a fact. Get that amount tu lend on a slow note?"

"Well, I might scrape it up—could give you a hundred down and the rest after the Court's adjourned."

Harris counted out the hundred, and rolling it up, held it temptingly in his hand. Seth's eyes stuck out like peeled onions, and his mouth fairly watered at the display. It was more money than he had ever owned in his life.

"Have you ever heard that I steal sheep in Tioga county, Seth?"

"Not's I know on."

"You're sure? mind you'll have to swear in Court."

Seth looked at Harris, and then at the bills.

"Sure—perfectly sure."

"Nor anything about my being implicated in the robbery of Jenkins's store?" Still holding the roll of bills in his hand, and turning over the ends, exhibiting the V's and X's most tantalizingly.

"No; I'll swear I never heard nobody say you had anything to do with it."

"You're an honest man, Seth; here's a hundred on account. The other hundred you shall have after the Court."

The Court had been in session some time, when the Colonel and myself arrived, and Seth had just been sworn. He was to destroy the character of Harris, by testifying in regard to the sheep-stealing, and the robbery at Painted Post.

"Han't no knowledge on the pint."

"Have you never heard, while living at Painted Post, that he was suspected of being engaged in the robbery?"

"I do-no. I never take no notice about what people say *suspiciously* about their neighbours."

"Really you're a very singular witness. Let me jog your memory a little. Do you remember having said anything about Harris's connection with the Tioga sheep-stealing, and the Jenkins's store robbery, while you were at Gillis's store one night last April?"

"As fer's my reck'lection serves, I ha—ant."

"Were you at Gillis's store on the night of the 17th of April?"

"I do-no for sartin."

"Were you in Ridgeway at all on the 17th of April?"

"Yeeas, I was."

"How do you fix the time? Proceed, and tell the justice, (we shall get at the truth of this story yet," aside to the plaintiff.) "Come Sir, proceed Sir."

"Wall, on the mornin' of the 17th, Dickson says he to me, says he, 'Seth, go down tu Mr. Dill's, and get the nails clenched in the brown mare's off-hind foot.' So I jist put a halter on an', cantered down tu Ridgeway, and stopt tu Gilleses' store, an' bort some thread an' needles for Ant Jerusha, an' Gilleses' clark ast me ef I wouldn't like tu taste sun new rum he had jist got up from Bellefonte, an' I said, 'Yis, an' he poured out about have a tumbler, an' I drinkt it right deown."

"Well, Sir, go on."

"Well, then I led the brown mare over tu Dill's, an ast Miss Dill—"

"You mean Mrs. Dill, his wife?"

"Yees, Miss Dill. I ast Miss Dill ef Mr. Dill was tu hum, an' she sed,

"'No, he's deown tu the lick b'low Andrewses' mill, arter deer. What you want?' says she.

"'I want to get the nails clenched to the mare's off-hind foot,' sez I.

"'Wal, sez she, 'can't you du it yerself?'

"'Wal, says I, 'I guess I can.'

“So she showed me whar the horse-nails war, an’ giv’ me the hammer, an’ I put on Dill’s leather apron, an’ at it I went. I got in three nails right snug, and clenched them, an’ was drivin’ down the third, when the mare shied at suthen, and shoved her foot a-one side, an’ the hammer cum deown caslap! right on this there thumb-nail. You see” (holding it up) “it’s not growed eout yit.”

“But what has that to do with the talk at Gillis’s store?”

“I’m goin’ on tu tell you. Lor! heow I did ye! you’d a thought thar was fifty painters about. Miss Dill, she cum a-runnin’ out, an’ ast what was the matter.

“‘Look here,’ sez I, holdin’ up my thumb, which was bleedin’ like all Jehu. ‘What shall I do?’ sez I.

“‘I’ll tell you what,’ says Miss Dill, an’ she run an’ got a leaf of live-for-ever, an’ sez she, ‘peel off the skin, an’ put the peth on.’

“‘Peel it yerself,’ sez I, a-cryin’ with the exhuberant pain.

“So she peeled it and tied it on, an’ in tu days thar wan’t a bit of soreness in it, but the nail cum off.”

“But come to Gillis’s store. What did you say about Harris that night?”

“Wal, all I recollect is, that Thompson an’ a lot of fellers was thar; an’ Thompson and I shot at a mark for whiskey, an’ Thompson he win, and we drinkt at my expense. Then Bill Gallager and Dill they shot, an’ Dill beat Bill, an’ we drinkt at his expense. Then Charley Gillis he shot agin Frank Souther, an’ Frank win; and we drinkt at Charley’s expense; an’ then Frank he sung a song, an’ then Thompson he sung a song; and the next I recollect was—”

“Well, Sir, was what?”

“Why, I waked up next mornin’ on Gillis’ counter the sickest critter ye ever see. I didn’t get over that spree for tu long weeks.”

“Well, is that all you have to say?”

“All I recollect at present. If I think of any more, I’ll come in an’ tell ye.”

“You may go, Sir.”

Harris won the suit.

XIII.  
THE TWO FAT SALS.<sup>[1]</sup>

If every man were to relate the little romances of love in which he becomes involved, at some time or other of his life, novelists or farce-writers would be supplied with plots and incidents enough to supply publishers and managers with a continual run of novelies for all times.

In the story of the "Two Fat Sals" is recorded the experience of one man only, but it affords a very useful lesson on the evils of a mind divided in the matter of love, and another illustrious example of the truth of the aphorism, that "the course of true love never did run smooth."

"There was two Sals livin' in our town—Sal Stebbins and Sal Babit; real corn-fed gals, I swow. Sal Stebbins would lift a barrel of cyder out of the eend of a cart as quick as any other feller, and drink it tew. Sal Babit, she was so fat, she'd roll one way jest as easy as t'other, and if anything, a little *easier*. Well, there was a corn-husking, and I went along with Sal Stebbins: there was all the gals and boys settin' round, and I got sot down so near Sal Babit, that I'll be darned if I didn't kiss her afore I know'd what I was about. Sal Stebbins, she blushed: the blood rushed right up into her hair: she was the best *red* critter I ever did see. I thought it was all up with me, and sure enough it was, for when I asked her if she would go hum with me, she said:

"'No; you needn't trouble yourself nothin' 'tall 'bout it.'

"'Well, if you're mind to get spunky, I guess I can git a gal that will let me see her hum. Sal Babit, shall I go hum with you?'

"'Well,' says she, 'I don't mind if you dew.'

"Arter that, Sal Stebbins married a feller in our town, by the name of *Post*,—blind in one eye, and deaf in one ear,—jest to spite me, nothin' else: so I thought if she was a mind to take a feller that couldn't see or hear any tew well, I'd better let her slide: so I went away from hum, and was gone about three—four—five years?—yes, jest about five years, 'cause I know when I got back she had four little *Posts*. I went to see how she got along. She asked me to come in and set down; so I tuck a cheer and squatted; then she tuck another cheer and squatted; and we both squatted there together. Her young ones was all runnin' round on the floor: she pintoed to them, and said, in a sort of bragging way,

"'You see them, don't you?'

"'Yes,' says I, squintin' up one eye, 'I see, they're all jest like their daddy, blind in one eye.'

"She was bilin' dumplings at the time, and as soon as she see me shut up one eye, she out with a hot dumplin', and let me have it in t'other, which made me shut it up a dam'd sight quicker than I ever did afore, and I haint been in love since that time."

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[1] By G. H. Hill.

XIV.  
WAR'S YURE HOSS?

Some years since, when the State of Missouri was considered "Far West," there lived on the bank of the river of the same name of the State, a substantial farmer, who, by years of toil, had accumulated a tolerable pretty pile of castings; owing, as he said, principally to the fact that he didn't raise much taters and unyuns, but rite smart of corn. This farmer, hearing that good land was much cheaper farther south, concluded to move there. Accordingly, he provided his eldest son with a good horse, and a sufficiency of the needful to defray his travelling and contingent expenses, and instructed him to purchase two hundred acres of good land, at the lowest possible price, and return immediately home. The next day Jeems started for Arkansas, and after an absence of some six weeks, returned home.

"Well, Jeems," said the old man, "how'd you find land in Arkansasaw?"

"Tolerable cheap, dad."

"You didn't buy mor'n two hundred acres, did yu, Jeems?"

"No, dad, not *over* tu hundred, *I reckon*."

"How much money hev yu got left?"

"Nary red, dad; cleaned rite out!"

"Why, I had no idee travellin' was so 'sensive in them parts, Jeems."

"Wal, just you try it worst, an' you'll find out, I reckon."

"Wal, never mind that, let's hear 'bout the land, an'—*but war's yure hoss?*"

"Why, yu see, dad, I was a goin' along one day—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Yu hole on, dad, an' I'll tell yu all 'bout it. Yu see, I was agoin' along one day, an' I met a feller as said he was goin' my way tu—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Dod darn mi hide, ef yu don't shut up, dad, I'll never git tu the hoss. Wal, as we was both goin' the same way, me an' this feller jined cumpenny, an' 'bout noon, we hitched our critters, an' set down aside uv a branch, and went to eatin' a snack. Arter we'd got thru, this feller sez tu me, "Try a drap uv this ere red-eye, stranger." 'Wal, I don't mind,' sez I—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Kummin' tu him bime-by, dad. So me an' this feller sot thar, sorter torkin' an' drinkin', an' then he sez, 'Stranger, let's play a keetle game uv Seven-up,' a takin' out uv his pocket a greasy, roun'-cornered deck uv *kerds*. 'Don'r keer ef I du,' sez I. So we sot up side uv a stump, and kummented tu bet a quarter up, an' I was a *slayin'* *him orful*—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Kummin' tu him, dad. Bimeby, luck changed, an' he got tu winnin', an' pretty sune I hadn't not nary nuther doller. Then sez he, 'Stranger, I'll gin yu a chance to git even, an' play yu one more game.' Wal, we both plaid rite tite that game, I sware, an' we was both six an' six, an'—"

"*War's yure hoss?*"

"Kummin' tu him, dad. We was six an' six, dad, an' 'twas his deal—"

"Will yu tell me *war's yure hoss?*" said, the old man, getting riled.

"Yes, we was six an' six, an' *he turned up the Jack!*"

"*War's yure hoss?*"

"The stranger won him, *a-turnin' that Jack!*"

In a remote region of the Hoosac Mountains is a little place called Turkeytown. It is a straggling assemblage of dingy, old-fashioned houses surrounded by the woods, and the inhabitants are as old-fashioned as their dwellings. They raise corn and pumpkins, believe in witches, and know nothing of railroads or the march of intellect. There has never been more than one pair of boots in the town: these are called "the town boots," and are provided at the public expense, to be worn to Boston every winter by the representative. I had the satisfaction last week of actually seeing these venerable coriaceous integuments in official duty upon the long shanks of Colonel Crabapple of the General Court, and was struck with becoming awe at their veteran looks. They seemed to be somewhat the worse for wear, but the Colonel informed me the town had lately voted to have them heel-tapped, and the vote would probably be carried into effect before the next session.

The present story, however, is not about boots, but about Bob Lee, who was an odd sort of a fellow, that lived upon the skirts of Turkeytown, and got his living by hook and by crook. He had neither chick nor child, but kept a bachelor's hall in a rickety old house, without any companion except an old black hen, whom he kept to amuse him because she had a most unearthly mode of cackling that nobody could understand. Bob used to spend his time in shooting wild ducks, trapping foxes and musquashes, catching pigeons, and other vagabond and aboriginal occupations, by means of which he contrived to keep his pot boiling, and a ragged jacket upon his back. Nothing could induce him to work hard and lay up something for a rainy day. Bob left the rainy days to take care of themselves, and thought of nothing but sunshine. In short, the incorrigible vagabond was lazy, careless, ragged and happy as any man you ever saw of a summer's day.

And it fell out upon a summer's day, that Bob found himself without a cent in his pocket or a morsel of victuals in the house. His whole disposable wealth consisted of a single fox-skin nailed against his back door, drying in the sun. Something must be had for dinner, and Bob took down the fox-skin, and set off for Deacon Grabbit's store to sell it. As luck would have it, before he had gone a quarter of a mile, he met old Tim Twist, the Connecticut pedlar, a crony and boon companion of many years' standing. Tim, who was glad to see his old gossip, invited him into Major Shute's tavern to take a glass of New-England. Bob, who had never signed the temperance pledge, accepted the invitation nothing loth. They sat down over half a pint, and discussed the news. No drink tastes better than that which a man gets for nothing. It was a hot day, and both were very thirsty. Tim was very liberal for a Connecticut man. What will you have? In the upshot they found they had made an immense potation of it; and Bob took leave of his old friend, clearly satisfied that he had not taken so heavy a pull for many a day.

He had hardly got out of sight of the tavern before he found the road too crooked to travel; he sat down under an apple-tree to take a little cool reflection, but the more he reflected, the more he could not understand it: his eyes began to wag in his head, and he was just on the point of falling asleep, when a bob o'link alighted on a branch over his head and began to sing "Bob o'link! bob o'link! bob o'link!" Bob Lee's brains were by this time in such a fog, that his eyes and ears were all askew, and he did not doubt somebody was calling on him.

"Hallo, neighbor;" says Bob Lee.

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! what ye got? what ye got? what ye got?" chattered the bird—as Bob thought.

"Got a fox-skin," answered he. "D'ye want to buy?"

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! what'll ye take? what'll ye take?" returned the little feathered chatterer.

"Half a dollar," replied Bob, "and it's worth every cent of the money."

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! bob o'link! two and threepence! two and threepence! two and threepence!" was the reply from the apple-tree.

"Won't take it," said Bob; "it's a real silver-grey: half a dollar is little enough for it. Can't sell it for two and threepence."

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! you'd better, you'd better, you'd better; two and threepence, two and threepence, two and threepence; now or never, now or never, now or never."

"Can't ye say any more? Well, take it then. I won't stand for ninepence. Hand us over the money," said Bob, twisting his head round and round, endeavouring to get a sight of the person with whom he was bargaining.

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! bob o'link! let's have it! let's have it, let's have it; quick or ye'll lose it! quick or ye'll lose it!"

Bob turned his head toward the quarter from which the sound proceeded, and imagining he saw somebody in the tree, threw up the fox-skin, exclaiming, "There it is, and cheap enough too, at two and threepence." Mr. Bob o'link started and flew away, singing "Bob o'link, bob o'link! catch a weasel, catch a weasel, catch a weasel!" for Bob Lee made clear English of every thing that the bird said, and never doubted all the while that he was driving a regular bargain with a country trader. At the same time, spying a toadstool growing at the foot of the tree, he imagined it to be a half dollar, and made a grasp at it. The toadstool was demolished under his hand, but Bob happening to clutch a pebble-stone at the same moment, thrust it into his pocket, fully persuaded he had secured his coin. "Can't make change,—remember it next time!" said he, and so turning about, he made the best of his way homewards.

When he awoke the next morning, he felt in his pocket for the half dollar, but his astonishment cannot be described at finding it metamorphosed into a stone. He rubbed his eyes, but the more he rubbed them, the more like a stone it looked:—decidedly a stone! He thought of witchcraft, but presently recollecting that he had taken a drop too much, just before the bargain under the apple-tree, he became of opinion that he had been cheated, and that the crafty rogue who had bought his fox-skin, had taken advantage of his circumstances to palm off a stone upon him for silver. Bob started upon his legs at the very thought. "A rascal!" he exclaimed, "I'll catch him if he's above ground!" No sooner said than done. Out he sallied in a tremendous chafe, determined to pursue the rogue to the further end of the state. He questioned every person he met, whether he had not seen a crafty-looking caitiff sharking about the town and buying fox-skins, but nobody seemed to know any such creature. He ran up and down the road, called at Major Shute's tavern, at Deacon Grabbit's store, at Colonel Crabapple's grocery, at Tim Thumper's shoemaker's shop, at Cobb's bank and at Slouch's corner, but not a soul had seen the man with the fox-skin. Bob was half out of his wits at being thus balked in his chase, never imagining he was all the while in pursuit of an innocent little bob o'link.

In great vexation at this disappointment, he was slowly plodding his way homeward, when he came in sight of the spot where he had made this unfortunate traffic with the roguish unknown. "Oh apple-tree!" he exclaimed, "if thou be'st an honest apple-tree, tell me what has become of my fox-skin." He looked up as he uttered these words, and to his astonishment, there was his fox-skin, dangling in the air at the end of a branch! He knew not what to make of so strange an adventure, but he was nevertheless overjoyed to recover his property, and climbing the tree, threw it to the ground. The tree was old and hollow; in descending, he thrust his foot into an opening in the trunk, some distance above the ground, and felt something loose inside. He drew it out and found it was a heavy lump, which he imagined at first to be a stone wrapped round with a cloth. It proved, however, on examination, to be a bag of dollars!

He could hardly believe his eyes, but after turning them over and over, riving them upon a stone and cutting the edge of some of them with a knife, at length satisfied himself that they were true silver pieces. The next inquiry was, how they came there, and to whom they belonged. Here he was totally in the dark. The owner of the land surely could not be the proprietor of the money, for he had no need of a strong-box in such a sly place. The money had lain in the tree some years, as was evident from the condition of the bag, which was nearly decayed. Was it stolen? No—because nobody in these parts had lost such a sum. Was it the fruit of a highway robbery? No robbery had been committed in this quarter, time out of mind. There were no imaginable means of accounting for the deposit of money in such a place. The owner or depositor had never returned to claim it, and was now probably dead or gone away, never to return.

Such were the thoughts that Bob revolved in his mind as he gazed over his newly-gotten treasure. At first he thought of making the discovery public, but reflecting on the many annoyances which this would bring upon him in the inquisitive curiosity of his neighbours, and more especially considering that the cash must in consequence lie a long time useless, ere he could be legally allowed to apply it as his own property, he resolved to say nothing about it, but to consider the money his own immediately. It was therefore conveyed the same evening to his house, and snugly lodged in his chest.

