

The Shaker Lovers, and Other Tales

Daniel P. Thompson

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"To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm than all the gloss of art."
Goldsmith.

PREFACE.

The following tales, though relating to matters of a domestic and local character, are yet founded more strictly on facts, than any of the author's composition. All of them, indeed, are but illustrations of the actual incidents by which they were suggested, with little other variation than what would naturally arise from the introduction of scenery and dialogue in bringing about the results, and, perhaps we should add, from the exercise of the license generally conceded to the writers of such stories—that of making any alteration in the grouping, which will heighten the interest, of the narrative, or add to the effect of the development of the plot.

Montpelier, Vt., – *June, 1848.*

The Shaker Lovers, and Other Tales

THE SHAKER LOVERS.

CHAPTER I.

I was once, upon a warm summer afternoon, journeying on horseback in that wild and picturesque tract of country, in New Hampshire, which borders on the upper portion of the mountainborn Merrimac, when a dark thunder cloud, that had been gathering, unperceived by me, in the distance, rose up suddenly from behind the screening hills, apprising me at once, by its threatening aspect, and the rapidity with which it was rolling towards me, that a thorough drenching was only to be avoided by an immediate flight to some place of shelter.

Applying the spur, therefore, I put my horse to his best speed, and fortunately, succeeded in reaching a substantial looking farm house by the road side, just as the big, bright drops of rain, as if shaken down by the crashing peal of thunder, that heralded their descent, came merrily dancing to the smoking earth.

While standing in the open shed, that I had been so lucky as to gain, listening to the roar of the elements, and marking that almost terrific sublimity, with which a thunder-storm in the mountains becomes invested, the owner of the establishment, a fine, hale looking man of about forty, came out, and very courteously invited me into the house, adding at the same time, that he thought, from the unpromising appearance of the clouds, I might as well make up my mind, at once, to remain with him through the night.

As it was then late in the afternoon, and the rain still continued to pour down, with little prospect of abating in time for me to resume my journey before dark, I soon concluded to accept the proffered hospitality; when I was immediately ushered into the house by my kind entertainer, and introduced to his interesting family, as "a stranger who had been induced to put up with their poor fare for the night."

I had already been struck with the appearance of thrift and good management in every thing about this establishment without, and my admiration was now equally awakened by the neatness and rustic taste of all within, and the peculiar quiet and order, with which the family concerns seemed to be conducted under the superintendence of my hostess, who was one of the most comely and engaging matrons I remember ever to have seen. I very soon discovered my host to be a man of much native shrewdness and of fixed and well-formed opinions on almost all subjects that presented themselves; and these qualities, united with a spice of sly humor and a good tact for description, failed not to impart a high degree of piquancy and interest to his conversation. After the excellent supper, with which we were soon favored, was over, the household affairs regulated, and the smaller children disposed of for the night, the amiable mistress of the house took her knitting-work and joined us in the sitting-room, adding a still further interest to the converse by her quiet presence, and the well-timed and pertinent remarks which she occasionally threw in, on the different subjects that were introduced. The conversation at length turned on the Shakers, an establishment of whom I had visited that very morning. Perceiving that my host appeared to dissent from some general remark I had made in praise of that singular society, I turned to him and said:—

"You believe them to be an industrious, quiet and very honest people, surely,—do you not, sir?"

"Industrious and quiet enough, doubtless, and just as honest as other people, and not a whit more so," he replied.

"Why, I had supposed them," I rejoined, "not only peculiarly honest and sincere, but in a great degree devoid of all those passions and vices that most move and agitate the rest of society."

"All that, in the exterior they generally present, I grant you; but are you willing to take that as a criterion of their true character?" he asked.

"By no means," said I.

"Well, sir, could you lift the curtain, and see all that this sober and wonderfully honest exterior is sometimes made to conceal, you might, perhaps, be a little less inclined to exempt them from the common feelings and frailties of other people. I have half a mind to tell you a story of an affair, which occurred some twenty years ago at the very establishment you visited, and which would show—"

"Now don't, husband!" interrupted my hostess, with a deprecating look.

"Only by way of argument, wife," briskly replied the man, casting an arch look at the other—"I want to show him, that love and intrigue may sometimes be found under a broad brim, as well as a narrow one."

"Oh! pray let us have it; go on—go on, by all means," I eagerly interposed, delighted at the novel idea of a love

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story from such an unpromising source as that of the Shaking Quakers. With another roguish glance at his slightly disturbed, though now acquiescent companion, my host, after a brief pause, began:

It was a delightful evening in the month of October, and the setting sun was throwing his parting beams over the yellow forests of the surrounding uplands, whose burnished foliage threw back the mingling streams of reflected light, and spread a red, quivering glow over the slumbering waters of the Mascomy and the beautiful meadows that lie stretched along its shores. Nearly the whole of the Shaker Family, numbering at that time something less than a hundred, were in the field, a short distance from the pond, engaged in gathering the rare fruit of their extensive orchards—the women, with their hand-baskets, picking the choicer kinds for market, or for winter preservation, and the men gathering and conveying to the teams, stationed at different points of the field for the purpose, that part of the fruit which was destined for the ordinary uses of the society. The almost exact uniformity in the fashion and color of their dresses, produced a singular sameness in the appearance of them all; but this was more particularly the case with the females, whose neat, prim dresses of never-varying slate color, white linen kerchiefs and snowy caps, surmounted by their low, plain bonnets, from which peeped their thin, pale visages, all seemingly marked with the same demure, downcast and abject expression, might have disposed an ordinary spectator, as they were moving about the field as silent and gestureless as a band of automatons, to look upon them with sensations much resembling those we experience in beholding a flock of wild fowls, where an inspection of one is an inspection of the whole. A closer observer, however, in examining the faces and figures of each, would have discovered, that here, as well as elsewhere, nature had not forgotten to be partial in the distribution of her favors; and that here, as well as elsewhere, were those on whom the gift of personal beauty had not been so altogether charily bestowed: and among the latter class there was particularly one, whose rounded, symmetrical person, fair and blooming face, and intelligent and sweetly expressive countenance, all strikingly contrasted with the drooping forms, plain features, and passive, unmeaning looks of most of her unattractive companions.

Just as the last rays of the sinking sun were fading from the lofty summit of the distant Kearsarge, the word was passed for the people to leave work and return to their houses. As the company were promiscuously, though in their usual quiet and unsocial manner, retiring from the field, one of the men, a dark eyed, compactly built young fellow of about twenty one, bearing a large basket of apples upon his shoulder, contrived to cross the path of the young Quakeress just described. While doing this, and when directly before her, at a few yards distance, he made a seemingly accidental misstep, which suddenly brought his basket to the ground, and sent its contents rolling over the grass around, till they met the feet of the approaching maiden, who instantly paused, and smiled at the little mishap, which had thus oddly interrupted her in her course. The young man immediately threw himself upon his knees among the scattered fruit, as if intent only on gathering it up; but while his hands were busily employed for that purpose, his eyes turned with a quick, eager look upon the face of the girl.

"At the Elm tree, Martha," he said, in a low, hurried tone; "meet me at the Elm tree, at the lower end of the orchard, immediately after worship."

"It is dangerous—dangerous, Seth!" replied the maiden, slightly coloring, and casting an uneasy glance around her.

"Now I do beseech thee, Martha," he persisted imploringly; "I have matters of great moment to impart to thee; and it may be the last time—yea, it will be, if thee refuse me now. Will thee not come, then?"

"Perhaps,"—answered the girl, after a hesitating pause, in which she threw a look of enquiry and concern upon the youth, but seemed to suppress the question which rose to her lips—"perhaps—that is, if I can get away from the buildings without being noticed. But thee need not have spilled thy apples for so poor a purpose, Seth," she added with a faint smile.

So saying, she turned hastily away, and with quickened steps pursued her course after her retreating companions; while the other now proceeded in earnest to pick up his scattered apples. This being completed, he was about to rise, when looking around him, he encountered the gaze of a man peering at him from under the low-hanging branches of a neighboring apple tree. A glance sufficed to apprise the young man of the character and object of the interloper; for, in the thick, dumpy figure, little hooked nose, whitish, gloating eyes and ill-omened countenance of the man, he at once recognized one of the Leaders of the Society, and the one above all others whose notice, at this juncture, he would have been most anxious to avoid.

"Well, make the most of it, thou vile seeker of accusations," indignantly muttered the young man between his

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teeth, as, with a look of defiance, he shouldered his basket and proceeded homeward, followed, at a short distance, by the object of his aversion, who did not seem inclined to make any immediate use of such discoveries as he might have made with his eyes, for the distance precluded the possibility of his hearing a word that had been uttered.

But before proceeding any further with our story, it may now be as well, perhaps, to speak a little more particularly of the different characters we have introduced, and advert to such circumstances of previous occurrence as may be necessary for a full understanding of the situation in which they relatively stood towards each other, at the time chosen for their introduction.

CHAPTER II.

Seth Gilmore had been an orphan almost from his childhood. At the death of his last remaining parent, he was taken home by an uncle, an old bachelor of considerable property, to which it was supposed the boy would eventually succeed. But in the course of a year or two, another, and a much older nephew, was taken home; and he, being of a selfish, intriguing disposition, soon contrived entirely to supplant the former in the affections of the changeable uncle, who, not long after, was induced to give the unoffending little Seth to the Shakers of the establishment of which we are speaking. Here continuing to remain, he became, as he grew up, noted among the Family for his faithfulness, activity and capacity for business, and, before he had arrived at the age of twenty, he was acknowledged by all to be one of the most skillful and efficient hands on the farm. So far, nothing important had occurred to him to vary the dull monotony of the Shaker life. But although Seth began to think for himself, and become desirous of acquiring information—a very great error he was taught to believe by the Leaders, who hold, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion," and that the youth and all the common members of the Family, should yield implicitly to those who are gifted to think for them and instruct them in all that is necessary to be known. The young man, however, wilfully persisted in his notions; and, by the promptings of this heretical spirit, he sought the acquaintance of two or three young men of the *world*, (as all without the pale of the Society are termed,) who occasionally visited the establishment for transaction of business, or from motives of curiosity. Being eager of enquiry and quick to comprehend, he soon gained information from these, which showed him the falsity of many of the strange ideas and impressions he had there imbibed respecting society at large, and otherwise afforded him the means of judging, from which he had been wholly debarred; for it is the settled policy of the Leaders of this people, in order to make faithful and contented subjects, not only to instill into the minds of their youth the greatest possible abhorrence of the world, which is constantly represented as dishonest, licentious and every way corrupt, but to guard with untiring vigilance every avenue of information that might have a tendency to undermine or diminish the prejudices and opinions thus inculcated. Seth's mind, however, was of a cast which, when once called into action, was not easily to be thus trammelled; and the doubts, which his own reason at first suggested, being constantly strengthened by the facts gathered in his intercourse with these young men, and the books that he borrowed of them, and secretly read, in spite of his masters, spiritual and temporal, he at length became a confirmed disbeliever in the creed to which he had been brought up, and began seriously to meditate on the expediency of sundering the ties which bound him to the Society. But before his views had become very definitely settled on these subjects, or any plans of future action matured, the Shaker Leaders themselves made a movement which was intended to anticipate or remedy any evils of the character just named that might be growing; for these wary men, who watch the intellectual progress of their youth as anxiously as ever did a pedagogue that of his pupils, though with far different motives, began to perceive about this time, that our hero's mind was becoming rather dangerously expanded; and, although not apprised of the means or extent of his information, yet judging from what they had noticed, that he could not long be retained without more than ordinary inducements, they held a secret consultation, and finally came to the sage conclusion, that Seth's merits were such as entitled him to promotion. Accordingly they proposed, unexpectedly to him, to make him an assistant deacon, or one of the overseers of business, naming some future day, not far distant, for him to enter on the duties of his office and be admitted to a seat with them in the council, which met from time to time to deliberate on the temporal concerns of the Family. This gave a new direction to his thoughts, and for awhile quieted his growing discontent. Still extremely anxious, however, to know more of the world, he soon claimed the privilege of going abroad on missions of trade—a privilege which he knew was sometimes accorded to those exercising the office that had been offered him, provided they were considered sufficiently tried and trustworthy. But in this fond wish of his heart he was unexpectedly doomed to disappointment, for which he was indebted, as he soon discovered, to the influence of one man, the person we have already introduced as playing the spy upon the young couple in the orchard. This man, who went by the appellation of Elder Higgins, had for some time manifested towards Seth an unusual degree of coldness and distrust, which the latter till now had but little heeded. But this last act caused his ill-will to be heartily reciprocated on the part of the young man; and circumstances soon occurred which made the breach irreparable. These circumstances were found to have reference to a third

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person—the young, innocent and lovely Martha, towards whom the elder, about this time, began to pursue a course of conduct as strange as it was questionable.

Martha had been brought to this establishment when eight or ten years of age by her parents, both of whom, at the same time, joined the Family, turning into the common fund the whole of the little property they possessed. All the acknowledged relations between parent or child, from that moment entirely ceasing, the little girl was left wholly to the guidance and instruction of the Elders and Eldresses, to whom the care of the youth is entrusted; and, through her docility and her meek and confiding disposition, she had readily imbibed the doctrines, and, for the greater part of her girl-hood, implicitly trusted in the creed that was taught her, exhibiting in her exemplary conduct a bright pattern of all that was esteemed good and lovely among the Family. But as she verged upon womanhood, and began to give herself to reflection; her naturally clear and discriminating mind, moved, perhaps, by the associations of her childhood that still hung about her, or the observations she had made upon the conduct of some of the Leaders, forced upon her questions and doubts which greatly perplexed her to answer or solve. These, it is true, at first, through the pious impulses of her truly devotional heart, were often rejected as the temptations of Satan; but they as often returned to disturb the quiet of her pure and gentle bosom; and, although, in spite of her strivings to the contrary, she became, though far less decidedly than the young man we have described, a disbeliever, at least, in many of the dogmas of that creed, which she had been taught to look upon as infallible.

Such was Martha Hilson; and it was nothing strange that two such young persons of the different sexes as she and Seth, in the daily habit of seeing each other, and possessing characters as congenial, as they were, in many respects, distinguished from those around them, should attract each other's particular notice. Nor is it much less to be wondered at, perhaps, that such notice should be followed by the springing up of mutual sympathies in their bosoms; though, that these sympathies should be defined and acknowledged by their true name, and made known by reciprocal avowals, was, indeed, at such a place, a rare occurrence. But Love is a cunning deviser of occasions; and, as difficult as it might be in this case, he, at length, found a way by which the young couple in question eventually discovered the nature of those feelings that were silently drawing their hearts towards each other. For a long time, however, no word or communication ever passed between them, save that which was conveyed in the language of the eyes. But, after awhile, the silence was broken, as they casually met in the yard, by a simple enquiry for some third person, and by as brief an answer. This was followed, after another interval, of perhaps a month, when they again accidentally met, by the interchange of a few words, on some common topic; and, at length, on a similar chance occasion, succeeded a proposal, on his part, to loan her a book, which, after some hesitation, she accepted, with the promise to persue and return it, at a time and place which he proposed for the purpose. An excuse for meeting being thus found, occasional interviews followed, though at none of them was a word breathed by either expressive of those feelings, of which each felt a trembling consciousness as the true secret of their being thus brought together. These interviews, moreover, were of the briefest kind, and indulged in but very rarely; for, aware that it was one of the distinguishing articles of their creed, that "*the corruption of man is the attachment of the sexes*," and, consequently, that all intercourse which might lead to such attachment, should be strictly forbidden, they knew how closely they were watched, and how surely penance of some kind or other would follow a detection of their meetings, however innocent the object. And such had been the extreme caution with which this intercourse had been managed, that they felt sure it could not have been discovered; and they supposed it remained wholly unsuspected. In this supposition, however, they soon found they had over confidently counted. Something in their demeanor, some unguarded look, when they publicly met, or some brief absence of both at the same time, had attracted the notice of the prying Higgins; and, his jealousy being thus aroused, he commenced a system of secret espionage upon the young couple, which would have conferred credit on a minion of the inquisition; the result of which was, that he became convinced of the existence of a forbidden attachment growing up between them, and strongly suspected them, though wholly unable to ascertain it for a fact, of holding clandestine interviews.

This personage, whose manner was as hateful as his countenance was repulsive, and whose whole character was a strange compound of the fanatic, the Jesuit and the voluptuary, was an Elder in the church, in which through his pretensions to "*leading gifts*," or direct revelations from above, and his intriguing and ambitious disposition, he had gained an influence even greater, perhaps, than the "*Elder Brother*" himself, as the chief ruler of each Shaker Family is denominated. And his ambition being not satisfied with his spiritual dominion, he

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aspired to, and by similar means obtained, an equal ascendancy in the management of the business and temporal concerns of the establishment. Exacting the most rigid obedience from all, requiring the most implicit faith in all the ultra doctrines of his creed, and ever untiring in searching out delinquencies in others, while he shielded his own under the very convenient dogma handed down by Mother Ann Lee for the special benefit of the peculiarly gifted like himself, that "*to the pure all things are pure,*" he had become fairly an object of dread among the people. For these reasons, then, if they had no others, it will be readily seen how much our two young friends had to fear from the sanctimonious Elder; but they had additional reasons:—He had, for some time, shown himself remarkably sensitive in every thing that related to Martha; and no sooner were his suspicions fairly awakened respecting the attachment between her and Seth, than she was summoned to meet him at the confessional alone, and in one of the most secluded rooms in the buildings. This was several times repeated, to the great horror of the distressed maiden, while it awakened the most painful apprehensions in the mind of Seth, who had become apprised of the circumstance, and but to well conjectured the secret motives of the Elder in summoning her, instead of him, to meet him in private; though what passed on these occasions he had no other means of judging, than by the mingled expression of grief and outraged feeling, which very visibly marked the tear-stained cheeks of the poor girl on her return from the scene of her trials.

With Seth a different course was taken; and, though no rebuke was openly administered, or even one word was anywhere said to him respecting the offence of which he, in common with Martha, was suspected to be guilty, yet he soon found, that he was not, for that reason, any the less marked for punishment. He soon discovered, that the Elder was secretly attempting to undermine his character with the Family; while a system of petty annoyances was made to meet him in every thing he did, till his life become one of constant vexation and misery; and, being no longer tempted by the proposed office without the coveted privilege of going abroad, he again began to meditate about leaving the Society. But checked in this wish by a want of confidence in his ability to succeed in the world, of which he was so little informed, and above all by his love for Martha, and his fears for her safety, marked, as he believed her to be, as the victim of the licentious Elder, he here also, became the prey of conflicting emotion. The treatment of his malicious prosecutor, however, at length drove him to a final decision; and, having formed a new plan in regard to his fair friend, whom he had been so reluctant to leave, he waited only for an opportunity of seeing her alone, (from which, through the precautions of the Elder, he had been for a long while debarred,) before carrying his resolve into execution. With these remarks, we will now return to the events which form the action of our story.

CHAPTER III.

On returning to their buildings, after the labors of the field were over, the Family, as usual, soon repaired to the rooms allotted to their daily repasts. For this purpose their tables were always spread in separate buildings, one for the ordinary male members, and for the females, and one for the Leaders; the two former of which are furnished with plain, substantial food, while the latter is loaded with the best that the land is capable of affording, and not unfrequently with foreign luxuries; For these dignitaries, if they do not always go on the principle of indulgence involved in the reported saying of the "*Elect Lady*," whose authority we have before quoted, that "*Spirituos liquor is one of God's good creatures*," have at least no hesitation in acting generally on the assumption, that the *Gift* of good living peculiarly their own.