From that day forward it began to be remarked among the neighbours, that Bob Lee was mighty flush of money, and though he had no visible means of subsistence, spent a great deal more than he was wont. More especially it excited their wonder that his pockets always contained hard dollars, while other people had little besides paper. There is nothing equal to the prying curiosity of the inhabitants of a country village, and the buzzing and stir which an insignificant matter will arouse among a set of

inquisitive gossips. Everybody began to talk about the affair, but nobody knew how to account for it. All sorts of guesses and conjectures were put upon the rack, but nothing was able to explain the mystery. All sorts of hints, inquiries and entreaties were put in requisition. Bob was proof against all their inquisitiveness and seemed resolved to let them die in the agonies of unsatisfied curiosity.

Bob stood it out for a long while; but human endurance has its limits, and after being worried with guesses and questions till he despaired of ever being left in quiet possession of his own secret, he began to cast about for a method of allaying the public curiosity in some measure, or at least of turning it aside from himself. An old gossip, named Goody Brown, had laid siege to him about the affair from the first moment. One afternoon she dropped in as usual, and after some preliminary tattle, recommenced the attack by inquiring, with a significant look and shake of the head, whether money was as scarce as ever with him. Bob had been for some time thinking of a trick to play the old lady, and thought this a good moment to begin his mystification: so putting on a look of great seriousness, knitting his brows, and puckering up his mouth, as if big with a mighty secret about to be communicated, he replied:

"Really, Mrs. Brown—I have been thinking, whether—now you are a prudent woman, I am certain."

"A prudent woman, indeed! who ever thought of calling me imprudent? Everybody calls me a prudent woman, to be sure. You need not doubt it, though I say so."

"You are a prudent woman, no doubt, and I have been thinking, I say, whether I might trust you with a secret!"

"A secret! a secret! a secret! Oh, Mr. Bob, then there is a secret?" stud the old lady aroused into great animation by the prospect of getting at the bottom of the mystery at last.

"Yes, Mrs. Brown, to confess the truth, there is a secret."

"Oh! I knew it! I knew it! I knew there was a secret. I always said there was a secret—I was always sure there was a secret! I told everybody I knew there must be a secret."

"But Mrs. Brown, this must be kept a secret; so perhaps I had better keep it to myself. If you cannot keep a secret, why then—"

"Good luck! Mr. Lee, I am sure you are not afraid. Never fear me: I can keep a secret. Everybody knows how well I can keep a secret."

"Everybody knows, to be sure, how well you can keep a secret; that is just what I am thinking about."

"Sure, Mr. Bob, you don't mean to keep me out of the secret now you have begun. Come, come, what is it? You know I can keep a secret; you know I can."

"But this, recollect, Mrs. Brown, is a very particular secret; and if I tell it to you—hey, Mrs. Brown, it must be in confidence you know."

"Oh, in confidence! to be sure in confidence—certainly in confidence. I keep everything in confidence."

"But now I recollect, Mrs. Brown, that story about Zachary Numps—they say you blabb'd it."

"Oh law! now Mr. Lee, no such thing! I only said one day in company with two or three people—together in confidence—that some folks might, if they chose, say so and so about some folks. It was all in confidence, but somehow or other it got out."

"If you are sure you can keep the secret then, I think I may trust you with it; but you must promise."

"Oh, promise! certainly I will promise, Mr. Bob; nobody will promise more than I will—that is, I certainly will promise to keep the secret."

"Then let me tell you," said he, in a low, solemn voice, hitching his chair at the same time nearer to the old woman, who sat with open mouth and staring eyes, eager to devour the wished-for secret: "These dollars of mine, you know, Mrs. Brown—" here he stopped, keeping her in the most provoking suspense imaginable.

"Yes, yes; the dollars, the dollars."

"These dollars of mine, you know, Mrs. Brown, why they are dollars—hey?"

"Yes, the dollars, the dollars; go on, go on—where do they come from? Mr. Bob, where do you get them?—where do you get them?"

"Why, I get them somewhere, you know; but where do you think?"

"Yes, yes, you get them somewhere; I always thought you got them somewhere: I always told everybody I knew you must get them somewhere."

"Very well, Mrs. Brown."

"Very well, Mr. Lee; but where do you get them? that is the question—you have not told me."

"Where do I get them," said Bob, slowly and solemnly, and rubbing his hands together, screwing up his mouth, rolling his eyes and shaking his head, while the old lady was on the tenter-hooks of suspense and expectation. "Where do I get them? Now what do you think, Mrs. Brown, of my old black hen?"

"Your old black hen! What do you mean?"

"There's the thing now! Then you never guessed, hey? Is it possible you never heard the story of the goose with the golden egg?"

"To be sure," replied Goody, opening her eyes wider than ever; "to be sure, Mr. Bob—to be sure. But your hen, you know, is not a goose."

"That is very true, Mrs. Brown; but here is another question. If a goose can lay a golden egg, why can't a hen lay a silver one?"

"Sure enough, Mr. Lee, sure enough, sure enough," said the old woman, beginning to get some light on the subject.

"Sure enough, as you say. Now this black hen of mine—every day I go to the nest and find a silver dollar there!"

"You amaze me, Bob!" said she, in the greatest astonishment. "Who would have thought it! Indeed! indeed! indeed! and is it true?"

"Why, Mrs. Brown, if I do not get them there, where do I get them?"

"Sure enough. Well, my stars! I almost knew it—I always thought there was something strange in the looks of that black hen."

"Ah, you are a cunning woman—but be sure you keep it a secret."

"To be sure, never fear me. A dollar a day! Who would have thought it! Bless me, what a lucky man! Do, Mr. Lee, let me see the nest; it must be very curious: I am dying to see it."

"Certainly, with all my heart; but let us see if there is nobody coming. Ah, step this way; I keep her in a snug place, you see, because if she should run away, what should I do for cash?"

So saying, he led the way, and the old woman trotted after him. He carried her in at one door and out at another, up this passage and down that, over, under and through, zig-zag and round about, through all the rigmalar turnings and twistings upon his premises, in order to give the whole affair an appearance of greater mystery. At last coming to a little nook in the corner of his barn, he told her that was the place. She gazed at it with staring eyes and uplifted hands, exclaiming,

"Was there ever anything like it!"

Bob, to carry on the trick, concealed a dollar in his sleeve, and thrust his hand into the nest, drew it forth, and exhibited it to the old woman, who was now fully convinced, because she had actually seen the dollar in the nest, and who could doubt after such a proof?

It is needless to add that within two days, the story was trumpeted all over the town, and Bob was beset with greater crowds than ever; so far from diminishing the curiosity of his neighbours by the stratagem, he found he had augmented it tenfold. It is not to be supposed that every one believed the story, but there were enough who did, and the remainder fell to wondering, guessing and questioning with more pertinacity than ever. Bob's house was besieged from morning till night, and the unfortunate man, under these redoubled annoyances, found he had got out of the frying-pan into the fire. He now denied the whole story, and declared that he had been only sporting with the credulity of the old Goody; but unluckily they would not believe him: people do not like to have their belief in the marvellous disturbed; they could not believe his tale of finding the money in an oak tree, but that the dollars were got from a hen's nest, was something worth believing. Bob, at a loss what to do in this emergency, applied to many people for advice, and at last was struck with the following counsel from Deacon Grabbit.

"If I were in your place," said the Deacon, "I think I would make the hen turn me a penny;—for why? If folks believe she gives you a dollar a day, they will be willing to give a good price for her, and if they buy her and find themselves mistaken, that is their look-out. Now I would put her up at auction and sell her for the most she will bring: it will be a fair bargain, provided you warrant nothing!"

This advice seemed excellent, and Bob was not long in making up his mind to follow it. He accordingly gave public notice, that he should expose his hen at auction in front of the Meeting-house on Saturday afternoon next, at four of the clock. This announcement made a great stir, and when the time arrived, he found a prodigious crowd assembled. Bob mounted the top of a hoghead with his hen in one hand and a stick of wood in the other, and began the following harangue—

"Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong! Ahoy, ahoy, ahoy! Know all men by these presents. Whereas, nevertheless, notwithstanding, Gentlemen, please to come to order and attend to the sale. Here we are in the name of the commonwealth, and here is the fowl all the world is talking about, now to be sold to the highest bidder. Whoever

buys her will get a black pullet for his pay, but as to silver dollars, that is neither here nor there; I warrant no such thing, but it may be, and it may not be; nobody knows all the pickings and scratchings of the hen creation. I'll warrant the creature to be sound of wind and limb, but whether her eggs are round or flat, I shan't be flat enough to swear quite so roundly: that is the buyer's affair, not mine. Gentlemen, I moreover warrant her to be a black hen, and that no washing can make her white, except whitewashing. But whether black or white, nobody can say black is the white of her eye, for she is as honest a soul as ever picked up a crumb, and if she deals in dollars, you may depend upon it they are not counterfeit. Whoever buys her will get his money's worth if he does not give too much; and he may reckon on any reasonable number of chickens, provided he does not reckon them before they are hatched. Gentlemen, I won't be certain as to her age, but I will assure you this, that if she is too young, it is a fault will grow less and less every day. Here she goes. What'll ye give me? What'll ye give me? What'll ye give me? Come bid away, gentlemen, and make your fortunes. Some folks say I have made my fortune by her, and good luck betide them while they speak the truth, say I. People say this and that, but I say nothing. So, who buys my hen?—Going—going, going!”

The old hen set up a loud cackling, and fluttered her wings prodigiously, at the conclusion of this speech, much to the astonishment of the crowd of spectators, who gaped, stared and scratched their heads, imagining that the creature understood every word of what was uttered, and never suspecting that Bob had given her a smart pull by the tail to make her squall out. They shook their heads and observed that the creature looked as if she saw something: Bob called out for bidders, but his customers, with true Yankee caution, bid slowly, and made very low offers: at last, however, she was knocked off to a credulous bumpkin, named Giles Elderberry, for six dollars, to be paid in corn and potatoes at a fair price the next fall. Bob delivered him the hen, and took Giles's note of hand for the pay.

Giles took his purchase home in great glee, hugging himself with the prospect of having a heap of silver ere many days. He bestowed her snugly in his hencoop, and was hardly able to shut his eyes that night, by thinking of the fortune that awaited him. Next morning he ran to the nest, but was disappointed in not finding the dollar. He waited all day and saw the night approach, but nothing rewarded his patience. He began to scratch his head, but presently bethought himself that it was Sunday, and the hen being orthodox, would not lay till the next day. So he went to bed again with undiminished hopes. But Monday came and there was no dollar to be seen: he cudgelled his brain, and suspected there might be witches in the case; thereupon he nailed a horse-shoe on the door of the hencoop, and waited another day, but nothing came of it. He now sat down upon a log of wood, and fell to pondering upon the matter with all his might; finally another thought struck him, and he imagined a nest-egg might be wanting. Straightway he procured a dollar and lodged it in the nest, but it did not bring him even six per cent. interest, for the next day there was a dollar and no more. He tried various other expedients, but they all failed in the same manner. The neighbours inquired about his success, but he informed them that the hen put it off terribly. He consulted Bob Lee about it, and got only a bantering answer and a hint about the note of hand. Giles was not to be bantered out of his belief, but laid the case before sundry of his acquaintance, who were notorious for their credulity in all marvellous affairs. Most of them gave it as their opinion that the hen was bewitched, and Giles was already inclined to the same belief: his only solicitude now was to discover some means of disenchantment.

At length a waggish fellow of the town, who had got a scent of the affair, meeting Giles one day, informed him that he knew of a scheme that would do the job for him. Giles begged earnestly to know it, and promised as a recompense to give him the first dollar the hen should lay, in case the plan succeeded, “for you know,” said he, “it is a fair bargain, no cure, no pay.”

“You'll find that next fall,” replied the fellow.

He then communicated the scheme, by which Giles was instructed to go to the top of Blueberry Hill the next morning at six o'clock, mark out a circle on the ground, set up a tall pole in the centre with the hen at the top: he was then to walk three times round it, heels foremost, say the A B C backwards, sing a stave of Old hundred, cry cock-a-doodle-doo, and sneeze three times—all which he was assured would break the spell.

Giles took all this for gospel, and the next morning he was on the spot ready prepared at the hour. He set his fowl up in the air and went to work with the incantation; all was going on prosperously and according to rule: he had got through the psalm tune, crowed as exactly like an old rooster as one could wish, and was just taking a thumping pinch of Scotch yellow to enable him to sneeze with more effect, when casting his eyes aloft he descried a monstrous hen-hawk upon the wing in the act of making a stoop at his enchanted fowl. Giles blurted out a tremendous stermutation, but the hawk was not to be sneezed out of his prey, for before he could rub away the tears which this explosion shook into his eyes, souse came the hawk upon the hen, and both were out of sight among the woods!

Giles scratched his head and stared with wonder, but they never came back to give any account of themselves: he is certain although, that had he got through the incantation half a minute sooner, the hen would have been as safe as a thief in a mill. I have heard people say that he has still some expectation of their return, but I believe he has given up speculating in poultry. However, the memory of the story remains in those parts, and when a person does anything that shows uncommon wisdom, such as discovering that the Dutch have taken Holland, or that asses have ears, he is said to be akin to the witches, like Bob Lee's hen.

XVI.  
THE SHOOTING-MATCH.

Shooting-matches are probably nearly coeval with the colonization of Georgia. They are still common throughout the Southern States; though they are not as common as they were twenty-five or thirty years ago. I was travelling in one of the north-eastern counties, when I overtook a swarthy, bright-eyed, smirky little fellow, riding a small pony, and bearing on his shoulder a long, heavy rifle, which, judging from its looks, I should say had done service in Morgan's corps.

"Good morning, Sir," said I, reining up my horse, as I came beside him.

"How goes it, stranger?" said he, with a tone of independence and self-confidence that awakened my curiosity to know a little of his character.

"Going driving?" inquired I.

"Not exactly," replied he, surveying my horse with a quizzical smile, "I haven't been a-driving by *myself* for a year or two, and my nose has got so bad lately I can't carry a cold-trail *without hounds to help me.*"

Alone, and without hounds as he was, the question was rather a silly one; but it answered the purpose for which it was put, which was only to draw him into conversation, and I proceeded to make as decent a retreat as I could.

"I didn't know," I said, "but that you were going to meet the huntsmen, or going to your stand."

"Ah, sure enough," rejoined he, "that *mout* be a bee, as the old woman said when she killed a wasp. It seems to me I ought to know you."

"Well, if you *ought why don't* you?"

"What *mout* your name be?"

"It *might* be anything," said I, with borrowed wit; for I knew my man, and knew what kind of conversation would please him most.

"Well, what *is* it then?"

"It *is* Hall," said I; "but, you know, it *might* as well have been anything else."

"Pretty digging," said he, "I find you're not the fool I took you to be; so here's to a better acquaintance with you."

"With all my heart," returned I; "but you must be as clever as I've been, and give me your name."

"To be sure I will, my old 'coon; take it, take it, and welcome. Anything else about me you'd like to have?"

"No," said I, "there's nothing else about you worth having."

"Oh yes, there is, stranger. Do you see this?" holding up his ponderous rifle with an ease that astonished me. "If you will go with me to the shooting-match, and see me knock out the *bull's-eye* with her a few times, you'll agree the old *soap-stick's* worth something when Billy Curlew puts his shoulder to her."

This short sentence was replete with information to me: it taught me that my companion was Billy Curlew; that he was going to a *shooting-match*; that he called his rifle the *soap-stick*; and that he was very confident of winning beef with her; or, which is nearly, but not quite the same thing—*driving the cross with her.*

"Well," said I, "if the shooting-match is not too far out of my way, I'll go to it with pleasure."

"Unless your way lies through the woods from here," said Billy, "it'll not be much out of your way; for it's only a mile a-head of us, and there's no other road for you to take till you get there; and as that thing you're riding in, ain't well suited to fast travelling among bushy knobs, I reckon you won't lose much by going by. I reckon you hardly ever was at a shooting-match, stranger, from the cut of your coat?"

"Oh yes," returned I, "many a time. I won beef at one, when I was hardly old enough to hold a shot-gun off-hand."

"Children don't go to shooting-matches about here," said he, with a smile of incredulity. "I never heard of but one that did, and he was a little *swinge-cat*. He was born a-shooting, and killed squirrels before he was weaned."

"Nor did I ever hear of but one," replied I, "and that one was myself."

"And where did you win beef so young, stranger?"

"At Berry Adam's."

"Why stop, stranger, let me look at you. Good. Is your name Lyman Hall?"

"The very same," said I.

"Well, dang my buttons, if you ain't the very boy my daddy used to tell me about! I was too young to recollect you myself; but I've heard daddy talk about you many a-time. I believe mammy's got a neck-handkerchief now that daddy won on your shooting at Colten Reid's store, when you were hardly knee-high. Come along, Lyman, and I'll go my death upon you at the shooting-match, with the old soap-stick at your shoulder."

"Ah, Billy," said I, "the old soap-stick will do much better at your own shoulder. It was my mother's notion that sent me to the shooting-match at Berry Adam's; and, to tell you the honest truth, it was altogether a chance shot that made me win beef; but that wasn't generally known, and most everybody believed that I was carried there on account of my skill in shooting; and my fame was spread far and wide, I well remember."

"I remember, too, perfectly well your father's bet on me at the store. He was at the shooting-match, and nothing could make him believe but that I was a great shot with a rifle, as well as a shot-gun. Bet he would on me, in spite of all I could say, though I assured him that I had never shot a rifle in my life. It so happened too, that there were but two bullets, or rather a bullet and a half; and so confident was your father in my skill that he made me shoot the half bullet, and strange to tell, by another chance shot I like to have drove the cross, and won his bet."

"Now I know you're the very chap; for I heard daddy tell the very thing about the half bullet. Don't say anything about it, Lyman, and darn my old shoes if I don't tear the lint off the boys with you at the shooting-match. They'll never 'spect such a looking man as you are of knowing anything about a rifle. I'll risk your *chance* shot."

I soon discovered that the father had eaten sour grapes, and the son's teeth were on edge; for Billy was just as incorrigibly obstinate in his belief of my dexterity with a rifle, as his father had been before him.

We soon reached the place appointed for the shooting-match. It went by the name of Sims' Cross Roads, because, from the time that the first had been laid out, Archibald Sims had resided there. Archibald had been a Justice of the Peace in his day (and where is the man of his age in Georgia who has not?), consequently, he was called Squire Sims. It is the custom in this state, when a man has once acquired a title, civil or military, to force it upon him as long as he lives; hence the countless number of titled personages who are introduced in these sketches.