Immediately after supper, the whole Family assembled for worship in the house especially consecrated to that purpose. But so well known is their meaningless mode of worship—their long drawn, nasal chant of Hottentot gibberish, set to the "inspired" tune of perhaps Nancy Dawson, or the Roving Sailor; (for their tunes as well as the words they contend are inspired) their formal, unvarying, Kangaroo-like dance, performed with uplifted hands and various contortions of features, or the occasional exhibition, by some freshly inspired Elder or Eldress, of a new *gift* for clapping the hands, for shaking, jerking, jumping, stamping and groaning—so well known are all these, that we will pass over them for matters more immediately connected with our story; and for this purpose we will now repair to the trystic tree of the persecuted lovers, who had generally, as now fixed upon, for their interview, the hour immediately succeeding worship, which was allowed the different members of the Family for attending to their individual concerns, and which, therefore, afforded opportunity for an absence less likely to be noticed by the Arguseyed Leaders.

The broad, bright Harvest-moon rising majestically over the eastern hills, was beginning to pour down her floods of quivering light upon the quiet scene—now striking upon the taller, then the shorter shrubbery of the field, and seemingly converting its pendant boughs into glittering tissues of silver—now bursting in brightness upon the waveless waters of the extended pond, and now glancing abroad upon the whole of the surrounding landscape, and lighting it up with her dim and solemn splendors.

The young man, the first to reach the spot, stood pensively leaning against the trunk of a wide-branching elm, standing but a short distance from the margin of the water. As the moon-light gleamed across his face, tokens of deep and struggling emotions were there visibly depicted; and even a tear might occasionally be seen to start out and glitter upon his manly cheek.

Presently the white fluttering robe of a female was seen glancing among the obstructing trees of the orchard, and rapidly gliding toward the spot. In another moment the light figure rushed into the opened arms of the young man, their heads were dropped on each other's shoulders, and, for a brief interval, not a word was spoken.

"O, Martha, Martha!" at length uttered the young man in tones of deep and troubled feeling, and again was silent.

"Thee seems much agitated to night, Seth," said the girl, in a meek, enquiring tone, after waiting awhile for the other to proceed.

"I am Martha," he replied; "my heart is indeed tried—sorely, most sorely tried."

"And why art thee thus disquieted, Seth?" again tenderly asked the girl, "and why," she continued in a tone of gentle expostulation, "why hast thee urged me to this meeting, when thee knows, that I am not without my doubts and misgivings about communing with thee in this manner; and when also thee so well knows the great risk we both run of being discovered and punished, and I, particularly, of being brought to shame before the people, or punished in other fearful ways?"

"I know—I know all, Martha; and should be grieved to be the means of causing thee trouble. But so many things have happened since we met, and I had so much which I desired to say to thee, that I could not find it in my heart to go away without seeing thee."

"Go away, Seth? Surely! Hast thee well considered?"

"Yea, long and deeply. I can no longer endure the vile misuseage I have lately received; and I can no longer endure to be a slave—a slave to those, who would fetter and degrade both the body and the mind; and therefore I

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have fully determined, that this night I will leave them."

"But whither would thee go, Seth?—into the wide, wicked world?"

"If I thought, Martha, that I should find the people of the world more wicked than some of those I shall leave behind, I would remain. But of that I have no fears; and it is not that which now troubles and perplexes me."

"If we have been taught aright, what should trouble thee more, Seth?"

"Ay, if aright; but thee already knows my opinions of the absurdity of much of our creed, and the falsity of half that is told us. No, it is no scruples of that kind, but my doubts and fears about the reception I may meet with in the world, of whose ways I know so little, and in which I must appear so foolish and awkward. I am ignorant, Martha, ignorant as a child, of all that I should know."

"But does not that spring from pride of heart, Seth, which, under any good creed, thee would be taught, and should strive, to banish? It appears to me thee should have better reasons."

"Well, I have other reasons, and they are with me, I confess, much stronger ones; but I know not that thee would consider them better. It is"—and the youth paused and hesitated, while the wondering maiden threw an innocent and enquiring look upon his sorrowful and agitated countenance—"it is," he resumed, at length mastering his emotions, "it is the thought of leaving thee, Martha, which wrings my heart—of leaving thee among this people, to be subjected to the wiles and persecutions of that designing—"

"Oh! name him not—name him not, Seth!" quickly interrupted the girl, with a shudder, which but too plainly told her fears and abhorrence of the man about to be mentioned.

"I should not, Martha, but I have noticed that which has filled me with alarming conjectures—with fears for thy safety; and I would that thee tell me what he proposes to thee?"

"I cannot—I cannot; but Oh! if thee knew my troubles, Seth"—and the poor girl, at the thought thus called up, dropped her head on the other's shoulder, and wept as if her heart would break.

"The wretch! the accursed wretch!" exclaimed the young man bitterly.

"Nay, nay, do not curse, Seth," sobbed the girl, making an effort to check her emotions; "that is a gift belonging, I think, only to the Great One above, who metes out justice to the sinful, not as man metes it, under the influence of blinding passions, but according to the proper measure, and He, we must remember, can protect the innocent as well as punish the guilty; and though my trials are indeed sore, yet I trust that that Good Being will still, as he has thus far done, preserve me guiltless and unharmed."

Each being absorbed in the thoughts and feelings which the conversation had excited, there was a short pause in the discourse, during which the maiden gently disengaged herself from the partial embrace of the other, and, wiping her eyes, resumed her usual tranquility.

"Martha," at length said the young man, with an air of embarrassment and a slight tremulous accent.—

"What would thee say, Seth?" asked the maiden innocently, seeing the other hesitated to go on.

"Martha," resumed the youth with an effort, "Martha, does thee love me?"

"Why—why," replied she, now embarrassed and hesitating in turn, "why we are *commanded* to love one another, are we not?"

"Ay, Martha; but does thee regard me with that feeling which the world calls love?"

"I hardly know what to tell thee, Seth—I have often greatly feared that my heart was an erring one. I have tried to bestow my love on all; but I may have sometimes thought, perhaps, that thee was getting rather more than thy share."

"Thy words are precious to my heart, Martha. Let us then cherish that feeling towards each other, and permit it to lead us to its natural consummation. Thee knows, Martha, that the love of which I speak, when crowned by marriage, is allowed and approved by the good and wise of every sect but our own. Thee knows, also, that it is sanctioned and blessed by the Good Book, which I lent thee on purpose that thee might read the whole, instead of only such parts as our Elders would have us take as our guide, cunningly denying us the free use of the book, because they fear to have us read and reason the rest—not because, as they pretend, we should pervert it."

"Thee bewildereest me, Seth—I will confess, I have, at times, thought, that there is reason in what thee now says; but I have nearly as often feared, that it was only the promptings of vain fancies or sinful inclinations. And it is so different from what I have always been taught, that it sometimes makes me tremble, lest I should be left at last, to harbor a belief which may be wrong in itself and prove ruinous to my soul's interests."

"It is not wrong," warmly urged the young man; "it surely is not wrong, Martha. It is right; thy reason tells thee

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it is right, all nature confirms it. The Bible when properly consulted, answers yea. Come then, Martha, come with me:—Let us go into the world, where there will be no mean spies to dog and torment us—no tyrants to prevent our innocent actions, and make them an excuse for prosecuting their own foul designs—none to molest or make us afraid—where united as one, never more to part, we will live and be free to love, and, in that love and freedom, find our solace, our comfort and lasting felicity. Come— O, come, come, Martha and fear not—with my own hands I will support and provide for thee, and in my own heart I will cherish thee through all the changing scenes of life."

"Oh! tempt me not—tempt me not, Seth!"

"Do not call it temptation, dearest one.—Sooner would I suffer all that wicked men could inflict, than lead thee astray, I mean it—I think it for thy good, as much as for my own happiness.— No, it is not temptation; it is but the pleadings of wisdom and of love. Fly with me, then, this night and this hour,— fly with me from the persecutions, the miseries and the dangers that here so thickly beset thee, to safety and happiness."

"Nay, nay, Seth," replied the maiden calmly and firmly, after appearing to struggle a moment with her conflicting feelings— "thy proposal is a bold and a startling one; it is also, to me, a new and an unexpected one. I have not considered, and may not now accept it; and, moreover, I may not now longer remain with thee. I must return to the buildings."

"And am I never to see thee more?" asked the other sadly.

"Why, if thee will indeed leave us," she replied, lingering and hesitating—"unless, perhaps—unless thee could return, at some appointed time, and place"—

"Will thee, then," eagerly enquired the young man, "will thee meet me here, four weeks from this night?"

"If permitted, I will, Seth."

"And be prepared to go with me?"

"Again I may not promise; but I will weigh thy proposal with kindly intent; now fare—thee—well, Seth."

"Fare—thee—well, beloved Martha—if thee can stay no longer, fare—thee—well, with many, many blessings; but remember, Oh! remember!"

Fondly and anxiously gazed the young man after the maiden, till her retreating form was lost to his view among the intervening shrubbery, when he appeared to rouse himself from his tender reverie to the purpose now remaining to be accomplished; and, with a firm step and resolute air, he bent his course towards the shore of the pond, where he knew a boat belonging to the Shakers was moored.

CHAPTER IV.