We stopped at the Squire's door. Billy hastily dismounted, gave me the shake of the hand which he had been reluctantly reserving for a mile back, and leading me to the Squire, thus introduced me:

"Uncle Archy, this is Lyman Hall; and for all you see him in these fine clothes he's a *swinge-cat*—a darn sight cleverer fellow than he looks to be. Wait till you see him lift the old soap-stick, and draw a bead upon the bull's-eye. You *gwine* to see fun to-day? Don't say nothing about it."

"Well, Mr. Swinge-cat," said the Squire, "here's to a better acquaintance with you," offering me his hand.

"How goes it, Uncle Archy?" said I, taking his hand warmly; for I'm always free and easy with those who are so with me, and in this course I rarely fail to please. "How's the old woman?"

"Egad!" said the Squire, chuckling, "there you're too hard for me; for she died two-and-twenty years ago, and I haven't heard a word from her since!"

"What! and you never married again?"

"Well, that's not my fault."

"No, nor mine *nither*," said I.

Here we were interrupted by the cry of another, Rancey Sniffle.

"Hello, here! All you as wish to put in for the shooting-match come on here! for the put 'n in's *riddy* to begin."

About sixty persons, including men spectators, had collected; and the most of them were more or less obedient to the call of Mealy Whitecotton—for that was the name of the self-constituted commander-in-chief. Some hastened and some loitered, as they desired to be first or last on the list; for they shoot in the order in which their

names are entered.

The beef was not present, nor is it ever upon such occasions; but several of the company had seen it, who all concurred in the opinion that it was good beef, and well worth the price that was set upon it—eleven dollars. A general inquiry ran, in order to form some opinion as to the number of shots that would be taken; for, of course, the price of a shot is cheapened in proportion to the increase of that number. It was soon ascertained that not more than twenty persons would take chances; but these twenty agreed to take the number of shots at twenty-five cents each.

The competitors now began to give in their names; some for one, some for two, three, and a few for as many as four shots.

Billy Curlew hung back to the last, and when the list was offered to him, five lists remained undisposed of.

"How many shots left?" inquired Billy.

"Five," was the reply.

"Well, I take them all. Put down four shots for me, and one to Lyman Hall, paid for by William Curlew."

I was thunderstruck; not at his proposition to pay for my shot, because that Billy meant it as a token of friendship, and he would have been hurt if I had refused to let him do me this favour; but at the unexpected announcement of my name as a competitor for beef, at least one hundred miles from the place of my residence!

I was prepared for a challenge from Billy to some of his neighbours for a private match upon me, but not for this. I therefore protested against his putting in for me, and urged every reason to dissuade him from it that I could, without wounding his feelings.

"Put it down," said Billy, with the authority of an emperor, and with a look that spoke volumes, intelligible to every bystander. "Reckon I don't know what I'm about?" Then, wheeling off, and muttering in an under, self-confident tone: "Dang old Roper," continued he, "if he don't knock that cross to the north corner of creation, and back again, before a cat can lick her foot!"

Had I been king of the cat-tribe, they could not have regarded me with more curious attention than did the whole company, from this moment. Every inch of me was examined with the nicest scrutiny; and some plainly expressed, by their looks, that they never would have taken me for such a bite. I saw no alternative, but to throw myself upon a third chance-shot; for, though by the rules of sport I would have been allowed to shoot by proxy, by all the rules of good-breeding I was bound to shoot in person. It would have been unpardonable to disappoint the expectations which had been raised on me. Unfortunately too for me, the match differed, in one respect, from those which I had been in the habit of attending in my younger days. In olden-time, the contest was carried on chiefly with *shot-guns*, a generic term, which, in those days, embraced three descriptions of fire-arms: *Indian-traders*—a long, cheap, but sometimes excellent, kind of gun, that Mother Britain used to send hither for traffic with the Indians—the *large musket*, and the *shot-gun*, properly so-called.

Rifles were, however, always permitted to compete with them, under equitable restrictions. These were, that they should be fired off-hand, while the shot-guns were allowed a rest, the distance being equal; or that the distance should be one hundred yards for the rifle to sixty for the shot-gun, the mode of firing being equal.

But this was a match of rifles exclusively; and these are by far the most common at this time.

Most of the competitors fire at the same target, which is usually a board from nine inches to a foot wide, charred on one side as black as it can be made by fire, without impairing materially the uniformity of its surface; on the darkened side of which is pegged, a square piece of white paper, which is larger or smaller, according to the distance at which it is to be placed from the marksmen. This is almost invariably sixty yards, and for it the paper is reduced to about two and a half inches square. Out of the centre of it is cut a rhombus of about the width of an inch, measured diagonally—this is the bull's-eye, or diamond, as the marksmen choose to call it; in the centre of this is the cross. But every man is permitted to fix his target to his own taste; and accordingly, some remove one fourth of the paper, cutting from the centre of the square to the two lower corners, so as to leave a large opening from the centre downwards; while others reduce the angle more or less; but it is rarely the case that all are not satisfied with one of these figures.

The beef is divided into five prizes, or as they are commonly termed, five *quarters*, the hide and tallow counting as one. For several years after the revolutionary war, a sixth was added; the *lead* which was shot in the match. This was the prize of the sixth best shot; and it used to be carefully extracted from the board, or tree, in which it was lodged, and afterwards remoulded. But this grew out of the exigency of the times, and has, I believe, been long since abandoned everywhere.

The three master shots and rivals were Moses Firmby, Larkin Spivey, and Billy Curlew, to whom was added, upon this occasion, by common consent, and with awful forebodings—your humble servant.

The target was fixed at an elevation of about three feet from the ground; and the judges (Captain Turner and Squire Porter) took their stands by it, joined by about half the spectators.

The first name on the catalogue was Mealy Whitecotton. Mealy stepped out, rifle in hand, and toed the mark. His rifle was about three inches longer than himself, and near enough his own thickness to make the remark of Darby Chisholm, as he stepped out, tolerably appropriate.

"Here comes the corn-stack and the sucker!" said Darby.

"Kiss my foot!" said Mealy; "the way I'll creep into that bull's eye's a fact."

"You'd better creep into your hind sight," said Darby.

Mealy raised and fired.

"A pretty good shot, Meal," said one.

"Yes, a blamed good shot!" said a second.

"Well done, Meal!" said a third.

I was rejoiced when one of the company inquired, "Where is it?" for I could hardly believe they were founding these remarks upon the evidence of their senses.

"Just on the right hand of the bull's-eye," was the reply.

I looked with all the power of my eyes, but was unable to discover the least change in the surface of the paper. Their report, however, was true—so much keener is the vision of a practised than an unpractised eye.

The next in order was Hiram Baugh. Hiram was like some race-horses which I have seen—he was too good not to contend for every prize, and too good-for-nothing ever to win one.

"Gentlemen," said he, as he came to the mark, "I don't say that I'll win beef; but if my piece don't blow, I'll eat the paper, or be mighty apt to do it, if you'll believe my rocket. My powder are not good powder, gentlemen—I bought it *thum* (from) Teb Dagget, and gin him three quarters of a dollar a pound for it; but it are not what I call good powder, gentlemen: but if old Buck-killer burns it clear, the boy you call Hiram Baugh eats paper or comes mighty near it."

"Well, blaze away!" said Mealy. "And be hanged, you and Teb Dagget, and your powder and Buck-killer, and your powder-horn and shot-pouch to boot! How long you gwine stand thar talking 'fore you shoot?"

"Never mind," said Hiram, "I can talk a little and shoot a little too; but that's nothin'. Here goes!"

Hiram assumed the figure of a note of interrogation, took a long sight, and fired.

"I've eat paper," said he, at the crack of the gun, without looking, or seeming to look towards the target. "Buck-killer made a clear rocket. Where am I, gentlemen?"

"You're just between Mealy and the diamond," was the reply.

"I said I'd eat paper, and I've done it, haven't I, gentlemen?"

"And s'pose you have!" said Mealy, "what do that amount to? You'll no' win beef, and never did."

"Be that as it mount be, I've beat Meal 'Cotton mighty easy; and the boy you call Hiram Baugh are able to do it."

"And what do that 'mount to? Who ain't able to beat Meal 'Cotton! I don't make no pretence of being nothing great no how; but you always makes out as if you were gwine to keep 'em making crosses for you, constant; and then do nothin' but eat paper at last; and that's a long way from eating beef' cording to Meal 'Cotton's notions, as you call him!"

Simon Stow was now called for.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed two or three, "now we have it. It'll take him as long to shoot as it would take Squire Dobbins to run a track o' land."

"Good-bye, boys," said Bob Martin.

"Where you going, Bob?"

"Going to gather in my crop. I'll be back again though by the time Sime Stow shoots."

Simon was used to all this, and therefore it did not disconcert him in the least. He went off, and brought his own target, and set it up with his own hand.

He then wiped out his rifle—rubbed the pan with his hat—drew a piece of tow through the touch-hole with his wiper—filled his charger with great care—poured the powder into his rifle with equal caution—shoved with his finger the two or three vagrant grains that lodged round the mouth of his piece—took out a handful of bullets—looked them all over carefully—selected one without flaw or wrinkle—drew out his patching—found the most even part of it—sprung upon the grease-box in the breech of his rifle, greased side down—placed his ball upon it—pressed it a little—then took it up and turned the neck a little more perpendicularly downward—placed his knife-handle on it—just buried it in the mouth of the rifle—cut off the redundant patching just above the bullet—looked at it and shook his head in token that he had cut off too much or too little, no one knew which—sent down the ball—measured the contents of his gun with his first and second fingers, on the protruding part of the ramrod—shook his head again to signify that there was too much or too little powder—primed carefully—placed an arched piece of tin over the hind sight to shade it—took his piece—got a friend to hold his hat over the foresight to shade it—took a very long sight—fired, and didn't even eat paper.

"My piece was badly *load'nd*," said Simon, when he heard the place of his ball.

"Oh, you don't take time," said Mealy. "No man can shoot that's in such a hurry as you is. I'd hardly got to sleep 'fore I heard the crack o' the gun."

The next was Moses Firmby. He was a tall, slim man, of rather sallow complexion: and it is a very singular fact, that though probably no part of the world is more healthy than the mountainous regions of Georgia, the mountaineers have not generally robust forms or fine complexions: they are, however, almost inexhaustible by toil.

Moses kept us not long in suspense. His rifle was already charged, and he fixed it upon the target with a steadiness of nerve and aim that was astonishing to me and alarming to all the rest. A few seconds, and the report of his rifle broke the death-like silence which prevailed.

"No great harm done yet," said Spivey, manifestly relieved from anxiety by an event which seemed to me better calculated to produce despair.

Firmby's ball had cut the lower angle of the diamond, directly on a right line with the cross.

Three or four followed him without bettering his shot; all of whom, however, with one exception, "eat the paper."

It now came to Spivey's turn. There was nothing remarkable in his person or manner. He took his place, lowered his rifle slowly from a perpendicular, until it came on a line with the mark—held it there like a vise for a moment, and fired.

"Pretty *seogirous*, but nothing killing yet," said Billy Curlew, as he learned the place of Spivey's ball.

Spivey's ball had just broken the upper angle of the diamond, beating Firmby about half its width.

A few more shots, in which there was nothing remarkable, brought us to Billy Curlew. Billy step out with much confidence, and brought the soap-stick to an order, while he deliberately rolled up his shirt sleeves. Had I judged Billy's chance by the looks of his gun, I should have said it was hopeless. The stock of soap-stick seemed to have been made with a case-knife, and had it been, the tool would have been but a poor apology for its clumsy appearance.

An augur hole in the breech served for a grease-box, a cotton string assisted a single screw in holding on the lock, and the thimbles were made, one of brass, one of iron, and one of tin.

"Where's Lark Spivey's bullet?" called out Billy to the judges, as he finished rolling up his sleeves.

"About three quarters of an inch from the cross," was the reply.

"Well, clear the way! the soap-stick's a coming, and she'll be along in there among 'em presently."

Billy now planted himself a-straddle, like an inverted V, shot forward his left hip, drew his body back to an angle of about forty-five degrees with the plane of the horizon, brought his cheek down close to the breech of old soap-stick, and fixed her upon the mark with an untrembing hand. His sight was long, and the swelling muscles of his left arm led me to believe that he was lessening his chance of success with every half second that he kept it burdened with his ponderous rifle; but it neither flagged nor wavered until soap-stick made her report.

"Where am I?" said Billy, as the smoke rose from before his eye.

"You've just touched the cross on the lower side," was the reply of one of the judges.

"I was afraid I was drawing my bead a *leetle* too fine," said Billy. "Now, Lyman, you see what the soap-stick can do. Take her, and show the boys how you used to do when you were a baby."

I begged to reserve my shot to the last; pleading, rather sophistically, that it was, in point of fact, one of Billy's shots. My plea was rather indulged than sustained; and the marksmen who had taken more than one shot commenced the second round. This round was a manifest improvement upon the first. The cross was driven three times, once by Spivey, once by Firmby, and once by no less a personage than Mealy Whitecotton, whom chance seemed to favour for this time, merely that he might retaliate upon Hiram Baugh; and the bull's-eye was disfigured out of all shape.

The third and fourth rounds were shot. Billy discharged his last shot, which left the rights of parties thus; Billy Curlew first and fourth choice, Spivey second, Firmby third, and Whitecotton fifth. Some of my readers may be curious to learn how a distinction comes to be made between several, all of whom drive the cross. The distinction is perfectly natural and equitable. Threads are stretched from the uneffaced parts of the once interesting lines, by means of which the original position of the cross is precisely ascertained. Each bullet-hole being nicely pegged up as it is made, it is easy to ascertain its circumference. To this, I believe, they usually, if not invariably, measure where none of the balls touch the cross; but if the cross be driven, they measure from it to the centre of the bullet hole. To make a draw shot, therefore, between two who drive the cross, it is necessary that the centre of both balls should pass directly through the cross—a thing that very rarely happens.

The *bite* alone remained to shoot. Billy wiped out his rifle carefully, loaded her to the top of his skill, and handed her to me.

"Now," said he, "Lyman, draw a fine bead, but not too fine; for soap-stick bears up her ball well. Take care, and don't touch the trigger until you've got your bead; for she's spring-triggered, and goes mighty easy; but you hold her to the place you want her, and if she don't go, dang old Roper."

I took old soap-stick, and lapsed immediately into the most hopeless despair. I'm sure I never handled as heavy a gun in all my life.

"Why, Billy," said I, "you little mortal, you! what do you use such a gun as this, for?"

"Look at the bull's-eye, yonder," said he.

"True," said I; "but I can't shoot her—it is impossible."

"Go 'long, you old coon," said Billy; "I see what you're at." (Intimating that all this was merely to make the coming shot the more remarkable.) "Daddy's little boy don't shoot anything but the old soap-stick, here, to-day, I know."

The judges, I knew, were becoming impatient, and, withal, my situation was growing more embarrassing every second; so I e'en resolved to try the soap-stick, without farther parley.

I stepped out, and the most intense interest was excited all around me, and it flashed like electricity round the target, as I judged from the anxious gaze of all in that direction.

Policy dictated that I should fire with a falling rifle, and I adopted this mode, determining to fire as soon as the sights came on a line with the diamond, *bead or no bead*. Accordingly, I commenced lowering old soap-stick; but, in spite of all my muscular powers, she was strictly obedient to the laws of gravitation, and came down with an uniformly accelerated velocity. Before I could arrest her downward flight, she had not only passed the target, but was making rapid encroachments on my own toes.

"Why, he's the weakest man in the arms I ever seed," said one, in a half whisper.

"It's only his fun," said Billy; "I know him."

"It may be fun," said the other, "but it looks mighty like yearnest to a man up a tree."

I now, of course, determined to reverse the mode of firing, and put forth all my physical energies to raise soap-stick to the mark. The effort silenced Billy, and gave tongue to his companions. I had just strength enough to master soap-stick's obstinate proclivity, and consequently my nerves began to exhibit palpable signs of distress with her first imperceptible movement upward.

A trembling commenced in my arms, increased and extended rapidly to my body and lower extremities, so that, by the time I brought soap-stick up to the mark, I

was shaking from head to foot, exactly like a man under the continued action of a strong galvanic battery. In the meantime, my friends gave vent to their feelings freely.

"I swear, point blank," said one, "that man can't shoot."

"He used to shoot well," said another; "but can't now, nor never could."

"You better git away from 'bout that mark," bawled a third; "for I'll be d——d if Broadcloth don't give some of you the dry gripes, if you stand too close there."

"The stranger's got the *Peedoddles*," said a fourth, with humorous gravity.

"If he had bullets enough in his gun, he'd shoot a ring round the bull's-eye, big as a spinning-well," said a fifth.

As soon as I found that soap-stick was high enough (for I made no further use of the sights, than to ascertain this fact), I pulled the trigger, and off she went.

I have always found the most creditable way of relieving myself of derision, was to heighten it myself as much as possible. It is a good plan in all circles, but by far the best which can be adopted among the plain, rough farmers of the country. Accordingly, I brought old soap-stick to an order with an air of triumph, tipped Billy the wink, and observed:

"Now Billy's your time to make your fortune. Bet 'em two to one that I've knocked out the cross."

"No, I'll be dod blamed if I do," said Billy; "but I'll bet you two to one that you ha'n't hit the plank."

"Ah, Billy," said I, "I was joking about betting, for I never bet, nor would I have you bet; indeed, I do not feel exactly right in shooting for beef, for it is a species of gaming, at last; but I'll say this much, if that cross has not been knocked out, I'll never shoot for beef again as long as I live."

"By dod," said Mealy Whitecotton, "you'll lose no great things at that."

"Well," said I, "I reckon I know a little about wabbling. Is it possible, Billy, a man who shoots as well as you do, never practised shooting with the double wabble? It's the greatest take in, in the world, when you learn to drive the cross with it. Another sort for getting bets upon, to the drop sight and single wabble; and the soap-stick's the very yarn for it."

"Tell you what, stranger," said one; "you're too hard for us all, here. We never *hearn* o' that sort o' shoot'n in these parts."

"Well," returned I, "you've seen it now, and I'm the boy that can do it."

The judges were now approaching with the target, and a singular combination of circumstances had kept all my party in utter ignorance of the result of my shot.

Those about the target had been prepared for a great shot from me; their expectations had received assurance from the courtesy which had been extended to me; and nothing had happened to disappoint them, but the single caution against the "dry gripes," which was as likely to have been given in irony as in earnest; for my agonies under the weight of the soap-stick were either imperceptible to them, at the distance of sixty yards, or being visible, were taken as the flourishes of an expert, who wished to "astonish the natives." The other party did not think the direction of my ball worth the trouble of a question; or if they did, my airs and harangues had put the thought to flight before it was delivered. Consequently, they were all transfixed with astonishment, when the judges presented the target to them, and gravely observed:

"It's only second best, after all the fuss."

"Second best!" exclaimed I, with uncontrollable transports.

The whole of my party rushed to the target, to have the evidence of their senses, before they would believe the report; but most marvellous fortune decreed that it should be true. Their incredulity and astonishment were most fortunate for me, for they blinded my hearers to the real feelings with which the exclamation was uttered, and allowed me sufficient time to prepare myself for making the best use of what I had said before, with a very different object.

"Second best!" reiterated I, with an air of despondency, as the company turned from the target to me; "second best, only! Here, Billy, my son, take the old soap-stick; she's a good piece, but I'm getting too old and dim-sighted to shoot a rifle; especially with the drop sight and double wabbles."

"Why, darn my buttons!" said Billy, with a look that baffles all description; "ain't you *driv* the cross!"

"Oh, driv the cross," rejoined I, carelessly. "What's that? Just look where my ball is! I do believe, in my soul, its centre is a quarter of an inch from the cross. I wanted to lay the centre of the bullet upon the cross, just as if you'd put it there with your fingers."

Several received this palaver with a contemptuous, but very appropriate, curl of the nose; and Mealy Whitecotton offered to bet half-a-pint, "that I couldn't do the like agin, with no sort of wabbles, he didn't care what."

But I had fortified myself on this quarter by my morality. A decided majority, however, were clearly of opinion that I was serious; and they regarded me as one of the wonders of the world. Billy increased the majority by now coming out fully with my history, as he had received it from his father; to which I listened, with quite as much astonishment as any other one of his hearers. He begged me to go home with him for the night, or, as he expressed it, "go home with him, and swap lies that night, and it shouldn't cost me a cent;" the true reading of which is, that if I would go home with him, and give him the pleasure of an evening's chat about old times, his house should be as free to me as my own. But I could not accept his hospitality, without retracing five or six miles of the road which I had already passed; and therefore I declined it.

"Well, if you won't go, what must I tell the old woman for you? for she'll be mighty glad to hear from the boy that won the silk-handkerchief for her; and I expect she'll lick me for not bringing you home with me."

"Tell her," said I, "that I send her a quarter of beef, which I won as I did the handkerchief, by nothing in the world but mere good luck."

"Hold your jaw, Lyman," said Billy; "I ain't a gwine to tell the old woman any such lies; for she's a *rael*, reg'lar built Meth'dist."

As I turned to depart—

"Stop a minute, stranger," said one; then lowering his voice to a confidential, but strictly audible tone: "What are you offering for?" continued he.

I assured him I was not a candidate for anything—that I had accidentally fallen in with Billy Curlew, who begged me to come with him to the shooting-match; and as it lay right on my road, I had stopped.

"Oh," said he, with a conciliatory nod, "if you're up for anything, you needn't be mealy-mouthed about it, 'fore us boys; for we'll all go in for you here, up to the handle."

"Yes," said Billy, "dang old Roper, if we don't go our deaths for you, no matter who offers. If ever you come out for anything, Lyman, just let the boys of Upper Hoghief know it, and they'll go for you, to the hilt, against creation, tit or no tit, that's *tatur*."

I thanked him kindly, but repeated my assurances.

The reader will not suppose that the district took its name from the character of the inhabitants. In almost every county in the State, there is some spot or district which bears a contemptuous appellation, usually derived from local rivalry, or from a single accidental circumstance.

XVII.  
THE HORSE SWAP.

During the session of the Superior Court, in the village of——, about three weeks ago, when a number of people were collected in the principal street of the village, I observed a young man riding up and down the street, as I supposed, in a violent passion. He galloped this way, then that, and then the other. Spurred his horse to one group of citizens, then to another. Then dashed off at half speed, as if fleeing from danger; and suddenly checking his horse, returned—first in a pace, then in a trot, and then in a canter. While he was performing these various evolutions, he cursed, swore, whooped, screamed, and tossed himself in every attitude which man could assume on horseback. In short, he *cavorted* most magnanimously (a term which, in our tongue, expresses all that I have described, and a little more), and seemed to be setting all creation at defiance.

As I like to see all that is passing, I determined to take a position a little nearer to him, and to ascertain, if possible, what it was that affected him so sensibly. Accordingly, I approached a crowd before which he had stopped for a moment, and examined it with the strictest scrutiny. But I could see nothing in it that seemed to have anything to do with the cavorter. Every man appeared to be in a good humour, and all minding their own business. Not one so much as noticed the principal figure. Still he went on. After a semicolon pause, which my appearance seemed to produce—for he eyed me closely as I approached—he fetched a whoop, and swore that “he could out-swap any live man, woman or child, that ever walked these hills, or that ever straddled horse-flesh since the days of old daddy Adam.”

“Stranger,” said he to me, “did you ever see the *Yallow Blossom* from Jasper?”

“No,” said I “but I have often heard of him.”

“I’m the boy,” continued he; “perhaps a *leetle*—just a *leetle* of the best man, at a horse swap, that ever trod shoe-leather.”

I began to feel my situation a little awkward, when I was relieved by a man somewhat advanced in years, who stepped up and began to survey the “*Yallow Blossom*’s” horse with much apparent interest. This drew the rider’s attention, and he turned the conversation from me to the stranger.

“Well, my old ‘coon,” said he, “do you want to swap *hosses*?”

“Why, I don’t know,” replied the stranger; “I believe I’ve got a beast I’d trade with you for that one, if you like him.”

“Well, fetch up your nag, my old cock; you’re jist the lark I wanted to get hold of. I am perhaps a *leetle*, jist a *leetle*, of the best man at a horse swap, that ever stole *cracklins* out of his mammy’s fat-gourd. Where’s your *hoss*?”

“I’ll bring him presently; but I want to examine your horse a little.”

“Oh! look at him,” said the Blossom, alighting and hitting him a cut, “look at him. He’s the best piece of *hoss* flesh in the thirteen united universal worlds. There’s no sort o’ mistake in little Bullet. He can pick up miles on his feet and fling ‘em behind him as fast as the next man’s *hoss*, I don’t care where he comes from. And he can keep at it as long as the sun can shine without resting.”

During this harangue, little Bullet looked as if he understood it all, believed it, and was ready at any moment to verify it. He was a horse of goodly countenance, rather expressive of vigilance than fire; though an unnatural appearance of fierceness was thrown into it, by the loss of his ears, which had been cropped pretty close to his head. Nature had done but little for Bullet’s head and neck; but he managed, in a great measure, to hide their defects, by bowing perpetually. He had obviously suffered severely for corn; but as if his ribs and hip bones had not disclosed the fact, *he* never would have done it; for he was, in all respects, as cheerful and happy as if he commanded all the corn-crisbs and fodder-stacks in Georgia. His height was about twelve hands; but as his shape partook somewhat of that of the giraffe, his haunches stood much lower. They were short, strait, peaked and concave. Bullet’s tail, however, made amends for all his defects. All that the artist could do to beautify it, had been done; and all that horse could do to compliment the artist, Bullet did. His tail was nicked in superior style, and exhibited the line of beauty in so many directions, that it could not fail to hit the most fastidious taste in some of them. From the root it dropped into a graceful festoon; then rose in a handsome curve; then resumed its first direction; and then mounted suddenly upwards like a cypress knee, to a perpendicular of about two and a half inches. The whole had a careless and bewitching inclination to the right.

Bullet obviously knew where his beauty lay, and took all occasions to display it to the best advantage. If a stick cracked, or if any one moved suddenly about him, or coughed, or hawked, or spoke a little louder than common, up went Bullet’s tail like lightning; and if the *going up* did not please, the *coming down* must of necessity, for it was as different from the other movement, as was its direction. The first, was a bold and rapid flight upward; usually to an angle of forty-five degrees. In this position he kept his interesting appendage, until he satisfied himself that nothing in particular was to be done; when he commenced dropping it by half inches, in second beats—then in triple time—then faster and shorter, and faster and shorter still; until it finally died away imperceptibly into its natural position. If I might compare sights to sounds, I should say its *settling* was more like the note of a locust than anything else in nature.

Either from native sprightliness of disposition, from uncontrollable activity, or from an unconquerable habit of removing flies by the stamping of the feet, Bullet never stood still; but always kept up a gentle fly-scaring movement of his limbs, which was peculiarly interesting.

“I tell you, man,” proceeded the Yellow Blossom, “he’s the best live *hoss* that ever trod the grif of Georgia. Bob Smart knows the *hoss*. Come here, Bob, and mount this *hoss* and show Bullet’s motions.”

Here, Bullet bristled up, and looked as if he had been hunting for Bob all day long, and had just found him. Bob sprang on his back.

“Boo-oo-oo!” said Bob, with a fluttering noise of the lips; and away went Bullet, as if in a quarter race, with all his beauties spread in handsome style.

“Now fetch him back,” said Blossom.

Bullet turned and came in pretty much as he went out.

“Now trot him by!”

Bullet reduced his tail to “*customary*”—sidled to the right and left airily, and exhibited at least three varieties of trot, in the short space of fifty yards.

“Make him pace!”

Bob commenced twitching the bridle and kicking at the same time. These inconsistent movements obviously (and most naturally) disconcerted Bullet; for it was impossible for him to learn, from them, whether he was to proceed or stand still. He started to trot—and was told that wouldn’t do. He attempted a canter—and was checked again. He stopp—and was urged to go on. Bullet now rushed into the wide field of experiment, and struck out a gait of his own, that completely turned the tables upon his rider, and certainly deserved a patent. It seemed to have derived its elements from the jig, the minuet, and the cotillon. If it was not a pace, it certainly had *pace* in it; and no man would venture to call it any thing else; so it passed off to the satisfaction of the owner.

“Walk him!”

Bullet was now at home again; and he walked as if money was staked on him.

The stranger, whose name I afterwards learned was Peter Ketch, having examined Bullet to his heart’s content, ordered his son Neddy to go and bring up Kit. Neddy soon appeared upon Kit; a well-formed sorrel of the middle size, and in good order. His *tout ensemble* threw Bullet entirely in the shade; though a glance was sufficient to satisfy any one, that Bullet had the decided advantage of him in point of intellect.

“Why man,” said Blossom, “do you bring such a *hoss* as that to trade for Bullet? Oh, I see you’re no notion of trading.”

“Ride him off, Neddy!” said Peter.

Kit put off at a handsome lope.

“Trot him back!”

Kit came in at a long, sweeping trot, and stopp suddenly at the crowd.

“Well,” said Blossom, “let me look at him; maybe he’ll do to plough.”

“Examine him!” said Peter, taking hold of the bridle close to the mouth. “He’s nothing but a tacky. He an’t as *pretty* a horse as Bullet, I know; but he’ll do. Start ‘em together for a hundred and fifty *mile*; and if Kit an’t twenty mile ahead of him at the coming out, any man may take Kit for nothing. But he’s a monstrous mean horse, gentlemen; any man may see that. He’s the scariest horse, too, you ever saw. He won’t do to hunt on, no how. Stranger, will you let Neddy have your rifle to shoot off

him? Lay the rifle between his ears, Neddy, and shoot at the blaze in that stump. Tell me when his head is high enough.”

Ned fired, and hit the blaze; and Kit did not move a hair's breadth.

“Neddy, take a couple of sticks and beat on that hoghead at Kit's tail.”

Ned made a tremendous rattling; at which Bullet took fright, broke his bridle and dashed off in grand style; and would have stopt all farther negotiations, by going home in disgust, had not a traveller arrested him and brought him back; but Kit did not move.

“I tell you, gentlemen,” continued Peter, “he's the scariest horse you ever saw. He an't as gentle as Bullet; but he won't do any harm if you watch him. Shall I put him in a cart, gig, or wagon for you, stranger? He'll cut the same capers there he does here. He's a monstrous mean horse.”

During all this time, Blossom was examining him with the nicest scrutiny. Having examined his frame and limbs, he now looked at his eyes.

“He's got a curious look out of his eyes,” said Blossom.

“Oh yes, Sir,” said Peter, “just as blind as a bat. Blind horses always have clear eyes. Make a motion at his eyes, if you please, Sir.”

Blossom did so, and Kit threw up his head rather as if something pricked him under the chin, than as if fearing a blow. Blossom repeated the experiment, and Kit jerked back with considerable astonishment.

“Stone blind, you see, gentlemen,” proceeded Peter; “but he's just as good to travel of a dark night as if he had eyes.”

“Blame my buttons,” said Blossom, “if I like them eyes.”

“No,” said Peter, “nor I either. I'd rather have 'em made of diamonds; but they'll do, if they don't show as much white as Bullet's.”

“Well,” said Blossom, “make a pass at me.”

“No,” said Peter; “you made the banter, now make your pass.”

“Well, I'm never afraid to price my hosses. You must give me twenty-five dollars boot.”

“Oh certainly; say fifty, and my saddle and bridle in. Here, Neddy, my son, take away daddy's horse.”

“Well,” said Blossom, “I've made my pass, now you make yours.”

“I'm for short talk in a horse swap; and therefore always tell a gentleman, at once, what I mean to do. You must give me ten dollars.”

Blossom swore absolutely, roundly, and profanely, that he never would give boot.

“Well,” said Peter, “I didn't care about trading; but you cut such high shines that I thought I'd like to back you out; and I've done it. Gentlemen, you see I've brought him to a hack.”

“Come, old man,” said Blossom, “I've been joking with you. I begin to think you do want to trade; therefore give me five dollars and take Bullet. I'd rather lose ten dollars, any time, than not make a trade; though I hate to fling away a good hoss.”

“Well,” said Peter, “I'll be as clever as you are. Just put the five dollars on Bullet's back and hand him over, it's a trade.”

Blossom swore again, as roundly as before, that he would not give boot; and, said he:

“Bullet wouldn't hold five dollars on his back no how. But as I bantered you, if you say an even swap, here's at you.”

“I told you,” said Peter, “I'd be as clever as you; therefore, here goes two dollars more, just for trade sake. Give me three dollars, and it's a bargain.”

Blossom repeated his former assertion; and here the parties stood for a long time, and the by-standers (for many were now collected,) began to taunt both parties. After some time, however, it was pretty unanimously decided that the old man had backed Blossom out.

At length Blossom swore he “never would be backed out, for three dollars, after bantering a man;” and accordingly they closed the trade.

“Now,” said Blossom, as he handed Peter the three dollars, “I'm a man, that when he makes a bad trade, makes the most of it until he can make a better. I'm for no ruses and after-claps.”

“That's just my way,” said Peter; “I never goes to law to mend my bargains.”

“Ah, you're the kind of boy I love to trade with. Here's your hoss, old man. Take the saddle and bridle off him, and I'll strip yours; but lift up the blanket easy from Bullet's back, for he's a mighty tender-backed hoss.”

The old man removed the saddle, but the blanket stuck fast. He attempted to raise it, and Bullet bowed himself, switched his tail, danced a little, and gave signs of biting.

“Don't hurt him, old man,” said Blossom archly; “take it off easy. I am, perhaps, a leetle of the best man at a horse-swap that ever caught a 'coon.”

Peter continued to pull at the blanket more and more roughly; and Bullet became more and more *avortish*: in so much, that when the blanket came off, he had reached the *kicking* point in good earnest.

The removal of the blanket, disclosed a sore on Bullet's back-bone, that seemed to have defied all medical skill. It measured six full inches in length, and four in breadth; and had as many features as Bullet had motions. My heart sickened at the sight; and I felt that the brute who had been riding him in that situation, deserved the halter.

The prevailing feeling, however, was that of mirth. The laugh became loud and general, at the old man's expense; and rustic witticisms were liberally bestowed upon him and his late purchase. These, Blossom continued to provoke by various remarks. He asked the old man, “if he thought Bullet would let five dollars lie on his back.” He declared most seriously, that he had owned that horse three months, and had never discovered before that he had a sore back, “or he never should have thought of trading him,” &c. &c.

The old man bore it all with the most philosophic composure. He evinced no astonishment at his late discovery, and made no replies. But his son, Neddy, had not disciplined his feelings quite so well. His eyes opened wider and wider, from the first to the last pull of the blanket; and when the whole sore burst upon his view, astonishment and fright seemed to contend for the mastery of his countenance. As the blanket disappeared he stuck his hands in his breeches pockets, heaved a deep sigh, and lapsed into a profound reverie; from which he was only roused by the cuts at his father. He bore them as long as he could; and when he could contain himself no longer, he began with a certain wildness of expression, which gave a peculiar interest to what he uttered:

“His back's mighty bad off; but ded drot my soal if he's put it to daddy as bad as he thinks he has, for old Kit's both blind and *deef*, I'll be ded drot if he *eint*.”

“The devil he is,” said Blossom.

“Yes, ded drot my soal if he *eint*. You walk him and see if he *eint*. His eyes don't look like it; but he *jist as live go agin* the horse with you, or in a ditch, as anyhow. Now you go try him.”

The laugh was now turned on Blossom; and many rushed to test the fidelity of the little boy's report. A few experiments established its truth, beyond controversy.

“Neddy,” said the old man, “you oughtn't to try and make people discontented with their things. Stranger, don't mind what the little boy says. If you can only get Kit rid of them little failings, you'll find him all sorts of a horse. You are a *leetle* the best man, at a horse swap, that ever I got hold of; but don't fool away Kit. Come, Neddy, my son, let's be moving; the stranger seems to be getting snappish.”