Although the Shaker Leaders mainly depend, for retaining their subjects, upon the impressions of aversion and hatred of the world, which they so sedulously implant in the bosom of their youth, aided by the extreme ignorance, in which they are kept for that purpose, and by which, they are generally rendered as helpless and passive as could be wished, yet force whatever may be said to the contrary, is, or at least, was formerly, not unfrequently resorted to for the purpose of restraining those detected in attempting to escape. Seth, therefore, with a view of avoiding collisions growing out of any attempt that might be made, in case he had been suspected and watched, to prevent his going away, deemed it best to depart in a direction, and in a manner, which the Shakers would be the least likely to suspect him of taking. In pursuance of this plan, he had determined to take the boat and cross over to some point, which would place him beyond the Family possessions, within the boundaries of which the pursuit of their fugitives was usually confined. Congratulating himself on the result of his interview with Martha, which, besides filling his bosom with the blissful consciousness that his love was reciprocated, and inspiring his mind with the joyful hope, that the prize of his affections would soon be his, had passed over, as he had supposed, undetected, he pursued his way with a light and rapid step along the path leading to the water. He had not gone many rods, however, before, to his utter surprise, his old persecutor, the sleepless Higgins, stepped out from behind a covert, and, with a look of malicious triumph, confronted him in his path. Deeply vexed, but neither daunted, nor turned from his purpose, the young man paused, and threw back a look of indignation and scorn on his detested opponent; for perceiving the Elder to be alone, and conscious of his own bodily powers, he disdained either to cower or flee, but with an air of cool defiance, stood waiting his movements.

"Ah! thou vile young heretic!" at length exclaimed the Elder tauntingly; "I have caught thee at last, then, in thine iniquities, eh? what was thee saying to the maiden?"

"What thee will not be likely to be much the wiser for," indignantly replied Seth, who felt confident that, whatever the Elder's luck had been as a spy, he could not, from the distance of his position, have gained much in the character of an eaves-dropper.

"Ha! dost thou defy thy appointed rulers, young man? Confess thy sins unto me, lest I make an example of both thee and her in punishment of thy heinous offences,"

"Hypocrite, I know thee, and for myself I defy thee! but I bid thee beware how thee shall further persecute that innocent girl; for as sure as thee injures a hair of her head, I will hunt thee while I live, and haunt thee when I am dead!"

Accustomed to witness only tokens of the most abject submission in the deluded people, over whom he had so long tyrannized, and totally unprepared for such bold language from the youth, whose spirit he had greatly underrated, the astonished Elder stood a moment fairly choking with rage, unable, from the violence of his passions, to utter a single word.

"Get—get—get thee back to the buildings!" at length he sputtered in exploding rage. "Get thee back, thou audacious—thou— thou God—forsaken reprobate! Get thee back, I say, instantly!"

"Man, I shall not obey thee!" said Seth, in a cool determined tone. "I no longer acknowledge thy authority; and, from this hour, I am no longer one of thy blinded and deluded people. I go hence," he added, turning out of the path and attempting to pass the other.

"I will detain thee—I will seize thee—I will curse thee, and, verily, I will smite thee!" again exclaimed the fuming Elder, springing at the other and making a desperate grasp at his collar.

The young man, however, was not taken unprepared for the onset; and the next instant the wrathful Quaker was sprawling upon the earth. Bounding forward for the pond, with the object of getting out upon the water before his discomfited antagonist could recover himself and reach the shore in pursuit. Seth quickly gained the landing, hastily unfastened the skiff and leaped aboard; but before he could succeed in clearing the boat from the shore, and as he was stepping backwards, with handled oar, to take his seat in the stern, the infuriated Elder came puffing in hot haste down the bank and dashed into the water up to his knees after the receding boat, which even at that moment had just passed out of his reach. But espying the end of a tie-rope, which, in the hurry of unfastening, had not been taken up, and which was now dragging through the water within reach, he instantly

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seized it and gave it a sudden and furious jerk. Unconscious of the oversight he had committed, and, therefore, wholly unprepared for this movement, the young man lost his balance in the violence of the shock, was precipitated backwards over the end of the skiff, and instantly disappeared beneath the surface. With a desperate effort the Elder first drew the skiff up high and dry on the shore, then hurriedly catching up an oar and springing back to the water's edge, he held the formidable implement uplifted and drawn back, as if in readiness for a fatal blow, the instant his victim's head should re-appear on the surface. In a few seconds the youth came up, just out of the reach of the weapon; when, perceiving the threatening attitude of his antagonist, apparently determined on his destruction should he attempt to come ashore, he seemingly became panic-struck and confused; and after glaring wildly around him an instant, sunk again with a gurgling sound, beneath the surface, to rise no more to view.

With a look of still unmitigated malice and ferocity, and, with the same menacing attitude, the ruthless Elder stood waiting for a second appearance of his victim for a full moment, when he began to exhibit tokens of surprise and lowered his weapon a little, still keeping, however, his eyes keenly fixed on the spot. After waiting in vain nearly another moment for the drowning man to rise, the Elder became thoroughly alarmed, and, throwing down his oar, hurriedly retreated a few yards on to the bank. Here he turned and threw another anxious and troubled look upon and around the fatal spot. A few faint bubbles, successively rising to the surface, alone answered his enquiring gaze; and, reading in them conclusive evidence of the horrid truth, he gave a convulsive start, and fled in terror towards the buildings, as fast as his quaking limbs could carry him, mumbling and chattering to himself as he went—

"Now, who would have thought!—If the youth could have swam—and am I to blame that he never learned to swim?—of a surety I am not. And then did he not lift his hand against a gifted Elder of God's Church? and, moreover, have I not saved the Family boat, which he was about to purloin? Verily, I have done a good thing!—though, I think, I will not name the matter to the people—no, lest it lead to the temptation of evil speaking against rulers, and, peradventure, get to the worlds magistrates. And, then, again, there is the youth's property, which he was so forward and perverse about relinquishing to the church,—Nay, I will not let the affair be known to any, but go to work right cunningly and secure it all for God's heritage, Yea, verily, I have done a good thing."

Thus strangely reasoning, and thus desperately grasping at salvos for his troubled and guilty feelings, the terror-stricken Elder reached home, and, without uttering a syllable of what had happened to any one, immediately betook himself to his solitary lodgings, not there, however, to find peace and repose, but to turn and writhe under the scorpion stings of conscience—that unescapable hell of the guilty, which retributive Heaven has planted in the bosom of Man for the certain punishment of his crimes.

CHAPTER V.

Meanwhile the lovely and conscientious Martha, wholly unapprised of what had befallen her lover, retired to her peaceful pillow, and endeavored to reflect calmly on the new and interesting subject, which her recent interview with him had opened to her mind. But finding herself unable to do this, from the thousand crowding thoughts and sensations, which combined to swell the half fearful, half delicious tumult of her gentle bosom, she discretely deferred the task for a cooler moment, and having piously commended herself to the protection of her Maker, yielded her senses to those quiet and peaceful sfumbers, that constitute not the least among the rewards of virtue and innocence. On awakening the next morning, her thoughts immediately recurred to the subject that occupied her last waking moments; and, as she now figured in her mind her lover, far on his way from the place, rejoicing in his freedom from the oppression he had at length escaped, she again and again recalled the tender professions he had made, and ran over the arguments he had advanced in urging her to leave her present situation and go forth with him into the world as his companion for weal or for woe. And the more she thought of the proposed step, at first so startling, the less fearful did it appear.—The more she weighed his reasons with these she found herself able to bring up in refutation, lighter and lighter grew the objections, which had caused her to hesitate, even in giving him a definite promise of acceding to his request when they should again meet; and as her scruples yielded, and, one after another gave way, the unchecked pleadings of her own heart came in, and soon decisively turned the already inclining balance, leaving her mind now free to wander unhesitatingly over the new and bright field of destiny which had thus been presented to her view.

After indulging in her pleasing reveries as long as inclination prompted, the maiden arose, performed the duties of her simple toilet, and was on the point of descending from her chamber to join in performing the domestic concerns of the morning, when her attention was arrested by an unusual commotion among the people below, which she soon ascertained, from some words that reached her ear through the partially opened door, to be caused by the discovered absence of Seth, for whom search had already been made, but in vain. The consciousness that within her own bosom she harbored the secret of the missing one's absence, which she might not reveal, made her, for the first time in her life, feel like a guilty one; and, daring not to go down, lest her appearance should betray the agitation she felt, she paused at the head of the stairs, and stood some time endeavoring to compose her feelings and gain a command of her countenance, which should save her from showing any excitement that might not be natural to the occasion. But while doing this, the poor girl was little dreaming of the thousand times more difficult task in reserve for her—that of controlling her feelings under the heart-crushing blow which she was destined the next moment to receive. For the appalling announcement was next heard passing from mouth to mouth among the Family, that Seth was drowned in the pond, the evidence of which, in addition to his unaccountable absence, was found in the circumstance, that his hat had been discovered floating near the shore, while, at a little distance, one of his shoes had been espied sunk on the bottom, which had been fished up and identified.

It can be much better imagined than described what were the feelings of Martha on hearing these mournful tidings. No word, or sound, however, escaped her lips on the occasion. She turned deadly pale, indeed, and, for a moment, leaned her head for support against the door casing; and this was succeeded by a quick heaving of her bosom, while with clasped hands and closed eyes, her trembling lips moved rapidly, as if earnestly engaged in silent devotion. But the next moment, as she opened her eyes, and with a firm step descended from her room, a spectator would have detected nothing more in her placid, though pale and sad countenance, than he might have seen in the faces of the rest of the sisterhood, among whom she now immediately mingled.

Most of that day was spent by the Shaker men in dragging the pond in search of the body, from which operation Elder Higgins kept studiously aloof; though the nervous restlessness he constantly exhibited through the day, and the many anxious and enquiring glances he frequently cast towards those thus engaged, plainly told the painful interest he felt in what was going on. The search proved a vain one. This, however, did not lead any one to doubt, that the young man's fate was any different from the one first supposed, as the body, it was conjectured, had floated off and sunk in some of the deepest parts of the pond. But although all were unanimous in the opinion, that Seth had met his death by drowning, yet, with regard to the manner in which the casualty could have

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happened, there were many and various minds: some supposing that he must have waded in to secure something which he saw floating near the shore;—others, that he had risen in his sleep and gone in, while yet others considered either of these suppositions to be highly improbable, since some of the young men now made known the fact, that Seth was an expert swimmer. These and many other conjectures equally erroneous were formed respecting the mysterious event, till, wearied with the fruitless discussion, it was given up as a case entirely hopeless of elucidation, and it was therefore permitted to rest.

Seth had been a peculiar favorite with the Family generally, and his loss, for many days, cast a deep gloom over the minds of the little community, who were thus unexpectedly called to mourn his premature decease. The impression, however, like all others of the kind, wore gradually away from the minds of all except the bereaved Martha and the conscience-smitten Elder, from whose bosoms the memory of the lost one, for reasons peculiar to each, was not, as may well be supposed, so easily to be erased.

Although the circumstances, in which Martha was placed, forbade any manifestation of her peculiar griefs, and wholly precluded her from communicating them to others, and receiving in return those alleviating sympathies which it is the privilege of ordinary sorrow to receive, yet none the less heavy for that fell this blow of affliction, and none the less keenly was felt the anguish which now in secret wrung her guileless and faithful bosom. Young love was beginning to shed his sweet and happifying influences over her pure and gentle heart, and his twin angel, Hope, had just showed his snowy pinion to her unaccustomed vision, pointing her to a land of earthly felicity, which never before, even in her brightest dreams, had been pictured to her mind. But all these grateful feelings had been suddenly chilled and frozen in the current that was so blissfully wafting her away to the promised haven of happiness—all these bright visions had vanished, leaving her future not only blank and cheerless, but dark with portents of persecution and wo, from which there was little hope of escaping. These circumstances combined to render the poor girl's loss no ordinary bereavement; and most persons of her natural sensibilities would probably have sunk under the weight of the affliction. But Martha was a Christian; and she meekly bowed beneath the chastening rod, and turned for consolation to that life-spring on high, which is never long a sealed fountain to the true and devoted followers of Him, who once himself knew earthly sorrows.

But while Martha was thus comforted and sustained, no such consolation remained for the despicable wretch who had been the cause of her troubles; and the more he tried to his startled conscience, the more did its accusing spirit rise up, to disquiet him, not only for the hand he had in the young man's death, but for the part he had previously acted towards him in his general misuse, and more particularly in an affair to which only a slight allusion has been made. About a month previous to the time of which we are speaking, a stranger, from the neighborhood of Seth's early residence, bearing for him a letter, which he expressed a desire to deliver in person; but the young man being at work in the woods some distance from home, and the stranger being anxious to resume his journey, the letter was at length entrusted to Higgins, on his promise of delivering it to Seth as soon as he returned. Having repeated his injunctions, the messenger departed, not however till the inquisitive Elder had fished out of him, as cautious as he evidently intended to be, some clue to the contents of the letter. And no sooner was the stranger's back fairly turned, than Higgins retired to a private apartment and broke open the letter, which proved to be from a neighbor of Seth's uncle, whom we have before mentioned, and which announced the successive deaths, within a few days of each other, of that uncle and the nephew living with him, by which event, it was stated, as no will had been made by either, Seth had become the legal heir to all the estate thus left, consisting of a good farm and considerable personal property. The writer closed by advising the young man to leave his present situation, come home and take possession of his property. After reading the letter carefully over several times, the perfidious Elder committed it to the flames, and spent the remainder of the day in devising and settling his plans, and in drawing up for Seth's signature, an acquittance to the Family of all the property of which he had, or might become the inheritor. And the next day, after having smoothed the way for the attempt, as he supposed, by an unusual display of affability and parent-like kindness, he cautiously broached the subject to the young man, tried to induce him to sign the paper falsely affirming it to be one of their regulations to require such an act of the young members of their Society, whether they had any property or not, when they arrived at legal age, at which Seth, as it happened, had, a few days before, attained. The latter, however, secretly meditating upon leaving the Family soon, had no notion of cutting himself off from any right of property which might some day accrue to him, though now he certainly had no such expectation; and he therefore firmly refused to comply with the Elder's request. After renewing the attempt several times, and resorting to every art and falsehood which he

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thought likely to aid him in his purpose, Higgins was compelled to relinquish his fraudulent design, with no other result than that of exciting the suspicions of Seth, that there might have indeed something occurred at his uncle's in his favor, and of hastening his determination to leave and go and see for himself.

It was no wonder, then, when all these injuries, closed as the dark catalogue was by the death of the victim, rose in review before the mind of the guilty Elder, that his conscience troubled him. He had not, it is true, really intended quite to destroy the young man's life, but he could not disguise from himself that his acts, malicious and wicked in themselves, had as much produced the fatal result as if his own hand had dealt the death-blow, and that, too, under feelings but little less holy than he need to have possessed to have rendered the deed the foulest in the list of human crimes. In vain did he try to shut out these disquieting thoughts from his mind; in vain did he try, by quibbling and sophistry to still the voice of conscience; and he soon became the prey of the most horrible fancies. He remembered the accidental threat made by Seth among the last things he uttered: "*I will haunt you when I am dead,*" and the fearful words "*I will haunt you when I am dead. I will haunt you when I am dead,*" rang constantly in his ears; and so strong were his guilty fears, and so nervous and excitable had he become, that to him the menace was often literally fulfilled in the dread shapings of his distempered imagination. By day he appeared abstracted or restless now heedless and lost to every thing around him, and now wildly starting at the rustling of every leaf; and by night roaring out in his sleep and disturbing his wondering people by his strange and almost unearthly outcries.

Such was the punishment of the miserable Elder; but whether this was not rather the result of his fears than any sincere repentance tending to make him a better man, we will not attempt to decide. One thing, however, is certain; it operated greatly to the relief of the before persecuted Martha; for, from that eventful night, on which she parted with her lover, she saw, for several weeks, no indications of any renewal of her trials. Much, indeed, did she wonder to what cause she owed this happy exemption; though she believed it, without being able to tell why, to have some connection with the fate of Seth, concerning which a horrid suspicion occasionally flitted across her mind. She tried, however, to banish such suspicions from her thoughts, and charitably strove to believe, that her persecutor had been brought to condemn his own conduct towards her, and had, in consequence, laid aside his designs against her peace. But she at length began to perceive that her hopes were to be disappointed—she again began to perceive that, in the demeanor of the Elder towards her, which told her that she was still the marked victim of his unhallowed designs. And from day to day she once more lived in the constant dread of being again summoned to the scene of her former trials. Nor was such summons long delayed. One day, as the Family were retiring from their noon meals, the Elder approached the terrified girl and notified her to meet him alone, after worship, the coming evening, in the room which he had formerly desecrated by his infamous conduct. But the hapless maiden was not reserved for so wretched a fate as that which seemed to hang so menacingly over her. An unexpected incident intervened between her and that dreaded hour, which was destined to form the most important era in her life, while it brought defeat and confusion upon her enemy.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a mild and pleasant afternoon in November, just four weeks after the melancholy event before described,—Martha was sitting in one of the common working-rooms of the women, at work with several of the sisterhood, some of whom, like herself, were engaged in sewing, some at the loom and some at the distaff. As she sat plying her needle, an air of deep pensiveness, sweetly tempered, however, by resignation, was resting on her lovely brow. She had been viewing with dismayed feelings, and gloomy apprehensions the dismal prospect before her; but having schooled those feelings into submission to whatever fate Providence might allot her, she had turned to the images of the past, and her mind was now wandering among the dearest memories of her existence. She recalled the almost forgotten circumstance, that the ensuing night was the one proposed by her departed lover for his return to meet her, and a thousand mournful fancies took possession of her mind. She imagined how, had her lover lived, her heart would now be fluttering at the thought of the approaching meeting; and then her excited imagination took wing, and she wondered if it was not true, as she had sometimes heard, that the dead were permitted to keep the appointments made by them while living, and come in spirit to the place to meet and commune with their friends; and, if so, whether, should she repair to the trysting tree, at the appointed hour, Seth would not be there to meet her. Faith and love answered yea; and, conscious of nothing which should cause her to fear such a meeting, at which perhaps, heavenly counsel might be imparted to guide and direct her in her threatened difficulties, she half-resolved to brave the summons of the Elder to meet him at the same hour, and go to keep her appointment with the deceased. While she was thus indulging in these sadly pleasing reveries, her attention was arrested by the sound of a strange voice in the yard below, belonging to some one who had just arrived, and was now engaged in conversation with several of the Shaker men. Thinking there was something peculiar in the careless, rattling manner of the new comer's discourse, she arose and went to the window, when it was with a mixture of wonder and surprise that she beheld the singular and vagabond appearance of the man who had attracted her attention. His dress was not only tattered and patched, but ill-fitting and whimsical, consisting of small clothes altogether too big, with a coat as much too little; and these were surmounted by an old staw hat entirely rimless before, and not much better behind. He was evidently quite a young man, and, but for a certain kind of foolish, staring cast of countenance, would have been accounted very good looking. He seemed quite at home among his new acquaintances, and was not at all bashful about making enquiries, many of which were so very simple and childish as to provoke a smile upon the sober visages, even of the Elders themselves. After asking a thousand foolish questions and rattling away awhile disconnectedly and witlessly enough to have made a good prototype for John Bunyan's Talkative, he carelessly observed, that, as for himself he was now entirely out of work and out of any home; and he really wished he could find some good place to live where he could get enough to eat, for he sat a great deal by victuals.

Instantly taking the hint from this observation of the vagabond, and believing him to be about simple enough to make them a good subject, the Shaker leaders were not slow to propose to him to join the Family, and at once to take up his residence at their establishment. To this the fellow replied, that he had often heard say, that the Shakers were a mighty good sort of people, and he had sometimes been almost a good mind to go and live with them, but as he had never seen them before, he should like to go round and look at things a little before he told them for sartin about staying; and if they would give him something to eat, and then let him go all round where he was a mind to, that afternoon, he would tell them at night, what he would do.'