XVIII.  
THREE CHANCES FOR A WIFE.

When a man has three chances for a wife, it is, indeed, a hard mischance if he should fail. The following is one of those cases which might have occurred down east, but I am rather doubtful if a similar event was ever known in any other part of the world. But let me give the experience of the gentleman, who had three chances, in his own language:

"I once courted a gal by the name of Deb Hawkins. I made it up to get married. Well, while we was going up to the deacon's, I stepped my foot into a mud puddle, and spattered the mud all over Deb Hawkins' new gown, made out of her grandmother's old chintz petticoat. Well when we got to the deacon's, he asked Deb if she would take me for her lawful wedded husband?"

"'No,' says she, 'I shan't do no such thing.'

"'What on airth is the reason?' says I.

"'Why,' says she, 'I've taken a mislikin' to you.'

"Well, it was all up with me then, but I give her a string of beads, a few kisses, some other notions, and made it all up with her; so we went up to the deacon's a second time. I was determined to come up to her this time, so when the deacon asked me if I would take her for my lawfully wedded wife, says I:

"'No, I shan't do no such thing.'

"'Why,' says Deb, 'what on airth is the matter?'

"'Why,' says I, 'I have taken a mislikin' to you now.'

"Well there it was all up again, but I gave her a new apron, and a few other little trinkets, and we went up again to get married. We expected then we would be tied so fast that all nature couldn't separate us, and when we asked the deacon if he wouldn't marry us he said:

"'No, I shan't dew any such thing.'

"'Why, what on airth is the reason?' says we.

"'Why,' says he, 'I've taken a mislikin' to both on you.'

"'Deb burst out cryin', the deacon burst out scoldin', and I burst out laughin', and sich a set of reg'lar busters you never did see.'"

Do I b'leve in the sea-sarpin'? You might as well ax me if I b'lev'd in the compass, or thought the log could lie. I've never seed the critter myself, cos I haint cruised in them waters as he locates himself in, not since I started on my first voyage in the 'Confidence' whaler, Captain Coffing; but I recking I've got a brother as hails from Nahant, that sees him handsome every year, and knows the latitude and longitude of the beast, just as well as I knows the length o' the futtock shrouds o' the foretops.

Did you ever see a marmaid? Wae'll, then, I reckon you'd best shut up, cos I have, and many on 'em; and marmen too, and marmesses and marmasters, of all sizes, from babbies not bigger nor mackrels to regular six-footers, with stars like a full-grow'd porpus. I've been at a marmaid's tea-party, and after larin' the poor ignorant scaly critters how to sprice the main-brace, I left the hull bilin' on 'em blazin' drunk.

You see, when our craft was cruisin' up the Arches, we cast anchor one mornin' in pretty deep water, just abrest of a small green island as wasn't down in the chart, and hadn't got no name, nyther. But our captin' know'd what he was arter, about as right as ninpence, cos a small skevner came alongside pretty sune, freighted with brandy and wine for the officers, what they'd ordered for their own private stores. Wae'll, the slings was run up to the end o' the main-yard, and the waiters were busy hoistin' up the barrils, when a cask o' brandy slipped from the slings as it was being canted round, and dropped right splash into the sea, sinkin' right away. Upon 'zaminationg the manifest, it proved to be the best cask o' brandy in the skevner, imported from Boardo direct for the captin' himself.

"You etarnal lazy suckers," said he; "look here! take all the boats' anchors, lash 'em together in tews so as to form grappnels o' four punts each, and drag all about here for that ar' brandy—and mind you find it, or I'll put every mother's son of you on short allowance o' rye for the next month."

Wae'll, the boats was ordered out, and a gropin' we went. I was placed in the jolly, with Sy Davis and Pete Slinks, and a middy to direct. The middy was a pretty considerable smart fellow, and jest as we was puttin' off, he nodded up to the chaplin as was leamin' over the side, and says:

"What say you to an hour's float upon this here glassy sea?"

The parson was down by the man ropes in a mimit, and off we sot a fishin' for the brandy tub.

The current run pretty slick by the side o' the little island, and the second luff, who was in the cutter, ordered us to go a-head and watch along the shore jest to see if the tub warn't rolled up there by the tide. We pretended to look right hard for the tub, till we made the lee o' the island, and then if we didn't resolve to take it easy and run the noose o' the jolly into the yellar sand o' the shore, there aint'n no snakes. I held on in the stern by the grappel, and the parson pulled out of his pocket a good-sized sample bottle o' the new stuff as he'd jest bought, and wanted the middy to taste—and arter passin' their ideas on the lick, the chaplin gave us men a pretty stiff horn a piece, now I tell you—and first-rate it was, I s'wore. It iled the parson's tongue like all out-doors—it took him to talk—all about the old original antek names o' the islands that laid in spots all about thar'—classic ground, as he called it, and a pretty yarn he did spin tew.

Then the middy, who'd been keepin' dark and layin' low all this time, show'd his broughtens-up, and let fly a hull broadside at the parson about them ar' syringes and other fabblus winnig.

Wae'll, you see, all this here talk made us dry as thunder; so the chaplin said he guessed the sun was over the fore-yard, and baled us out another horn o' lick, and loate. Then he took a "spell ho!" at the jawin' tackle, and allowed there was a river in Jarminy, where all our Dutch emigrants hails from, and that a naked gull used to locate herself in a whirlpool, and come up on moonshiny nights and sing a hull bookful o' songs, as turned the heads o' all the young fellers in them parts. Wae'll, reports ruz up as she'd a hull cargo o' gold stowed away at the bottom o' the whirlpool, and many a wild young Jarman, seduced by the gall's singin' and hopes o' gold, lept into the river, and warn't heard on never arter. These matters thar the young gall's kariter, and the old folks, who'd always allowed that she was a kind of goddess, began to think that she warn't the clear grit, and the young fellers said her singin' was no great shakes, and that her beauty warn't the thing it was cracked up to be.

There was a famous general, who wasn't raised in that section o' the country, but had swapped a castle on a mountain in Spain for one o' them ar' water lots near the whirlpool; he began to find himself rayther short o' cash to buy his groceries, and concluding that he couldn't dew without a keetle whorley to keep off the aguy, resolved to pay the whirlpool gall a visit, and jest see if he couldn't soft soap the young critter out of a keetle rhino. Next full moon, he tortles to the bluff what hung over the bilin' and foam'n river, and jest at eight bells, up ruz the gall, stark naked, a sittin' on the white froth o' the whirlin' water, and singin', "Won't you come to my bower what I've shaded for you?"

"Wae'll," says the general, not a bit daunted—says he, "look here, my gall: I mean to eat a lobster salad with you to-night, if you promise to behave like a lady, and won't cut up no shines."

Wae'll, the gall give her word o' honour, and the general dove into the whirlpool, and down they went right slick.

Next mornin', the general was found to hum with a sighter old gold pieces, bigger round than the top of a backer-box, and a hull pot full o' the tallest kind o' jewels; you see, the sojer had carried a small flask o' Monongaheny in his pocket, and the river gall couldn't git over the old rye—tew glasses opened her heart, I guess, and she let the general slip his cable in the mornin' with just about as much gold as he could stow away.

Some o' his friends kalkulated as he'd better drop his anchor thar' agin—and there was some talk in the settlement of formin' a jynt-stock company for the purpose o' gettin' up all the gold—but the general tell'd 'em he guessed he'd got enough for him, and he seed quite enough down thar' not to want to go no more; and refusin' to say what he had seen, or tell 'em how they was to go to work, it kinder stopped the jynt-stock company.

The river gall she fell quite in love with the general right up to the hub, and sot on the bilin' water night arter night, singin', "Meet me by moonlight alone;" but the general said he'd see her drowned first afore he trust her agin—for, says he, "No woman was never deceived twyst," which riled the river gall like mad, and in revenge she sot the whirlpool a bilin' like all creation, as if resolved to keep the neighbourhood in hot water. From the sarcumstance of the general's gettin' so much gold out o' the river, the Jarmins called it the Rhino, and its been known by somethin' like that name ever since.

When the chaplain had expended his yarn, he sarved out another allowance o' lick. I recking that he was the rael grit for a parson—always doin' as he'd be done by, and practisin' a darned sight more than he preached. "Taint Christian-like," says he, "to drink by one's self, and a rael tar never objects to share his grog with a shipmate." Them's gin-a-wine Bunker Hill sentiments, and kinder touch the bottom of a sailor's heart!

The middy then uncoiled another length o' cable about the fabblus winnig o' the sea, and said it were a tamation pretty idea, that them angels from hevving as ruled the airth should keep watch over the treasures o' the water. Then he telled a yarn consarnin' the captin' of a marchantman as was trading in the South Seas, layin' at anchor, becalmed, one Sunday mornin' about five bells, when a strange hail was heard from under the bows o' the craft, and the hands on deck as answered the hail seed somebody in the water with jest his head and arms stickin' out, and holdin' on to the dolphing striker. Wae'll, I guess they pretty soon throw'd him a rope and hauled him aboard, and then they seed he was a regular built marman, one half kinder nigger, and tother half kinder fish, but altogether more kinder fish than kinder nigger. So, as I was tellin' you, they got him aboard, and he made an enquerry arter the captin', who come out o' his cabing, and the marman made him a first-rate dancin'-skeul bow, and says in ginnewine English:

"Captin', I sorter recking it ain't entered into your kalkulation as this here is Sabber-day, for you've dropped your tarnal big anchor right in front o' our meetin'-house door, and our folks can't go to prayers."

Wae'll, the captin' was rayther taken aback, and the calm, you see, overlain' him in that thar' hot latitude, had sot his back up above a bit; and besides that, he felt considerable streeked at bein' roused out o' his mornin' nap for nothin'; so, altogether he felt sorter wolfish, and lookin' at the stranger darned savagerous, says:

"Who in creation are you?"

This here speech put the marman's dander up, for he says right sassy:

"I guess I'm appointed deacon over all the narmans and marmoids in these here parts, and I'll jest trouble you to treat me with the respect due tew a stranger and a gentleman."

Wae'll, I recking the captin's ebenezar was roused, for he seized hold of a harpoon that was layin' on the fowksell, and hollered to the marman:

"You fishy vaggubund, make tracks out o' my ship, you sammony-tailed son of a sea-cook, or I'll drive the grains slick through your scaly carkiss, I will."

Wae'll, the critter seein' as the captin' meant danger, made but one flop with his tail, and skeeted over the side o' the ship into the water. The captin' did not weigh anchor, nor nothin', only during the night the cable was cut by the marmen, and the ship drifted on tew a korrl reef, and rubbed a tarnal big hole in her plankin'.

"That's a good yarn," said the parson, "and I b'leve it's true as gospel. Nothin's impossible in natur, and the hull o' these strange fixins as we hear tell on, is nothin' more than links in the almighty great chain cable of universal natur". Bats is the link o' pureteenty as connects the natures o' fowls o' the air and the beasts o' the field. Seals and alligators links the natures o' beasts and fishes. Babboons and apes links beasts with humans; and why should not marmads be the links between humans and the fishes o' the sea? But there's the signal for the boat's return; here's jest a little horn a piece in the bottle—let's licker one more round, and then absquattle."

We pulled quietly back to the ship. The barrel of brandy had not been found, and I wish I may be sniggered if the captin' did not fly into the biggest kind o' quarter-deck passion I ever did see. He stormed great guns and fired hull broadsides at the boat's crews, swearin' that they should keep on dreg'in' till the tub was found, if it was the day arter eternity. So, you see, the hands was piped to dinner, but I was ordered tew keep in the boats and take care they didn't stave each other.

Wae'll, I laid down in the captin's gig, and what with the parson's licker, and the talk about marmads, and syringes, and water-galls, and one thing and t'other, a very pretty muss began mixin' in my brain pan. So, as I was layin' comfortably moored in the starn-sheets, with my head a leetle over the boats' quarter, I thought it highly unwrong that the brandy tub hadn't been fetched up, and that the men usin' the grapnels must have shirked as we did, cos, if they'd sarched as they oughter, they must have seed the barrel, for the water was so petickler clear that you could dissarm the crabs crawlin' over the korrl rocks at the bottom o' twenty fathom.

Wae'll, while I was lookin' into the ocean to see if I could light upon the barrel, a leetle o' the largest fish I ever did see come and swim right close to the bottom of the sea, jest under the boats. Then it kept risin' and risin', till I seed its long fins were shaped like men's arms; and when it come near the sarch, it turned on its back, and then I seed a human face! I know'd at once that it was a marmaid, or a marmen, or one o' them amfibberus critters called fabelus syringes, as the chaplain had been sperrin' his yarns about. So, the critter popt its head up jest above the water, which was smooth as glass, and a little smoother tew by a darned sight, and jest as clear and jest as shiny, and says he to me:

"Look here, stranger, you and your shipmates ain't doin' the genteel thing to me no how you can fix it, for they're playing old hub with my garding grounds and oyster beds by scratchin' and rakin' 'em all over with them ar' darned anchors and grapnel fixins, in a manner that's harrowin' to my feelins. If the captin' wants his thunderment licker tub, let him jest send eeny decent Christian down with me, and I'll gin it him."

Wae'll, I'm not goin' to say that I didn't feel kinder skeered, but the chaplain's yarns had rubbed the rough edge off, and the notion o' findin' the captin's cask pleased me mightily, cos I knowed it would tickle the old man like all creation, and sartly get me three or four liberty days for shore goun when we returned to Port Mahon. So, as I hadn't on nothin' petickler as would spile, only a blue cotting shirt and sail-cloth pantys, and the weather bein' most uncommon warm, I jest told the marmen I was ready, and torked quietly over the boat's side into the blue transparent sea.

The marmen grappled me by the fist, and we soon touched bottom, now I tell ye. I found as I could walk easy enough, only the water swayed me about jest as if I war a leetle tight, but I didn't seem to suffer nothin' from want o' breath, nyther.

We soon reached whar' the brandy-cask was lyn' right under the ship's keel, which accounts for its not bein' seen nor nothin' by the boats' crews. I felt so everlastingly comical about findin' the tub, that I told the half-bred dolphing fellow that pinte'd it out, that if I knowed how to tap it, I wish I might die if I wouldn't give him a gallon o' the stuff as a salvage fee.

"What's in it?" says the marmen.

"Why, licker," says I.

"Wae'll," says the marmen, "so I heard them scrapin' fellers in the boats say; but I guess I've licker enough to last my time, tho' I recking your licker is something stronger than salt water, seein' that its hooped up in that almighty way."

"Why, you lubber," says I, "it's brandy—the raal ginnewine coneyhack."

"And what's that?" says the marmen.

"Why, dew tell—want to know?" says I; "have you lived to your time o' life without tastin' spirretus licker? Wae'll, I swow, you oughter be the commodore of all them cold water clubs, and perpetual president of all temp'rance teetotalers. Go ahead, matey; pilot the way to your shanty, and I'll roll the barrel arter you. I'll sune give you a drink o' licker that will jest take the shirt-tail off eeny thing you ever did taste, now I tell you."

Wae'll, the critter flopped ahead, for you see its the natur' o' the marmen, seein' as they've no legs, only a fish's tail what's bent under them, jest like the lower part o' the letter J, to make way by floppin' their starns up and down, and paddlin' with their hands—somethin' between a swim and a swagger—but the way they get through the water is a caution. I rolled the tub along over the smooth white shiny sand, and the crabs and lobsters skeeted off right and left sides out o' my way regular skeered, and big fishes of all shapes and makes, with bristlin' fins, swum close alongside me, and looked at me quite awful with their small gooseberry eyes, as much as to say, "What the nation *are* you at?"

Bymeby, the marmen brought up in front of rayther a largeish cave or grotto of rock and shell work, kivered with korrl and sea-weed. So, you see, the tub was put right on end in one corner; I made an enquiry o' the marmen if he had a gimblet, and he said he b'leved there was such a thing in the hold or cellar; he'd found a carpenter's tool-chest in a wreck a few miles to the easterd, and he fetched away six or seven of the leetle fixins, thinkin' they might be useful to hum—so, he opened the back door and hailed a young marmen to bring him the gimblet.

Seein' as there was no benches nor nothin' to sit down on, which marmen and marmads don't desire, cos they've no sittin' parts to their bodies, which is all fish from their waistbands, I jest sot on the top o' the brandy tub, and took an observation of the critter before me. His face was reglar human, only it looked rayther tawney and flabby like a biled nigger, with fishy eyes, and a mouth like a huge tom cod. His hair hung stret down his shoulders, and was coarse and thick, like untwisted rattlin'; his hands were somethin' like a goose's paw, only the fingers were longer and thicker; and his body was not exactly like an Injin's nor a nigger's, nor a white man's—nor was it yellor, nor blue, nor green—but a sorter altogether kinder mixed up colour, lookin' as if it were warranted to stand the weather. Jest about midships, his body was tucked into a fish's belly, with huge green scales right down to the tail.

Whilst I was surveyin' the marmen fore and aft, the back door opened, and a she critter flopped in, with a young marmen at the breast. The leetle sucker was not bigger than a pickered, with a tail of a delicate sammon colour, and a head and body jest like one o' them small tan monkeys, with a face as large as a dollar. The marmen introduced the she critter as his wife, and we soon got into a coil of talk right slick, all about the weather, and the keare and trouble o' a young family—and I wished I may be swamped if the marmaid warn't a dreadful nice critter to chatter. Like all winning folk, she was plaguey kewrous as to whar' I was raised and rigged—and when I said I guess I hailed from Cape Cod, and all along shore thar', she looked at the marmen, and said to me:

"Wae'll, I never—Cape Cod! why, stranger, I guess there must be some finny in our breeds."

Wae'll, you see, I grew rayther kewrous tew, and wanted to log the peticklers o' the nateral history o' the race o' marmen—so I made a few enquiries respectin' their ways o' life.

"I guess," says I, "you've a tarnal good fish market in these here parts, and keep your table well supplied with hallbut and sea-bass, and black-fish, eh?"

"Why, stranger," says the marmen, rayther wrathy, "seein' its you I won't be offended, or, by hevving, if that speech ain't enough to make a marmen feel scaly, why then it ain't no matter. We claim to be half fish in our natur", and I reckon you don't kalkilate we gobbles our relations? there's sea varmint enough in all conscience, sitch as oysters, and clams, and quahogs, and muscles, and crabs, and lobsters. We do the hull shoot with them; and then we cultivates kail and other sea truck in our gardings, and sometimes we swims under the wild fowl as they're floatin', and jerks down a fine duck or a gull, or gathers their eggs off the rocks, or the barnacles off drift wood."

Jest then, the marmen's eldest son-fish fetched in the gimblet, and brought up the marmen's javin' tacks with a round turn. The young un was about the size of an Injin boy jest afore he runs alone—half papoose, half porpus. He got a leetle skeered when he clapt eyes on me, but I gave him a stale quid o' backer to amuse himself, and the sugar plum made the marmaster roll his eyes above a bit, now I tell you.

Wae'll, I bored a hole in the brandy tub, and pickin' up an empty clam-shell, handed a drink to the lady, and told her to tote it down. The she swaller'd it pretty slick, and the way she goped afterwards, and stared, and twisted her fishy mouth, was a sin to Davy Crockett. The marmen looked rayther wolfy at me, as if I'd gin her pison; so I drew a shell-fall and swallered it myself. This kinder cooled him down, and when the marmaid got her tongue tackle in runnin' order agin, she said she guessed the licker was the juice of hevving, and she'd be darned if she wouldn't have another drink right off the reel.

Seein' this, the marman swallowed his dose, and no sooner got it down than he squealed right out, and clapped his webby hands together, and wagged his tail like all creation. He swore it was elegant stuff, and he felt it tickle powerful from the top of his head to the eend of his starn-fin. Arter takin' two or three horns together, the sonny cried for a drink, and I gin him one that sent him wrigglin' on the sand like an eel in an uneasiness. So, the marman said as the licker was raal first-rate, and first-rater than that tew, he guessed he'd ask in his next door neighbour and his lady, jest to taste the godsend. Waell, in a minnit, in comes a huge marman of the most almighty size, looking jest like Black Hawk when he was bilious; he fatched up his lady with him, and his eldest son, a scraggy hobbadehoy marman, and his darters, two young marmmaids or marmisses, jest goin' out o' their teens, who flapped their yaller-skinned paws over their punking-coloured chops, pretendin' to be almighty skeered at comin' afore a strange man in a state o' natur—but they forgot all about that thar' when the licker was handed to them.

Arter takin' a few smaller, the fresh marman said he guessed the clam-shell was altogether tew leetle to get a proper amount of licker whereby a feller could judge correctly of the raal taste o' the stuff—so he went to his berth in the next cave, and fatched a large blue and silver shell that held about a pint.

The news o' the brandy-tub spred pretty slick, for in half an hour, I'd the hull grist o' the marmen belongin' to that settlement cooped up in the cavern. Sitch a noisy swillin' set o' wet souls I never did see; the drunk com' on em almighty strong, for they kept me sarvin' out the licker jest as quick as it would run. I thought if the captin' could have seen me astridin' his brandy-cask, in an underground grocery at the bottom o' the sea, surrounded by sich a skeul of odd fish, how many dozen at the gangway would he have ordered the bosen's mate to have sarved me out?

The way the drunk affected the different critters was right kewrous, now I tell you. One great scaly feller stiffened his tail all up, and stood poppindickler erect on the peaked pints of the eend fin, like a jury-mast, and jawed away raal dignified at all the rest, wantin' them to appoint him a sort o' admiral over the hull crew. Another yeller feller, with a green tail, was so dreadful blue, that he doubled himself into a figgery 5, and sung scraps and bits o' all sorts o' sea songs, till he got tew drunk to speak at all. Some o' the marmen wanted to kiss all the marmmaids, and tew o' the ladies begun scratchin' and fightin' like two pusseys, cos one trod on t'other's tail. Some went floppin' and dancin' on the sand like mad, raisin' sitch a dust that I could not see to draw the licker—but the party round the tub soon druv' them to the right about, as interferin' with the interest o' the settlement. Every minnit some fresh marman dropped on the ground with the biggest kind of load on; I never seed a set o' critters so almighty tight, yellin', swearin', huggin', and fightin', till they growed so darned savagerous that I kinder feared for my own safety amongst them drunken moffradite sea aborgoines. So, you see, I up and told them that I'd clapt my veto on the licker, and that they should not have any more.

Waell, if ever you did hear a most etarnal row, or see a hull raft o' drunken fellers cut d'loes, then *was* the time. It was voted that I were a public enemy, and every half-drunken marman suddenly become very 'fishus to have me lynched, and it were settled at last that I were to be rode on a rail, and then tarred and feathered. But, while some o' the varmint went arter the rail and the tar, the rest o' the critters begun quarrelin' who was to sarve out the licker; and as each marman, drunk or sober, wanted to have the keare o' the precious stuff, they soon raised a pretty muss, and kept on tearin' at each other like a pack o' wolves. Seein' this, I jest kinder sneaked quietly away from the cave grocery till I com' in sight o' the ship, when I struck upperd for the sarfis, and swum for dear life. I soon seed that the boats' crew were musterin' for another bout o' draggin' for the brandy-cask; so, fearin' least the captin' should miss me, I jest laid hold o' the edge o' the g'ig, and crawled in pretty quickly, and laid myself down in the starn-sheets, as if I'd never been out o' the boat.

I hadn't laid thar' half a second, when I heerd a noise jest for all the world as if somebody was squeezein' a small thundercloud right over my head. I ruz up, and thar' were the captin' and the hull crew lookin' over the ship's side at me—the officers in a tarnal rage, and the men grimin' like so many hyenas.

"Rouse up, you long-sided lazy swab, and bring the boats in from the boom. Are you goin' to sleep all day?"

"Ay, ay, Sir," said I, jumpin' up in the boat, when all the water run off me like forty thousand mill-streams—I'd been so outrageous soaked while down with the marmen. I felt kinder skeered lest the captin' should see it, but when I stood up he laughed right out, and so did the hull crew tew.

"Why, he's not awake yet," said the captin'. "Bosen, give him another bucket."

You see they wanted to persuade me that I'd fell asleep in the g'ig, as fast as a meetin'-house, and slept thar' the hull while the crew were at dinner, and that no shoutin' nor nothin' couldn't wake me up—so, the bosen run along the boom and jest give me a couple o' buckets o' sea-water right over me. When I told 'em my yarn about the marman poppin' up his head, and invitin' me down, and all abeout findin' the brandy-tub and the rest, they swore that I'd got drunk on the parson's licker, and dreamt it all in the boat. But I guess I know what I did see, jest about as slick as anybody; and the chaplain b'lieved the hull story; and said that as I'd learnt the marmen the valley o' licker, they'd get huntin' up all the tubs and barrels out of the different wrecks in all the various seas; and that intemperance would spile the race, and thin 'em off till they became one o' the things that was—jest like the Injins what's wastin' away by the power o' rum and whiskey given 'em by the white men.

I reckon the parson warn't far out in his kalkilashing. The love o' licker has had its effect upon the marmen and the marmmaids; they must have thinned off surprisin'ly, for I ain't seed none since, nor I don't know nobody that has nyther.

XX.  
CAPTAIN STICK AND TONEY.

Captain Stick was a remarkably precise old gentleman, and a conscientiously just man. He was, too, very methodical in his habits, one of which was to keep an account in writing of the conduct of his servants, from day to day. It was a sort of account-current, and he settled by it every Saturday afternoon. No one dreaded these hebdomadal balancings more than Toney, the boy of all-work; for the Captain was generally obliged to write a receipt, for a considerable amount, across his shoulders.

One settling afternoon, the Captain, accompanied by Toney, was seen "toddling" down to the old stable, with his little account-book in one hand, and a small rope in the other. After they had reached the "Bar of Justice," and Toney had been properly "strung up," the Captain proceeded to state his accounts, as follows:

"*Toney, Dr:*

"Sabbath, to not half blacking my boots, &c., five stripes.

"Tuesday, to staying four hours at mill longer than necessary, ten stripes.

"Wednesday, to not locking the hall door at night, five stripes.

"Friday, to letting the horse go without water, five stripes.

"Total, twenty-five stripes.

"*Toney, Cr:*

"Monday, by first-rate day's work in the garden, ten stripes.

"Balance due, fifteen stripes."

The balance being thus struck, the Captain drew his cow-hide and remarked:

"Now, Toney, you black scamp, what say you, you lazy villain, why I shouldn't give you fifteen lashes across your back, as hard as I can draw?"

"Stop, old Mass," said Toney; "dar's de work in de garden, Sir—dat ought to tek off some."

"You black dog," said the Captain, "havn't I given you the proper credit of ten stripes for that? Come, come!"

"Please, old Massa," said Toney, rolling his eyes about in agony of fright, "dar's—you forgot—dar's de scourin' ob de floor—old missus say e nebbber been scour as good before."

"Soho, you saucy rascal," quoth Captain Stick; "you're bringing in more off-sets, are you? Well, now, there!"—here the Captain made an entry upon his book—"you have a credit of five stripes and the balance must be paid."

"Gor a mity, Massa, don't hit yet—dar's sumpen else—oh, Lord! please don't—yes, Sir—got um now—ketchin' de white boy and fetchin' um to ole missus, what trow rock at de young duck."

"That's a fact," said the Captain, "the outrageous young vagabond!—that's a fact, and I'll give you credit of *ten* stripes for it—I wish you had brought him to me—now we'll settle the balance."

"Bress de Lord, ole Massa," said Toney, "*dat's all!*"

Toney grinned extravagantly.

The Captain adjusted his tortoise-shell spectacles with great exactness, held the book close to his eyes, and ascertained that the fact was as stated by Toney. He was not a little irritated.

"You swear off the account, you infernal rascal!—you swear off the account, do you?"

"All de credit is fair, old Massa," answered Toney.

"Yes, but—" said the disappointed Captain, "but—but—" still the Captain was sorely puzzled how to give Toney a *few licks any how*, "but—" an idea popped into his head, "*where's my costs*, you incorrigible, abominable scoundrel? You want to swindle me, do you, out of my costs, you black, deceitful rascal! And," added Captain Stick, chuckling as well at his own ingenuity, as the perfect justice of the sentence, "I enter judgment against you for costs—ten stripes!" and forthwith administered the stripes and satisfied the judgment.

"Ki nigger!" said Toney; "ki nigger! what dis judgment' for coss, ole Massa talk 'bout. Done git off 'bout not blackin' de boot—git off 'bout stayin' long time at de mill—and ebery ting else; but dis judgment' for coss gim me de debbil! Bress God, nigger must keep out ob de ole stable, or I'll tell you what, dat *judgmen' for coss* make e back feel mighty warm, for true!"

The afternoon of a still, sultry day, found us at the Bankhead spring, on Chaptico Bay, Maryland—Billy Harris, old "Blair," and myself. Billy was seated on the head of his canoe, leisurely discussing a bone and a slice of bread, the remnant of his mid-day's repast on the river; old "Blair" was busily engaged in overhauling and arranging the fish that he had taken in the course of the morning; while I, in a state of half-listlessness, half-doziness, was seated on the trunk of an uprooted cedar near the spring, with my head luxuriously reclining against the bank.

"Well, this is about as pooty a fish as I've had the handling ov for some time," remarked old "Blair," holding up and surveying with much satisfaction a rock about two feet and a half in length.

"Smart rock that," said Billy, as he measured the fish with his eye. "What an elegant team a couple o' dozen o' that size would make!"

"Elegant *what*, Mr. Harris?" inquired old "Blair," depositing the fish under the bushes in the bow of his canoe, and turning round towards Billy.

"Why, an elegant team for a man to travel with," replied Billy. "Did I never tell you 'bout my driving the drums to the Alexandri' market?'" he added, at the same time casting a furtive glance in the direction of the spot where I was seated.

"Well, I've hearn a right smart of your exploits, Mr. Harris, in our meetin's down here on the bay," said "Blair;" "but I don't remember ov hearin' you tell about that."

"The fact is," said Billy, "it's a little out o' the usual run o' things, and it's not every one that I care about telling it to. Some people are so hard to make believe, that there's no satisfaction in telling them anything; seeing it's you, though, Lewis, I don't mind relating that little spree—specially as the tide won't serve us up the narrows for some time yet, and Mr. —, there, seems inclined to do a little napping. Well, to begin at the beginning," he continued, as old "Blair" assumed the attitude of an attentive listener at the head of his canoe, "it's just seven years ago the tenth day of this here last month, that I went down to the drumming-ground off the salt-works to try my luck among the thumpers. I know'd the gents were about, for I'd heard 'em drumming the day before while I was out rocking on the outer end o' Mills's; so I got everything ready the over night, and by an hour by sun the next morning I had arrived upon the ground, ready for action. For the first half-hour or so I done nothing. Sometimes an old chanu'ler or a greedy cat would pay his respects to my bait in a way that would make my heart jump up into my mouth, and get me kind o' excited like, but that was all. Devil the drum ever condescended to favour me with a nibble. A'ter a while I begun to get tired o' that kind o' sport, and concluded that I'd just up-stake and shove a little nearer in shore. Just as I was preparing to pull in my line, though, I spied a piece o' pine bark, 'bout twenty yards off, floating down towards me. 'Now,' says I, 'gents, I'll give you until that bit of bark passes my line, to bite in, and if you don't think proper to do it in that time, you may breakfast as you can—I'll not play the waiting-boy any longer.' Well, the piece of bark got right off against my line without my getting so much as a nibble, and I begun wind up; but I hadn't got more'n a foot or so o' the line out the water, when I felt something give me a smart tug. At first I thought it might be a crab or an oyster-shell that I'd hooked, but presently my line begun to straighten under a strong, steady pull, and then I know'd 'twas about. I give one sangorous jerk, and the dance commenced."

"What was it—a drum?" inquired old "Blair," a little eagerly.

"Yes, a drum, and a regular scrouger, at that. I wish you had only been there, Lewis, to see the fim. Of all the hard fish to conquer, that ever I took in hand, that chap was the Major. I got him alongside at last, though, and lifted him in. I then run a rope through his gills, and sent him overboard agin, makin' the two ends of the line fast to a staple in the stern o' the boat, just behind me.

"Well, this put me in first-rate spirits, and out went my line agin in the twinklin' of an eye. Before it had time to touch the bottom, it was jerked through my hand for the matter of a yard or so, and then cum another interestin' little squabble. Just as I got that chap to the top o' the water, 'way went t'other line!"

"My patience!" exclaimed old "Blair," who had probably never taken a drum in the whole course of his life, "two goin' at once?"

"Yes, *two* at once."

"And did you save 'em both, Mr. Harris?"

"Save 'em!" said Billy; "did you ever know me to lose a fish arter I'd once struck him?"

"Well, exceptin' that big rock this mornin'," replied "Blair," as a scarcely perceptible smile crept over his ebony visage, "I don't remember as I ever did."

"But that, you know, was the fault o' the hook—the beard wasn't quite long enough," said Billy. "But to come back to the drums," he continued, quickly. "In about three hours from the time I staked down, I had no less than thirty-nine fine fish floating at the end o' my little corner; so I concluded that I'd just up-stake, and make a push for the narrows.

"But how am I to get the drums along?" said I to myself; "that's the next question. If I take 'em in the boat, I shall be swamped to a certainty; and if I undertake to tow 'em straight up the river, it's a school o' pickers to a single crocus that I'm run away with."

"A'ter debating the matter for a little while with myself, I concluded that I'd just shove in quietly towards the land, until I got into schoal water, and then follow the shore. So I bent over as easy as I could, pulled up the stake, and commenced shoving along; but no sooner did the drums feel themselves moving through the water, than they turned tack, and, with a flirt of their tails, dashed smack off down the river, like so many terrified colts."

"Thar, bless the Lord!" ejaculated old "Blair," suddenly rising from his seat, and then resuming it again.

"My first thought," continued Billy, "was to cut the rope, and let the whole batch of 'em go; but on turning round for that purpose, I found that the stern of the boat was buried so low in the water, that a little stream was beginning to run over the top; so I jist travelled to the other end of the boat, and tried to bear down. But the thing wasn't to be done so easy. The drums had taken the bit between their teeth, and were pullin' down with a regular forty-horse power. Seeing no other way of saving myself from the crabs, I jist got a-straddle o' the boat, and worked my way backwards, until I reached the last half inch o' the bow, and there I sot, with my legs dangling in the water, 'till the gents begun to cool down, and come to the top. By this time we had got over Cobb Bar, and the drums were looking straight up the Potomac. I never knowed how to account for it, but jist then a queer notion struck me:

"'Spose, now," said I, to myself, "I was to take these chaps in hand, and drive 'em to Alexandri'; wouldn't it be something to talk about when I got back!"

"The thing sorter pleased me, and I determined to try it, come what might of it. So I reached down, and got hold o' my drum-line, and carefully doubled it. I then got down into the boat, and crawled along on my hands and knees to the other end o' the corner, where the drums were, and looked over. Finding that they were all moving along quietly, I tied my line to the two ends o' the rope that they were fastened with, and then cut the rope loose from the staple. This made the reins about twenty-five yards long, but I only let out about one-half o' 'em. I was afraid, you see, if I give the gents too much play room, that they might get into tantrums, and give me more trouble. Seeing, arter a while, though, that I could manage 'em pretty well, I jist wound the line round my left hand, picked up my angel rope for a whip, took my seat in the stern of the boat, and told 'em to travel. And *didn't* they travel! I wish you could only have seen me, Lewis. Old Neption, that Mr. —, there, sometimes tells about, wasn't a circumstance. I had a thundering big red drum in the lead, and nineteen as pretty matches o' black ones following after, as ever a man could wish to look at; and they all moved along as nicely as so many well-broke carriage-horses. It's true, a chap would sometimes become a little fractious, like, and sheer off towards the Ma'lyand or Virginny shore, but I'd jist fetch a draw on t'other tack, and give him a slight touch with the rod near the back fin, and he'd fall into line agin as beautiful as could be. Well, Lewis, to make a long story short, it was about ten o'clock in the day when I took the gentlemen in hand, and by three hours by the sun that evening, I pitched the reins over one o' the posts on the Alexandri' wharf. A crowd o' people had collected together to see me land, and as the thing ov the man's drivin' fish to market seemed to tickle 'em, I soon sold out my whole team, at a dollar and a half a head. I at first thought of holding on to about half a dozen ov 'em to travel home with; but as I expected they were pretty well tired out, and the wind happened to be fair, I bought me a sail, laid in a supply ov eatables, and a jug of the best old rye that ever tickled a man's throat" (a slight working of old "Blair's" mouth was here perceptible), "and at day-break the next morning was snoozing it away nicely under my own shingles at home."