The man was accordingly soon furnished with an excellent meal, at which he appeared highly delighted. After this, free permission having been granted him for the purpose, he commenced his rambles over the farm, through the barns, yards and outhouses, inspecting the crops, stock, and every thing connected with the establishment, with childish curiosity and the greatest apparant interest, often leaving the objects of his examination and running to the Shakers to ask some question, and then racing back, in high glee, to his employment. When he appeared to have satisfied himself with viewing every thing out of doors, he went to the Elders and told them, "he now wanted to see the *women works*. He didn't, to be sure, think women of much use generally, but, as they had to get the victuals and make the clothes, he should like mighty well to go in awhile and see how they carried on?"

Although this was contrary to their general custom, yet the Leaders, conceiving they had the making of a good

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proselyte at stake, and evidently viewing the fellow as a weak minded, harmless creature, soon concluded to humor him in this freak as they had done in every thing else; and therefore, they told him to behave well, but go where he pleased.

Quickly availing himself of the permission, he began the rounds of the different female lodges, making, however, but a brief stay in any one till he came to the room where Martha was at work with the small party of her companions.—Here he leisurely walked round viewing, with an air of wondering simplicity, the work of these demure artisans, making his silly comments, and, as usual, asking a variety of irrelevant questions, and, among the rest, the names of all the different females in the apartment.

Although the conduct and conversation of the stranger went clearly to show him to be a very great simpleton, yet there was a certain something about him which soon led the discerning Martha to doubt whether he was quite what he pretended, or rather what all the rest of the Family obviously considered him. And that doubt was greatly strengthened, in a short time, as looking up, she caught him fixing a keen, steady, intelligent look upon her face, entirely at variance with the vacant, or idiotic, expression, which had thus far seemed to characterize his features. And it was with a sort of undefinable interest, that, the next moment, she saw him approaching her, as he now did, with the remark, that `he wanted to see what this woman was making too?' Accordingly he took up part of the work lying in her lap, when, as he was flourishing it about, under pretence of examining it, he slyly dropped a small, closely sealed billet into her open hand. As soon as he saw her fingers close over the paper, he threw down the work over her hand containing the billet, and, with the eagerly whispered injunction, "*Read and give me token,*" whipped off to look at something else, which seemed suddenly to have caught his attention.

Feigning some errand out, Martha soon rose and disappeared on her way to her private chamber. In a few moments the stranger returned to finish his inspection of Martha's work, during which, though as busy and talkative as ever he might have been seen to throw many a keen and anxious glance towards the door through which the fair absentee was expected to return. At length she made her appearance. A close observer would have at once noticed, that, during her absence, she had been agitated by powerful emotions, and had wept profusely; and yet, through the subsiding shower, the first smile, that had lit up, her face for a month, was stealing over her lovely features, while anything but displeasure marked the general expression of her glowing countenance.

On entering the room, she went immediately to an Eldress, and, with the air of one slightly annoyed, asked if she had not better hint to the man the propriety of his now retiring; and having received permission to do so, she approached him, and, with a look which he seemed readily to understand, observed,—

"Thy visit friend, has been very acceptable, and thy communications shall be heeded; but we think, that now, perhaps, thee would find more to divert thee among the men in the field."

With some careless remarks, in good keeping with the character he had been acting, the man immediately left the apartment and proceeded to the field, where the men were at work, and where, in chatting with them, trying his hand occasionally at their work, and rambling over the premises, he spent the remainder of the afternoon, apparently highly delighted with his situation.

CHAPTER VII.

When the Family assembled for supper, however, the fellow was unaccountably missing; but the Shakers, having seen so much of his erratic movements, and supposing him still to be somewhere about the farm or buildings, did not seem to pay much attention to the circumstance, or think it worth their while to institute any search for him; and their evening meal, through all the different departments of the Family, passed off with customary quietness.

After finishing their repast, as usual the whole Family, just as the stars were beginning to twinkle in the clear blue of the November's sky, took their way to the house of worship, which was an unenclosed building opening to the road, a branch of which turned up and ran directly by the doors. The ceremonies of worship, also, were attended with no unusual occurrence, and, being concluded the assembly broke up to return to their respective lodges. But on opening the doors and coming out on the steps, the foremost of the company, to their surprise, beheld a horse and chaise drawn up within a few yards of the door allotted to the use of the females, the door for the males being some thirty feet towards the other end of the house. By the side of the horse a man, young and neatly dressed, as far as his appearance could be judged of by star-light, stood holding the reins and whip, with his face turned towards the door, and in the seeming attitude of waiting. The women came hesitating down the steps, and there coming to a stand, began timidly and silently to stretch forward their heads and peer at the mysterious stranger. The men, also, coming out and seeing the unexpected visitant and his equipage stationed across the path of the women, began, with low-whispered enquiries of one another, to gather towards the spot. In this stage of the affair, Elder Higgins, who had purposed to remain in the house till all had retired, that he might pass unobserved to the room where he was expecting the next moment to meet the victim of his designs, became impatient at the tardy movement of the people, and came bustling through the throng, with a light in his hand, to ascertain the cause of the delay; when the stranger turned suddenly round and confronted him. The instant the light struck upon the face of the latter, the recoiling Elder uttered a convulsive shriek, and, with wildly glaring eyes and chattering teeth, sunk down upon the ground in horror and affright at the apparition which he believed he had beheld. A commotion was now observed among the huddling and startled females, and, the next moment a light figure rapidly made her way to the front of the crowd.

"It is!" she exclaimed in low, eager accents, after a momentary pause, "it is—oh! it is he!" she repeated, and, springing forward, threw herself into the arms of the stranger, who, lightly swinging her into the seat of his vehicle, turned again towards the crowd.

"Viper!" he exclaimed, advancing with brandished fist close to the appalled and nearly prostrate Elder; "viper, thou art baffled!"

With this he turned quickly about, leaped nimbly into his seat by the side of the fair companion he had just placed there, applied the whip to his horse, and dashed forward for the main road, leaving the whole assembled Family of Shakers standing aghast and bewildered with astonishment and perplexity at what had so suddenly and inexplicably passed before them.

As dreadfully frightened as the guilt-smitten Elder had been, yet he was the first to comprehend the mystery and rally for the rescue.

"The fiend!" he fiercely cried, leaping up and pointing with frantic gestures after the departing carriage, "Oh, the fiend!— the apostate—the reprobate, the Godless reprobate is carrying off Martha! Pursue him! stop him! catch him! save her from the villain! Run! run for your lives, or they will escape us!"

Roused by the commands and the eager and furious manner of their leader, the men, followed by the women, rushed promiscuously down the road in pursuit of the fugitives; but scarcely had they passed the line of the buildings in this disorderly rout, and gained the main road where it became enclosed by fences, when a rope suddenly sprang from the dust across the path against the legs or uplifted feet of the foremost rank of the pursuers; and the next instant a platoon of Shakers were rolling and sprawling on the ground, while those in the rear, unable to check their speed in time to save themselves, came, rank after rank, successively tumbling and floundering down at the backs of their fallen companions, till nearly the whole bevy were prostrate and scrambling on all fours in the road.

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At this juncture the wild, rattling laugh of the missing vagabond was heard behind the stone fence over against one end of the mischief-making spring rope; and, the next instant a gaily dressed young man leaped lightly over the fence into the road, and made a brief pause a few paces ahead of the fallen and confused forces of the pursuing enemy.

"May be, friends," he said in a half jovial, half commiserating tone, as he glanced at the disorderly plight of his recent entertainers, "may be you don't know me with my Sunday clothes on?—Well, well, good people, perhaps it *is* indeed rather a provoking case for you; but here is about twenty yards of good new rope, which I will leave you, by way of amends for your hospitality this afternoon, and your tumble this evening. It is the best I can do for you now, I believe; though if you should ever cage another such rare bird, as the one just flown yonder, and should be in want of more rope—but I can't stay to chat now—so good bye, thee and thou, good bye to ye!"

So saying, and leaving the discomfitted Shakers to gather themselves up in the best way they could, he bounded forwards, a few rods, leaped upon a horse, which stood tied in a nook in the fence, and galloped off after the receding carriage, now rattling away in the distance.

"And what then? I asked, perceiving that the narrator had come to a stand, with the air of one who had arrived at the end of his story—"what then—what next happened?"

"Why, nothing very unnatural, I believe," replied my host, with a humorous smile, "unless you make out to the contrary from the fact, that an old Justice of the Peace, living some eight or ten miles from the scene of action, was called up that night to do a little business in the marrying line."

"And the bride on the occasion?"—I asked, somewhat puzzled to comprehend the development, "the bride was your heroine, Martha, of course; but the bridegroom?—Not Seth, surely, for he was drowned you know."

"Perhaps, friend," answered my host, with waggish gravity, "perhaps he was not drowned as much as some, after all; but, rising to the surface, after his unlucky plunge, and seeing the wicked attitude of the Elder, suddenly changed his plan, and, so sinking under again, with some little show of drowning, and with a kick or two to make the bubbles rise, came up silently under a neighboring clump of bushes—crept away with the loss of his shoe and broad-brim—went to a young farmer of his acquaintance—exchanged his wet Quaker gear for a decent suit of clothes, and set off for the residence of his late uncle, where he arrived the next day, and, to his agreeable surprise, found himself in possession of one of the best little farms on the Merrimac, and where, in due time, he, in conjunction with a new made young friend there, concocted the plan which you have seen executed."

"A romantic coming out, upon my soul!" I exclaimed in delight; "Well, then, you knew the parties?—are they still alive?"

"Ay."

"Do they reside in this vicinity?"

"Ay again."

"Why, I would go almost any distance to see them."

"You would have no very serious journey to perform for that purpose, Sir," he replied significantly.

"Why?—How?" I asked, still in doubt respecting the full development.

"Why, verily, my friend," said my host, casting an arch look at my perplexed countenance, and speaking in the Quaker dialect, "verily thee art not so shrewd a guesser as I had supposed thee, else thee had smelt the rat long ago."

"Stupid!" I cried, "stupid indeed! But I see it all now—the hero, Seth, is here before me, and the heroine, the good Martha"—

"Run away," he interrupted, laughingly, "run away, as you might have noticed, perhaps, at the beginning of the description, by which she was introduced, as we went on with the story; but the hero, being more modestly described, made out to stand the racket without running."

"One more question only," said I;—"the young friend who, in the character of a vagabond, took your letter to Martha, and so finely managed the affair"—

"Was also from this neighborhood," he replied—"you noticed, perhaps, as you came along, a mile or two back, a two story white house, with an office in the yard?"

"I did—thinking it a very neat establishment," I answered.

"Well, Sir, he rejoined, "that is the—though, perhaps, Esquire Wentworth would not thank me for telling of his pranks when he first started life as a lawyer. It was the making of the man, however;—people seeing how cleverly

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he had managed a love case, concluded he would be no slouch at a law case, if he had one.—He rose rapidly after that. But enough of this. Seth and Martha, my children!" he continued, calling to his eldest boy and girl, still up and reading in the kitchen;—"one of you take a mug and the other a candle, and go down and draw us a mug of the best cider in the cellar.—This Shaker story has made my throat as dry as a tin trumpet."

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ETHAN ALLEN, AND THE LOST CHILDREN.

It is often less difficult, perhaps, to awaken the sympathy of the reader by the portraying of fiction, than by the recital of facts. And many a writer, we doubt not, who might have easily produced a very thrilling fancy-sketch, has paused over incidents of actual occurrence calculated to arouse the deepest emotions of the heart, with a painful consciousness of his inability to present them in such a manner, as should ensure the interest and effect, which legitimately belong to them. Such, at all events, are our feelings, as we take up our pen to describe an incident of the early settlement, well known and often rehearsed, among the unwritten stories of the times, by the inhabitants of that section of country where it occurred. And if we can but succeed in writing up to nature, or even exciting in the reader one moiety of the feeling that agitated the bosoms of the actors in the scene as it transpired, we shall not need a single touch from the hand of fancy to add interest or pathos to our description.

In the afternoon of the last day of May, 1780, the wife of a settler might have been seen sitting at her spinning-wheel at the open door of her log cottage, situated in one of the secluded vales of Sunderland, and interior town lying along the western slope of the Green Mountains.—The day being quite warm and pleasant, she had drawn out her wheel thither, that, while pursuing the labors of the distaff, she might inhale the odorous breezes of the season, and enjoy the wild but pleasing prospect presented in the thousand slopes and swells of the far-stretching mountain-wilderness, over which nature had just thrown her gorgeous mantle of living green, brightly relieved and variegated, at intervals, by the pure white of the blossoming shad-wood and the varying hues of other flowering shrubs, which, at that season, beautify the appearance, and make sweet the breath of the forest. For deem not, ye book-made connoisseurs of the beautiful and magnificent,—deem not the pleasures of taste exclusively your own, because you can give learned names to your sensations.—The humblest cottagers of our mountains, though they may not be able to define their emotions in the exact terms of art, yet enjoy the beauties of nature with as lively a relish as yourselves, and are even more inclined, we have often thought, to view them with that higher, holier feeling, which they ever should inspire—that feeling, which causes the soul, as it contemplates, to send up the incense of its silent adorations to Him, who made earth so lovely for creatures who so dully appreciate the boon, constituting as it does, one of the most striking of all his manifold blessings.

The woman we have introduced was not only a wife but a mother; and, while she was seen occasionally to send a glance of affection towards her hardy husband, bending over his hoe in an adjoining field, her eyes, beaming with all a parent's tenderness and pride, even still more often turned upon her children, two sprightly little girls, of the ages of five and seven, who were playing in the yard before her.

"Mother!" exclaimed the elder of the two girls, stopping short in her gambols at the thought that seemed suddenly to have struck her, "Mother, when I went yesterday with father along side of the woods over yonder, I saw—O, such sights; and sights of pretty flowers!—adder-tongues, violets, and all, which he wouldn't let me have time to get—now mayn't we go there and gather some?"

"I don't know about that, my child,"—good naturedly replied the mother. "You are such a little romp, that if you once get into the woods, you will be sure to run till you get lost, I fear, and"—

"O, but we won't go into the woods, only a little, *leetle* ways, Mother," interrupted the child.

"And then," resumed the anxious mother, without heeding the interruption, "and then it is but a short distance to Roaring Branch, where you might get drowned.—I had rather you would go to your father, children."

"Let us go into the woods and get the flowers first, and then we'll go to father. We wont get lost, certain, certain—so now do, mother?" persisted the little pleader, looking up beseechingly into the other's face.

The mother still shook her head, but with so kindly a smile that the quick eye of the child saw that her purpose was won, and joyously shouting "O we may!" she bounded away, followed by her little sister, under the repeated but scarcely heard or heeded cautions of the former, till an intervening swell hid them from her sight.

As the eye of the mother rested fondly and proudly on the receding forms of her children, she thought of what they were to her then—her comfort and her care—of what they soon would be to her;—not only a comfort, but an aid in lightening the burdens and toils, so heavily imposed on her and her companion, in their endeavors to subdue the wilderness and create within its bosom a comfortable home. And as she thus turned to the future, imagination began to be busy with her bright pictures of coming prosperity and happiness; for in them, as usual, all the

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sunshine of life was gathered and all its clouds forgotten. Beneath her glowing pencil, the wilderness fast faded away; and in place of the humble log tenement, a large and commodious mansion rose to view, surrounded by smooth and fertile fields laden with products, and green pastures filled with flocks, or embowered with orchards bending with fruit; while she, the mistress of all, with the companion of her early toils, now beyond the necessity of labor, were reaping the rewards of all their privations and hardships, in the enjoyment of the bounties by which they were surrounded,—of the cheering presence of their children, budding into life and attracting a pleasant social circle around them—the respect of society at large—perhaps the honors of the public, and every thing that could make their lives desirable, or in any manner heighten the picture of the happy domicil thus figured to her mind.

In reveries like these, in which many a poor first settler has found his only reward for a life of hardship, hours glided away unperceived by the entranced mother, till the descending sun, beginning to dip behind the lofty mountains bounding the vale to the north and west, caught her abstracted eye and brought her back to the realities of life.

"My children! where are they?" was the first thought that crossed her awakened mind, as she became aware of the lapse of time since their departure. Suddenly stopping her wheel, she rose hastily to her feet, and, after throwing a searching glance over the field where her husband was still at work, she ran to the top of the knoll, behind which they had disappeared. Here she paused and ran her eye eagerly along the borders of the woods, bounding their little opening on the east. But no children greeted her anxious gaze. She then called loudly their names; but no sound responded to her call, excepting a hallo from her husband, who demanded the cause of her outcries.

"The children!" she almost shrieked in reply, "have you seen the children?"

"No—I thought they were with you," he answered, holding his suspended hoe in his hands, while he listened to her brief and hurried recital of the time and manner of their children's disappearance.

As she closed, the hoe dropped suddenly from his hands, and, making his way with rapid strides, he, the next moment, stood before her, when mutely exchanging with her a look of agonizing intelligence, and, bidding her follow, with that almost savage sternness, which startled affection will often force into the manner of the most mild and gentle, they hurried forward to the woods. Here taking different directions, they at first proceeded along the borders of the forest around the whole clearing; and then, penetrating farther within the woods, they repeated their rounds, frequently pausing and calling aloud, but in vain, for their lost children. After hunting an hour in this manner, the now thoroughly alarmed parents met again at the spot where they commenced their search.

"Run and raise the neighbors, wife," said the husband in an agitated voice, "and tell them to come quick—quick," he added, as, with an uneasy glance towards the distant summits, where the fading of the last rays of the setting sun told him how little of daylight remained for the search, he again plunged into the forest.

Although the poor mother was already flushed with heat, and nearly exhausted by her exertions, yet she rather flew than ran to the house of the nearest neighbor, nearly a mile distant, and, as soon as she could get breath to speak, made known her trouble, the simple announcement of which was sufficient to arouse the sympathizing inmates to immediate action in her behalf, by starting off in different directions to spread the alarm through the settlement. The instant she saw the hastily saddled horses mounted by the messengers, and put under whip and spur on their destination, she turned and sped back to her now desolate home, thinking she would there rest till the expected help arrived; when she herself would lead the way to the spot where the children disappeared. But little was the rest which her troubled spirit permitted her to enjoy. She would sit down for this purpose, it is true; but the next moment, she would start up and run to the door to look out, return, sit down, and rise again to repeat the same motion; or, perhaps, she would run to her cupboard and handle over the dishes, but only to replace them, and proceed to something else to be as unconsciously begun and as quickly relinquished.

In this manner did the distressed mother employ herself, till the sudden trampling of horses' feet brought her to the door, where she saw about a dozen men dismounting in the yard, whose presence she greeted with a shout of almost frantic joy. Among the new comers there was, fortunately, one whose well known name was a host in every public gathering, when a united effort was required to accomplish the object in view; for with a full share of the more common qualities of skill and energy, he possessed a remarkable faculty of inspiring in others that faith of success by which, not unfrequently success can only be insured. That man was the celebrated Colonel Ethan Allen, who to recruit a constitution impaired by the fatigues of the camp and his long captivity, had retired to a

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farm in this town, where he was then an honored resident.

Allen now advanced to the bereaved mother, and, kindly saluting her, enquired the particulars of the disappearance of her little ones. She began to reply but with almost the first word burst into tears: and pointing to her husband, who at that moment was seen approaching from the woods, she dropped on to a bench and covered her face with her hands.