"Didn't you see no steam-boats, nor nothin', on your way up, Mr. Harris?" inquired old "Blair."

"Oh yes," said Billy. "'Bout twenty miles this side o' Alexandri' I met the old Columbia, coming down under a full head o' steam. She was crowded with people, and as I passed close along by the wheel-house, and bowed my head to 'em, they all clapped their hands and hollered mightily. I beam afterwards that the Captain, or somebody else, had it all put in the papers, but I can't say from my own knowledge whether it was so or not. I also overtook two or three brigs, but didn't stop to talk—

just give 'em a nod, and passed on."

"My patience!" exclaimed old "Blair;" "well you *was* a travellin'."

"Just t'other side o' Nangem'y Reach, too," continued Billy, "I fell in with a sa'cy little pungy, that brushed up alongside, and seemed inclined to keep company. As the wind happened to freshen up just then. I couldn't get away from her no how; and the son of a blood of a captin kept bearing me in towards the land until he got me almost right upon a long bar before I know'd it. As the water was several feet deep at the eend of the bar, the pungy could pass right by it without touching; so I had either to cross the bar or go round the pungy. It was a desperate undertaking to try the bar, for 'bout a yard or so wide it was perfectly bare; but I couldn't think of being beat, so I just stood up in the boat, gathered the line well together in my hands, and with a whoop to the drums, rushed 'em at it."

"And did you *raily* cross it, Mr. Harris?" said "Blair," a little staggered.

"Without turning a shell," replied Billy.

"And what became o' the pungy?"

"Why in a little while the wind died away, and she dropped behind, and I saw nothing more of her. I reckon it mad the captin open his eyes, though, to see the way I crossed the bar. But the greatest expl't ov all was—"

"What, you unconscionable liar—what?" exclaimed I, determined to put a stop to any further drafts upon old "Blair's" credulity.

"Why, the one you was tellin' me t'other day 'bout old Nepton's hitching his sea-horses to some big island or 'nother, and pulling it up by the roots, and towing it off with the people and all on it, and anchorin' it down in some other place that he liked better," was the unexpected rejoinder.

A reply was deemed unnecessary; and in a few minutes more the cheerful plash of the Bankhead spring was among the sounds we heard not.

XXII.  
YANKEE HOMESPUN.

"When I lived in Maine," said Uncle Ezra, "I helped to break up a new piece of ground: we got the wood off in the winter, and early in the spring we begun ploughing on't. It was so consarned rocky that we had to get forty yoke of oxen to one plough—we did faith—and I held that plough more'n a week; I thought I should die. It e'en a most killed me, I vow. Why, one day I was hold'n, and the plough hit a stump which measured just nine feet and a half through it—hard and sound white oak. The plough split it, and I was going straight through the stump when I happened to think it might snap together again, so I threw my feet out, and had no sooner done this, than it snapped together, taking a smart hold of the seat of my pantaloons. Of course I was tight, but I held on to the plough-handles, and though the teamsters did all they could, that team of eighty oxen could not tear my pantaloons, nor cause me to let go my grip. At last though, after letting the cattle breathe, they gave another strong pull altogether, and the old stump came out about the quickest; it had monstrous long roots, too, let me tell you. My wife made the cloth for them pantaloons, and I haven't worn any other kind since."

The only reply made to this was: "I should have thought it would have come hard upon your suspenders."

"Powerful hard."

In my round of practice, I occasionally meet with men whose peculiarities stamp them as belonging to a class composed only of themselves. So different are they in appearance, habits, taste, from the majority of mankind, that it is impossible to classify them, and you have therefore to set them down as queer birds "of a feather," that none resemble sufficiently to associate with.

I had a patient once who was one of these queer ones; gigantic in stature, uneducated, fearless of real danger, yet timorous as a child of superstitious perils, born literally in the woods, never having been in a city in his life, and his idea of one being that it was a place where people met together to make whiskey, and form plans for swindling country folks. To view him at one time, you would think him only a whiskey-drinking, bear-fat-loving mortal; at other moments, he would give vent to ideas, proving that beneath his rough exterior there ran a fiery current of high enthusiastic ambition.

It is a favourite theory of mine, and one that I am fond of consoling myself with, for my own insignificance, that there is no man born who is not capable of attaining distinction, and no occupation that does not contain a path leading to fame. To bide our time is all that is necessary. I had expressed this view in the hearing of Mik-hoo-tah, for so was the object of this sketch called, and it seemed to chime in with his feelings exactly. Born in the woods, and losing his parents early, he had forgotten his real name, and the bent of his genius inclining him to the slaying of bears, he had been given, even when a youth, the name of Mik-hoo-tah, signifying "the grave of bears," by his Indian associates and admirers.

To glance in and around his cabin, you would have thought that the place had been selected for ages past by the bear tribe to yield up their spirits in, so numerous were the relics. Little chance, I ween, had the cold air to whistle through that hut, so thickly was it tapestried with the soft, downy hides, the darkness of the surface relieved occasionally by the skin of a tender fawn, or the short-haired irascible panther. From the joists depended bear-hams and tongues innumerable, and the ground without was literally white with bones. Ay, he was a bear-hunter, in its most comprehensive sense—the chief of that vigorous band, whose occupation is nearly gone—crushed beneath the advancing strides of romance-destroying civilization. When his horn sounded—so tradition ran—the bears began to draw lots to see who should die that day, for painful experience had told them the uselessness of all endeavouring to escape. The "Big Bear of Arkansas" would not have given him an hour's extra work, or raised a fresh wrinkle on his already care-corrugated brow. But, though almost daily inbruing his hands in the blood of Bruin, Mik-hoo-tah had not become an iniquitous or cruel-hearted man. Such was his piety, that he never killed a bear without getting down on his knees—to skin it—and praying to be—need if it warn't a buster; and such his softness of heart, that he often wept when he, by mistake, had killed a suckling bear—depriving her poor offspring of a mother's care—and found her too poor to be eaten. So indefatigable had he become in his pursuit, that the bears bid fair to disappear from the face of the swamp, and be known to posterity only through the one mentioned in Scripture, that assisted Elisha to punish the impertinent children, when an accident occurred to the hunter, which raised their hopes of not being entirely exterminated.

One day, Mik happened to come unfortunately in contact with a stray grizzly fellow, who, doubtless in the indulgence of an adventurous spirit, had wandered away from the Rocky Mountains, and formed a league for mutual protection with his black and more effeminate brethren of the swamp. Mik saluted him, as he approached, with an ounce ball in the forehead, to avenge half a dozen of his best dogs, who lay in fragments around; the bullet flattened upon his impenetrable skull, merely infuriating the monster, and before Mik could reload, it was upon him. Seizing him by the leg, it bore him to the ground, and ground the limb to atoms. But before it could attack a more vital part, the knife of the dauntless hunter had cloven its heart and it dropped dead upon the bleeding form of its slayer, in which condition they were shortly found by Mik's comrades. Making a litter of branches, they placed Mik upon it, and proceeded with all haste to their camp, sending one of the company by a near cut for me, as I was the nearest physician. When I reached their temporary shelter, I found Mik doing better than I could have expected, with the exception of his wounded leg, and that, from its crushed and mutilated condition, I saw would have to be amputated immediately, of which I informed Mik. As I expected, he opposed it vehemently; but I convinced him of the impossibility of saving it, assuring him if it were not amputated he would certainly die, and appealed to his good sense to grant permission, which he did at last. The next difficulty was to procure amputating instruments, the rarity of surgical operations, and the generally slender purse of the "Swamp Doctor," not justifying him in purchasing expensive instruments. A couple of bowie-knives, one ingeniously made and filed into a saw—a tourniquet made of a belt and a piece of stick—a gun-screw converted for the time into a tenaculum—and some buckskin slips for ligatures, completed my case of instruments for amputation. The city physician may smile at this recital, but I assure him many a more difficult operation than the amputation of a leg, has been performed by his humble brother in the "swamp," with far more simple means than those I have mentioned. The preparations being completed, Mik refused to have his arms bound, and commenced singing a bear-song; and throughout the whole operation, which was necessarily tedious, he never uttered a groan, or missed a single stage. The next day, I had him conveyed by easy stages to his pre-emption; and tending assiduously, in the course of a few weeks, he had recovered sufficiently for me to cease attentions. I made him a wooden leg, which answered a good purpose; and with a sigh of regret for the spoiling of such a good hunter, I struck him from my list of patients.

A few months passed over and I heard nothing more of him. Newer, but not brighter, stars were in the ascendant, filling with their deeds the clanging trump of bear-killing fame, and, but for the quantity of bear-blankets in the neighbouring cabins, and the painful absence of his usual present of bear-hams, Mik-hoo-tah bid fair to suffer that fate most terrible in aspiring ambitions—forgetfulness during life. It was near sunset when I arrived at home from a long wearisome semi-ride-and-swim through the swamp. Receiving a negative to my inquiry whether there were any new calls, I was eliciting myself upon a quiet night beside my tidy bachelor hearth, undisturbed by crying children, babbling women, or amorous cats—the usual accompaniments of married life—when, like a poor henpecked Benedict crying for peace when there is no peace, I was doomed to disappointment. Hearing the splash of a paddle in the bayou running before the door, I turned my head towards the bank, and soon beheld, first the tail of a coon, next his body, a human face, and, the top of the bank being gained, a full-proportioned form clad in the garments which, better than any printed label, wrote him down rafterman, trapper, bear-hunter. He was a messenger from the indefatigable bear-hunter, Mik-hoo-tah. Asking him what was the matter, as soon as he could get the knots untied, which two-thirds drunkenness had made in his tongue, he informed me, to my sincere regret, that Mik went out that morning on a bear-hunt, and in a fight with one he had got his leg broke all to flinders, if possible worse than the other, and that he wanted me to come quickly. Getting into the canoe, which awaited me, I wrapped myself in my blanket, and yielding to my fatigue, was soon fast asleep. I did not awaken until the canoe striking against the bank, as it landed at Mik's pre-emption, nearly threw me in the bayou, and entirely succeeded with regard to my half-drunken paddler, who—like the sailor that circumnavigated the world, and then was drowned in a puddle-hole in his own garden—had escaped all the perils of the tortuous bayou to be pitched overboard when there was nothing to do but step out and tie the dug-out. Assisting him out of the water, we proceeded to the house, when, to my indignation, I learnt that the drunken messenger had given me the long trip for nothing. Mik only wanting me to make him a new wooden leg, the old one having been completely demolished that morning.

I would have returned that night, but the distance was too great for one fatigued as I was, so I had to content myself with such accommodations as Mik's cabin afforded, which, to one blessed like myself with the happy faculty of ready adaptation to circumstances, was not a very difficult task.

I was surprised to perceive the change in Mik's appearance. From nearly a giant he had wasted to a mere huge bony frame-work; the skin of his face clung tightly to the bones, and showed nothing of those laughter-moving features that were wont to adorn his visage; only his eye remained unchanged, and it had lost none of its brilliancy—the flint had lost none of its fire.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Mik? I have never seen any one fall off so fast; you have wasted to a skeleton—surely you must have the consumption."

"Do you think so, Doc? I'll soon show you whether the old bellows has lost any of its force!" and hopping to the door, which he threw wide open, he gave a death-hug rally to his dogs, in such a loud and piercing tone, that I imagined a steam-whistle was being discharged in my ear, and for several moments could hear nothing distinctly.

"That will do! stop!" I yelled, as I saw Mik drawing in his breath preparatory to another effort of his vocal strength; "I am satisfied you have not got consumption; but what has wasted you so, Mik? Surely you ain't in love?"

"Love! pooh! you don't suppose, Doc, even if I was 'tarminted to make a cussed fool of myself, that there is any gal in the swamp that could stand that hug, do you?" and catching up a huge bull-dog, who lay basking himself by the fire, he gave him such a squeeze that the animal yelled with pain, and for a few moments appeared dead. "No, Doc, it's grief, pure sorrow, sorrow, Doc! when I looks at what I is now and what I squee to be! Jes think, Doc, of the fast hunter in the swamp having his sport spilt,

like bar-meat in summer without salt! Jes think of a man standin' up one day and blessing old Master for havin' put bar in creation, and the next cussing high heaven and low h—l 'cause he couldn't 'sist in puttin' them out! Warn't it enough to bring tears in the eyes of an Injun tater, much less take the fat off a bar-hunter? Doc, I fell off like 'simmons arter frost, and folks as doubted me, needn't had asked whether I war 'ceifurl or not, for they could have seed plum threw me! The bar and painter got so saucy that they'd cum to the tother side of the bayou and see which could talk the impudentest!

“Don't you want some bar-meat or painter blanket?” they'd ask; ‘bars is monstrous fat, and painter's hide is mighty warn!’

“Oh! Doc, I was a miserable man! The sky warn't blue for me, the sun war always cloudy, and the shade-trees gin no shade for me. Even the dogs forgot me, and the little children quit coming and asking:

“Please, Mr. Bar-Grave, catch me a young bar or a painter kitten.”

“Doc, the tears would cum in my eyes, and the hot blood would come bilin' up from my heart, when I'd hobble out of a sundown and hear the boys tell, as they went by, of the sport they'd had that day, and how the bar fit 'fore he was killed, and how fat he war arter he was slayed. Long arter they was gone, and the whip-poor-will had eat up their voices, I would sit out there on the old stump, and think of the things that used to hold the biggest place in my mind when I was a boy, and p'raps sense I've bin a man.

“I'd heard tell of distinction and fame, and people's names never dying, and how Washington and Franklin, and Clay and Jackson, and a heap of political dishesunary-folks, would live when their big hearts had crumbled down to a rifle-charge of dust; and I begun, too, to think, Doc, what a pleasant thing it would be to know folks a million years off would talk of me like them, and it made me 'tarmin' to 'stinguish myself, and have my name put in a book with a yaller kiver. I warn't a genius, Doc, I nude that, nor I warn't dishesunary; so I determined to strike out in a new track for glory, and 'title myself to be called the 'bear-hunter of Ameriky.' Doc, my heart jump't up, and I belted my hunting-shirt tighter for fear it would kepe out when I fust spoke them words out loud.

“The bar-hunter of Ameriky!” Doc, you know whether I war ermin' the name when I war ruined. There is not a child, white, black, Injun, or nigger, from the Arkansas line to Trinity, but what has heard of me, and I were happy when—here a tremor of his voice and a tear glistenin' in the glare of the fire told the old fellow's emotion—“when—but les take a drink—Doc, I found I was dying—I war gettin' weaker and weaker—I nude your truck warn't what I needed, or I'd sent for you. A bar-hunt war the medsin that a systum required, a fust-class bar-hunt, the music of the dogs, the fellers a screaming, the cane poppin', the rifles crackin', the bar growlin', the fight hand to hand, slap goes his paw, and a dog's-hide hangs on one cane and his body on another, the knife glistenin' and then gun' plump up to the handle in his heart! Oh! Doc, this was what I needed, and I swore, since death were huggin' me, any how, I mite as well feel his last grip in a bar-gun.

“I seed the boys goin' long one day, and haled them to wait awhile, as I believed I would go along too. I war frade if I kept out of a hunt much longer I wood get outen practis. They laughed at me, thinkin' I war jokin'; for wat cood a sick, old, one-legged man do in a bar-hunt? how cood he get threw the swamp, and vines, and canes, and back-water? and s'pose he mist the bar, how war he to get outen the way?

“But I war 'tarmined on goin'; my dander was up, and I swore I wood go, tellin' them if I coodent travel 'bout much, I could take a stand. Seein' it war no use tryin' to 'swade me, they saddled my poney, and off we started. I felt better right off. I knew I cuddent do much in the chase, so I told the fellers I would go to the cross-path stand, and wate for the bar, as he would be sarten to cum by thar. You have never seed the cross-path stand, Doc. It's the singlarst place in the swamp. It's rite in the middle of a cane-brake, thicker than har on a bar-hide, down in a deep sink, that looks like the devil had cummen diggin' a skylite for his pre-emption. I knew it war a dangerous place for a well man to go in, much less a one-leg cripple; but I war 'tarmined that time to give a deal on the dead-wood, and play my hand out. The boys gin me time to get to the stand, and then cummenst the drive. The bar seemed 'tarmined on disappointin' me, for the fust thing I heard of the dogs and bar, they was outen hearing. Everything got quiet, and I got so wrathly at not being able to foller up the chase, that I cust till the trees cummenst shedding their leaves and small branches, when I herd them lumbnin' back, and I nude they war makin' to me. I primed old 'bar death' fresh, and rubbed the frizin, for it war no time for rille to get snappin'. Thinkin' I, if I happen to miss, I'll try what virtue there is in a knife—when, Doc, my knife war gone. Oh! bar, for God's sake have a soft head, and die easy, for I *can't* run!

“Doc, you've hearn a bar bustin' thro a cane-brake, and know how near to a harrycane it is. I almost cummenst dogdin' the trees, thinkin' it war the best in the shop one a comin', for it beat the loudest thunder ever I heard; that ole bar did, comin' to get his death from an ole one-legged cripple, what had slayed more of his brethren than his nigger foot had ever made trax in the mud. Doc, he heard a *monstrous long way ahead of the dogs*. I warn't skeered, but I must own as I had but one shot, an' no knife, I wud have prefired they had been closer. But here he cum! he bar—big as a bull—boys off h—llwards—dogs no whar—no knife—but one shot—and *only one leg that cood run!*

“The bar 'peered s'prised to see me standin' ready for him in the openin'; for it war currently reported 'mong his brethren that I war either dead, or no use for bar. I thought fust he war skeered; and, Doc, I b'leve he war, till he catch a sight of my wooden leg, and that toch his pride, for he knew he would be hist outen every she bear's company, ef he run from a poor, sickly, one-legged cripple, so on he cum, a small river of slobber pourin' from his mouth, and the blue smoke curlin' outen his ears. I tuck good aim at his left, and let drive. The ball struck him on the eyebrow, and glanced off, only stunnin' him for a moment, jes givin' me time to club my rifle, an' on he cum, as fierce as old grizzly. As he got in reach, I gin him a lick 'cross the temples, brakin' the stock in fifty pieces, an' knockin' him senseless. I struv to foller up the lick, when, Doc, I war fust—my timber toe had run inter the ground, and I cuddent git out, though I jerked hard enuf almost to bring my thigh out of joint. I stuped to unscrew the infernal thing, when the bar cum too, and cum at me, gim. Vim! I tuck him over the head, and, cochunk, he keeled over. Oh! but I cavorted and pitched. Thar war my wust enemy, watin' for me to giv him a finisher, an' *I cuddent git* at him. I'd cummense unacrewin' leg—here cum bar—vim—cochunk—he'd fall out of reach—and, Doc, *I cuddent git to him*. I kept workin' my body round, so as to unscrew the leg, and keep the bar off till I cood 'complich it, when jes as I tuck the last turn, and got loose from the pesky thing, here cum bar, more venomous than ever, and I nude that war death to one out, and comin' shortly. I let him get close, an' then cum down, with a perfect tornado on his head, as I thought; but the old villain had learnt the dodge—the barrel jes struck him on the side of the head, and glanst off, slingin' itself out of my hands 'bout twenty feet 'mongst the thick cane, and thar I war in a fix sure. Bar but little hurt—no gum—no knife—no dogs—no frens—no chance to climb—an' *only one leg that cood run*. Doc, I jes cummenst makin' 'pologies to ole Master, when an idee struck me. Doc, did you ever see a piney woods nigger pullin' at a sassafras root? or a suckin' pig in a tater patch arter the big yams? You has! Well, you can 'magin how I jurk at that wudden leg, for it war the last of pea-time with me, sure, if I didn't rise 'fore bar did. At last they both cum up, 'bout the same time, and I braced myself for a death struggle.

“We fit all round that holler! Fust I'd foller bar, and then bar would chase me! I'd make a lick, he'd fend off, and showin' a set of teeth that no doctor, 'cept natur, had ever wurkt at, cum tearin' at me! We both 'gan to git tired, I heard the boys and dogs cummin', so did bar, and we were both anxshus to bring the thing to a close 'fore they cum up, though I wuddent thought they were intrudin' ef they had cum up some time afore.

“I'd worn the old leg pretty well off to the second jint, when, jest 'fore I made a lick, the noise of the boys and dogs cummin' sorter confused bar, and he made a stumble, and bein' off his guard I got a fair lick! The way that bar's flesh gin in to the soft impresshuns of that leg war an honour to the mederkal perfunshon for havin' invented sich a weepun! I hollered—but you have heered me holler an' I won't describe it—I had whipped a bar in a fair hand to hand fight—me, an old, sickly, one-legged bar-hunter! The boys cum up, and, when they seed the ground we had fit over, they swore they would hav thought, 'stead of a bar-fight, that I had been cuttin' cane and deadenin' timber for a corn-patch, the sile war so worked up, they then handed me a knife to finish the work.

“Doc, les lick'er, it's a dry talk—when will you make me another leg? for bar-hunt is not over plenty in the cabin, and I feel like tryin' another!”

## COLONEL CROCKETT'S RIDE ON THE BACK OF A BUFFALO.

About ten years ago I fell in with a camp of Konzas, a good piece off the north fork of the Canadian. The Injuns a kyind a sorter give me a sorter tanyard grin, and the old chief specially puckered up his pictur like a green persimmon; but there were three raal roarers from Salt River with me, so I didn't care a picayoon if it cum to skulpin. Besides I was tetotaciouly tired, and I slepp so sound that I wish my rifle may hang fire for ever if I don't think it would have took something rougher than an earthquake to wake me. So I lay till after daylite, and then one of me comrades shook me, to tell me the Injun boys had found a huraaah's neest. I took up old Kill-devil, and out I went, and about a hundred yards from the camp there war an old buffalo bull with a hundred little screeching imps about him, with their bows and arrows. They'd stuck so many arrows in him that he looked as thorny as a honey locus or a porky-pine; but they hadn't got deep enough to touch the rite spot. First the old Turk would go arter one full chizzle; but then another would stick an arro into his posterity, saving your presence, and round he would turn and arter the little torment like an ate-horse baggage waggin. I raily pitied the old cretur, and sez I, "It are raily a shame to let this uncircumsised Fillistin defy the army of Israel in this ridiculous way. I'll let him know there's a warrant out arter him," and I wur gwine to blaze away; but an old Injun kort me elbow, and axed me if it were the way in Kentuck to hinder the children from having a little dust of diversion that did no harm to no one.

"Truth are the truth," sez I, "if an Injun do speak it, and my sarvis to you for the complement."

After a wile the old devil's baby of a bull laid down, for he'd lost a purty smart chance of blood, and what doz one of the b'ys do, but gits a-straddle on his back. The way he riz up warn't slow, and off he sot as if the prairie were afire behind him. I've a notion the b'y never rode so sharp a rail before as that bull's hump.

The old Injun the b'y belonged to wur as white as a lump of chalk for fear his b'y would be killed, and he bangs away at the bull and hits him in the belly, for he wur afraid of breaking the by's leg if he squinted at the heart. That maid the cretur as ugly as a copperhead in July, and he takes arter the old hero like a whole team of thunderbolts.

"Run! run, father!" screeches the young varmint to the old one, "or I'll be down on ye like a falling star," and I begun to see the old one was in danger pretty considerably much.

So I sung out to the b'y to raze his leg, cause it kivered the critter's heart, and I wish I may be shot if he didn't do it as cool as if I held the breech of the rifle at him and not the muzzle, but that's the nature of an Injun. Bang goes old Kill-devil and down comes old bull-beef; but the b'y couldn't walk for a week, and he kyind of thort he'd never ride bairbacked on a buffalo agin, without he seed some special 'casion.

You may say what you please, and be hanged to you, Mr. Stranger, about your hannycondy, the great terrificacious sarpint of Seelon, in South Ameriky, and your rale Bengal tiger from Afriky. Both on 'em heated to a white heat, and welded into one, would be no part of a priming to a grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains. He'd chaw up your roonosseros, and your lion, and your tiger, as small as cut tobacco, for breakfast, and pick his teeth with the bones. The cretur's rale grit, and don't mind fire no more than sugar plums, and none of your wild beastesses can say that for themselves. I've killed one or two on 'em myself, which ar not a thing many suckers can boast on, tho' they are pretty good at scalping Injuns. I was delightfully skeered by the fist I ever saw—no, that ar a lie, tho' I say it myself: Davy Crockett was never skeered by anything but a female woman; but it ar a fact that I war tetotaciously consarned for my life.

You see it war when I war young I went to massacree the buffaloes on the head of Little Great Small Deep Shallow Big Muddy River, with my nigger b'y Doughboy, what I give three hundred dollars for. I'd been all day, till now, vagabondizing about the prairie, without seeing an atom of a buffalo, when I seed one grazing in the rushes, on the edge of a pond, and a crusty old batchelder he was. He war a thousand year old at least, for his hide were all kivered with skars, and he had as much beard as would do all the dandies I've seen in Broadway for whiskers and mustashes a hull year. His eyes looked like two holes burnt in a blanket, or two bullets fired into a stump; and I see he was a cross cantankerous feller, what coodent have no cumfort of his life bekays he war too quarrelsome. If there's enything Davy Crockett's remarkable for, it's for his tender feelings, sheshally toward dum creturs; and I thort it would be a marcy to take away his life, seeing it war onny a torment to him, and he hadent no right to live, no how. So I creeps toward him like a garter snake through the grass, tralein Kill-devil arter me. I war a going to tickle him a little about the short ribs, jest to make him feel amiable, when out jumps a great bear, as big as Kongress Hall, out of the rushes, and lights upon the old Jew like a grey-winged plover. He only hit him one blow, but that war a side winder. I wish I may be kicked to death by grasshoppers, if he didn't tare out five of his ribs, and laid his heart and liver all bare. I kinder sorter pitied the old feller when I see him brought to such an untimely eend, and I didn't somehow think the bear done the thing that war right, for I always does my own skalping, and no thanks to interlopers. So, sez I:

"I'm a civil man, Mr. Bear, saving your presence, and I won't come for to give you no insolatious language; but I'll thank you, when we meet again, not to disremember the old saying, but let every man skin his own skunks."

And with that I insinnivated a ball slap through his hart.

By the ghost of the great mammoth of Big Bone Licks, you'd have thort, by the way he nashed his teeth, I'd a spoken sumthing onpleasant to him. His grinders made a noise jest as if all creation war sharpening cross-cut saws by steam-power, and he war down upon me like the whole Missouri on a sand-bar.

There's no more back out in Davy Crockett than thar ar go-ahead with the Bunker Hill Monument, and so I give him a sogdologer over his coco-nut with the barrel of old Kill-devil that sot him a konsidering, and he thort better on it, and sot off after Doughboy as if the devil had kicked him on eend. It's true Doughboy slipped a ball into his ampersand jest as I struck him; but that war not what turned him; I grinned him out a countenance, so he thort it war safer to make his breakfast on Doughboy than me, which war a thing oncreditable to his taste, seeing I war a white man and he only a nigger.

Well, I hadn't time to load my iron before he gathered upon Doughboy like a Virginny blood mear, and the nigger give himself up for a gone sucker, and fainted away. The bear got up to him jest as I war putting down my ball, and I expected to see him swaller the b'y without greasing; but he no sooner smelt of him than he turned up his nose in disgust, as Isaac Hill did when Mr. Upham hosswipt him, and run away howling as if his delicacy was hugaceously shocked.

By this time I felt most inticingly wolfy and savagerous, and I jest giv him a hint that no man could neglect that it war best to turn in his tracks, and I waited for him jest on the edge of Little Great Small Deep Shallow Big Muddy. He pitched inter me like the piston of a steam-injun, and we both rolled into the drink together. Onluckily for him I didn't lose holt of Kill-devil, and when he raised his head and tried to get over his astonishment, I clapt the barrel right across his neck to shove his visnomy under water. I'll be shot with a packsaddle without benefit of clargy if the ridiculous fool didn't help me himself, for he clapped both hands on the eends of the barrel and pulled away as if it war a pleasure to him. I had nothing to do but hold on to the stock and float alongside of him till he war drowned.

Don't you come for to say I'm telling the least of a lie, for every fool knows a grizzly bear will live an hour with a ball through his heart, if so be he's onny mad enuff.

People tell a great many silly stories about swallows. Some say that if you kill one your cows will give bloody milk, and others tell as how they fly away in the fall and come back again in the spring, when the leaves of the white oaks are just as big as a mowse's ear. Agin, thar ar some that tell how they keep Christmas and New Year's among the little fishes, at the bottom of some pond; but you may tell all them that sez so they are dratted fools, and don't know nothing about the matter. Swallows sleep all winter in the holler of some old rotten sycamore, and I'll tell you how I come to find it out.

I war out airly in the spring with my rifle on the banks of the Tennessee, making up my opinion about matters and things in general, when all of a sudden I heard a clap of thunder, and that sot me a thinking. "Now," sez I, "if I war to go home and tell of that, the boys would think me a liar, if they didn't dare to call me so; for who ever heard of such a thing as thunder under a clear sky of a bright spring day!" And with that I looked up, and agin I heerd the thunder, but it war not thunder anyhow I could fix it; for a hull swarm of swallows came bodily out of an old hollow sycamore, and it war the noise they made with the flapping of their wings.

Now I thought to myself that them ar little varmints war doing some mischief in the tree, and that it war my duty to see into it; for you see just then I felt hugely grandiferous; for the nabors had made me a Justus Pease. So I cut down a saplin' with my knife, and set it agin the tree, and clim' up like a squirrel; for you know a sycamore has a smooth bark. As I war bending over the edge of the holler to look down, the saplin' broke under me, and trying to catch at something I lost my balance, and fell down into the tree head-foremost. When I got to the bottom I found myself a little the nastiest critter ever you saw, on account of the swallows' dung, and how to get out I didn't know; for the hole war deep, and when I looked up I could see the stars out of the top. Presently I put my hand into something as soft as a feather-bed, and I heerd an awful growling. But it war only an old bar I woke out of his winter nap, and I out butcher to see which war the best man. But the kriter war clean amazed, and seemed to like my room better than my company, and made a bolt to get out of the scrape most cowardly.

"Hollo, stranger!" sez I; "we don't part company without having a fair shake for a fite;" and so, saving your presence, I clenched hold both his posterities. But finding the hair war like to give way, I got hold of his stump of a tail with my teeth, and then I had him fast enough. But still he kept on clim'ing up the holler, and I begun to sorter like the idee; for you know he couldn't get up without pulling me up arter him. So when he begun to get tired, I quickened his pace with an awful fundamental poke with my butcher, jest by way of a gentle hint. Before long we got to the top of the tree, and then I got to the ground quicker than he did, seeing he come down take foremost, I got my shooting iron to be ready for him. But he kinder seemed to got enough of my company, and went off squeeling as if something ailed his hinder parts, which I thought a kind of curious; for I've no opinion of a fellow that will take a kick, much less such usage as I give him. However, I let him go, for it would be onmanly to be onthankful for the sarvis he done me, and for all I know he's alive yet. And it war not the only thing I had to thank him for, I had a touch of the toothache before, and the bite I got at his tale cured me entirely. I've never had it since, and I can recommend it to all people that has the toothache to chew two inches of a bear's tail. It's a sartin cure. Thar ar a wicked sight of vartue in bear's grease, as I know by my own experience.

XXVII.  
A PRETTY PREDICAMENT.

When I was a big boy, that had jist begun to go a galling, I got astray in the woods one afternoon; and being wandering about a good deel, and got pretty considerable soaked by a grist of rain, I sot down on to a stump, and begun to wring out my leggin's, and shake the drops off of my raccoon cap.

Whilst I was on the stump, I got kind of sleepy, and so laid my head back in the crotch of a young tree that growed behind me, and shot up my eyes. I had laid out of doors for many a night before, with a sky blanket over me—so I got to sleep pretty soon, and fell to snoring most beautiful. So somehow, or somehow else, I did not wake till near sundown; and I don't know when I should have waked, had it not been for somebody tugging at my hair. As soon as I felt this, though I wan't more than half awake, I begun to feel to see if my thum' nail was on, as that was all the ammunition I had about me. I lay still, to see what the feller would be at. The first idee I had was that a cussed Ingun was fixing to take off my scalp; so I thought I'd wait till I begun to feel the pint of his knife scraping against the skin, and then I should have full proof agin him, and could jerk out his copper-coloured liver with the law all on my side. At last I felt such a hard twitch, that I roared right out, but when I found my head was squeezed so tight in the crotch that I could not get it out, I felt like a gone sucker. I felt raal ridiculous, I can assure you; so I began to talk to the varmint, and telled him to help me get my head out, like a man, and I would give him five dollars before I killed him.

At last my hair begun to come out by the roots, and then I was mad to be took advantage of in that way. I swore at the varmint, till the tree shed all its leaves, and the sky turned yaller. So, in a few minutes, I heard a voice, and then a gall cum running up, and axed what was the matter. She soon saw what was to pay, and telled me that the eagles were tearing out my hair to buik nests with. I telled her I had endured more than a dead possum could stand already, and that if she would drive off the eagles, I would make her a present of an iron comb.

"That I will," says she; "for I am a steam-boat, and have doubled up a crocodile in my day."

So she pulled up a small sapling by the roots, and went to work as if she hadn't another minnit to live. She knocked down two of the varmints, and screamed the rest out of sight. Then I telled her the predicament I was in; and she said she would loosen the hold that the crotch had on my head. So she took and reached out her arm into a rattlesnake's hole, and pulled out three or four of them. She tied 'em awl together, and made a strong rope out of 'em. She tied one end of the snakes to the top of one branch, and pulled as if she was trying to haul the multiplication table apart. The tightness about my head begun to be different altogether, and I hauled out my cocoon, though I left a piece of one of my ears behind.

As soon as I was clear, I could not tell which way to look for the sun, and I was afeared I should fall into the sky, for I did not know which way was up, and which way was down. Then I looked at the gal that had got me loose—she was a strapper: she was as tall as a sapling, and had an arm like a keel boat's tiller. So I looked at her like all wrath, and as she cum down from the tree, I says to her:

"I wish I may be utterly onswoggled if I don't know how to hate an Ingun or love a gal as well as any he this side of roaring river. I fell in love with three gals at once at a log rolling, and as for tea squalls my heart never shut pan for a minnit at a time; so if you will marry me, I will forgive the tree and the eagles for your sake."

Then she turned as white as an egg-shell, and I seed that her heart was busting, and I run up to her, like a squirrel to his hole, and gave her a buss that sounded louder than a musket. So her spunk was all gone, and she took my arm as tame as a pigeon, and we cut out for her father's house. She complained that I hung too heavy on her arm, for I was enermost used up after laying so long between the branches. So she took up a stone that would weigh about fifty pound, and put it in her pocket on the other side to balance agin my weight, and so she moved along as upright as a steam-boat. She told me that her Sunday bonnet was a hornet's nest garnished with wolves' tails and eagles' feathers, and that she wore a bran nev gown, made of a whole bear's-hide, the tail serving for a train. She said she could drink of the branch without a cup, could shoot a wild goose flying, and wade the Mississippi without wetting herself. She said she could not play on the piano, nor sing like a nightingale, but she could outcream a catamount and jump over her own shadow; she had good strong horse sense and new a woodchuck from a skunk. So I was pleased with her, and offered her all my plunder if she would let me split the difference and call her Mrs. Crockett.

She kinder said she must insult her father before she went so fur as to marry. So she took me into another room to introduce me to another beau that she had. He was sitting on the edge of a grind-stone at the back part of the room with his heels on the mantel-piece! He had the skull-bone of a catamount for a snuff-box, and he was dressed like he had been used to seeing hard times. I got a side squint into one of his pockets, and saw it was full of eyes that had been gouged from people of my acquaintance. I knew my jig was up, for such a feller could outcourt me, and I thort the gal brot me in on proppus to have a fight. So I turned off, and threatened to call agin; and I cut through the bushes like a pint of whiskey among forty men.

END OF VOL. I.

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Printer errors have been corrected where obvious errors occur.

Author spellings have been maintained and differences corrected to majority author use.

Inconsistencies in punctuation have been maintained.

A cover was created for this eBook.

[The end of *Traits of American Humour, Vol. I of III*, by Thomas Chandler Haliburton.]