"Be of good cheer, dear madam," said the hero, deeply touched at her grief. "Bear up with fortitude, and confide in us soon to relieve you of your anxiety; for your children shall be found. I pledge you the word of Ethan Allen, that I will return with them or search till I die."

After learning the desired particulars of the father, who now came up, Allen held a brief consultation with those present, respecting the manner of conducting the proposed search. And it was soon settled, that every man should provide himself with a pine knot torch for the night.—Such as could readily procure horns or conk—shells were to take them to blow at intervals, for the purpose of keeping the company in a line, or near together; and, as nearly all came with guns, it was concluded to take them along also; but no man was to discharge his piece, till the children should be found, when two guns in quick succession, were to be fired as the signal.

These brief arrangements being made, the company, now every moment fast increasing by fresh arrivals, was put in motion by Allen, who was unanimously chosen leader, and marched forward to the border of the woods. Here they halted and lighted their torches, it being by this time quite dark; when each man, having taken his appointed station in a line, formed by placing the men about a dozen yards apart, the whole, at the word of command from their leader, entered the forest and began the anxious search.

Man happily seems endued with the privilege and power of deadening the sharpest stings of grief and anxiety by action; but no such privilege—perhaps no such power, remains for woman. The father of the lost ones, as deep as was his anguish, could yet endure it in silence, while mingling in the active exertions of the search. But O, what pen can describe the feelings of that agonized mother, during the lingering hours of that dreadful night? Though surrounded by female neighbors, who had come in to assist, and who would have gladly encouraged and comforted her, yet she would listen to no words of comfort. But restlessly moving about the room, and wringing her hands in tearless wo, she ceased not to bewail her children, whom she sometimes fancied in watery graves, and sometimes torn to pieces and devoured by wild beasts. Hope, indeed, might occasionally come to her relief, and her mind for a moment, be diverted from its engrossing sorrow, as the sounds of horns, or the voices of the men, shouting to their fellows in the woods, struck her ear, or the gleaming of their torches caught her eye. But the embittering thought would quickly return, and drive her to resume her ceaseless rounds about her room, till compelled by utter exhaustion, she would throw herself on to her bed, and perhaps fall into a disturbed slumber, but only to start again the next moment, with an exclamation of anguish at some fearful image, which dreaming fancy had called up from the depth of her troubled spirit.

Thus, with the poor mother passed this seemingly interminable night, and the morning light so anxiously looked for by her, at length made its appearance, but only to disclose the scattering groups of the company returning from the woods, with slow and weary steps, and the thoughtful and downcast manner, which plainly told that their exertions had been unsuccessful. They returned not, however, with the thought of relinquishing their object, but only to refresh, and recruit themselves by a short respite for a renewal of the search. And, after as many as the house could supply had been furnished with food, and the messengers, despatched to other houses for the purpose, had returned with supplies for the rest, the company were again led back by their persevering leader to recommence, in other, and yet unexplored parts of the forest, the search for the lost ones, of whom not a single trace had yet been discovered.

Another day of fruitless researches succeeded—another day of torturing anxiety and suspense to the pitiable parents, now giving away to despair, and now clinging to hope, but to a hope continually growing weaker and weaker from the consciousness that every hour lessened the probability that their children would be found, or if found, that they would be found living. Although the country for more than twenty miles around had been alarmed, and over six hundred men had by this time assembled and joined in the search,—although miles of the dark and tangled forest had been carefully explored by the company, proceeding, now that their numbers were so increased, in a line at arms length from each other, or always so near as to preclude the possibility that the lost could be passed over unseen; yet no traces of them had been seen—no clue discovered, which could lead to any thing but the merest conjecture of their fate or present situation. And so deeply impressed were a large proportion

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of the company, before the close of this day, of the uselessness of any further search for the children, who, as they generally believed, must have been seized by the wolves or panthers, and borne off to distant dens to be devoured, that they would have relinquished the search and gone home, but for the constant and untiring efforts of their indefatigable leader, who, passing continually from one end of the line to the other, encouraged, exhorted, and implored them to persevere, and entertain no thought of yielding, till the children, whether living or dead should be found. And such were his powers of controlling the multitude, and infusing into them his own burning and confiding spirit, that their hesitation gave way under his appeals, and in spite of fatigues, and the faintness consequent on the scantiness of the supplies of food, which, only could be brought to so many in the woods, they cheerfully continued their unpromising toils, not only through the dreary night that followed, but the greater part of the succeeding day; though with no other result, than that of keeping alive, in the meantime, in the bosoms of the distracted parents, the forlorn hope, which arose from the knowledge that the search was not yet relinquished. Perseverance, however, with a lessening prospect of success, could not always be expected in a body of men brought thus promiscuously together, and acting only from feelings of sympathy, or the dictates of a common duty. And towards night, on this, the third day of the search, small parties began to steal away. And the example operating on the rest, faint, weary, and despairing of success, the whole soon broke from a line, and retiring from the woods, followed in silence by their now sad and grieved leader, assembled at the house of the disconsolate parents.

All seemed deeply impressed by the painful circumstances under which they were now, for the last time, as they supposed, assembled at this abode of unmitigated sorrow. Though no one had announced that the search had been given up, yet all seemed to understand that such was the fact. Even the beraved parents seemed perfectly aware of the melancholy truth; for, differently from what they had yet done, they now came out and took a seat together, after the manner of mourners at the last rites of the dead, on a bench near the door, in full view of the company, and there sat drooping with that air of hopeless grief, which is only assumed under the sad consciousness that all is over. The silence of a funeral pervaded the whole assembled multitude, who, seated on logs, and other objects, or lying in groups on the grass about the yard, seemed silently mingling their sympathies for the bereaved. And for nearly half of an hour, no movement was made, and no loud word was spoken; when the singularly gifted, and, to this day, even but imperfectly understood man, who had acted as leader, and had now been standing aloof, with a sad and troubled look, slowly mounted a large stump on one side of the yard, and raising his towering form, and glancing mournfully round over the assemblage, commanded attention:—

"Men," he impressively began, "fellow—men, neighbors, parents, all, hear me, for I can keep silent no longer; and, if I should, it seems to me, to use the words of the good book, that the very stones would cry out! I have been in battles, where the dying and the dead lay thick around me. I have spent months in the earthly hell of a British prison—ship, where despair and death, in their most appalling forms, were daily before me; but they all furnished no scene to wring the bosom with commiseration like this. Look at that bereaved, heart—stricken pair!" he continued, while the big tears began to roll down his cheeks, "why are their bosoms thus heaving with convulsive sobs; and why is dark despair settling on their countenances, which, till now, have not been without the light of hope? Is it because their children are dead? No! for they, as well as ourselves, must know that it is yet quite too soon to settle down in that melancholy presumption. No, it is not this! But is it not because they see, that we have come here to tell them,—as we should, if we could find in our hearts to make the announcement, to tell them, that we can search no longer for their children,— that we are tired, and must go home to our business now, leaving their unfortunate little ones to perish miserably in the woods! Young men, who have often found strength to keep the woods a week to hunt down some paltry wolf or bear, are you satisfied to give up after a search of forty—eight hours, when two human lives are at stake?—Men, who have been with me in the war, and cheerfully undergone fatigues and hunger, a hundred fold greater than those we have here experienced, are you also, willing that your acts should tell the same story to this broken—hearted pair, and to the world? And lastly, parents, O parents, can you take this case home to your own bosoms,—can you look on this distracted father and mother, and make their case your own, and picture to yourselves, your own little ones lost in the woods, worn out, weary and famishing, with no human face to cheer and encourage them,—no human hand to minister to them,—trembling with fear through the night, as the wild beasts howl around them, and wailing out their little lives in grief and hunger. Can you do this, and then coldly talk of relinquishing the search, and going home? If you can," he went on, with the tears now falling in streams from his eyes, "go, go! and may the God of humanity forgive you, and be merciful to

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you, when your own children in turn, are lost and perishing in the wilderness! As for myself, I am now about to return to the forest there, as I pledged myself to these poor parents, at the outset, there to continue the search till the lost are found, or life be worn out in the effort. But can it be, friends and neighbors, to whom this is my last appeal, can it be, that I am to go alone?

"No! never!" shouted a dozen voices from different parts of the crowd.

"No! no, I will go! I shall go! we will all go with you, even to the end of your vow, noble colonel!" responded one and all, rushing forward with excited looks, and new resolution beaming through the manly tears, which had bedewed every cheek of that large assemblage, during the touching appeal of their idolized leader.

"God bless you for this, my friends!"—exclaimed Allen with emotion, "Depend on't there's a Providence in this new born faith and resolution. Those children are yet to be found; and ah!" he continued, exultingly pointing to an ox-team, containing several large baskets of provisions, which, driven by a boy, was seen turning into the yard. "Ah, here is already an omen of our success, in these supplies so timely forwarded by our thoughtful wives and daughters. Come, men, gather round it. Let each furnish himself with a good ration, and we will be off again to the woods; for we must bear in mind that an hour lost now may be death to the objects of our search."

The clouds of doubt and despondency having been thus dispelled, and a complete revulsion of feeling effected by the tact and rough eloquence of Allen, men forgot their fatigues, and everything now proceeded with spirit and animation. The fresh arrivals of provisions was hastily distributed; and all other preparations being as speedily made, the lengthened column, headed by the now exulting leader, was seen deploying along the borders of the woods. Here they halted; and a brief consultation was held among the most prominent of the company, which resulted in the determination to push eastwardly, directly on to the mountains beyond the limits of their previous explorations. A party of four men, however, consisting of active and experienced woodsmen, were detached to the left to proceed up Roaring Branch, and follow it up to its sources in the ponds in the gorges of the mountains, the upper part of the stream having been hitherto left unexplored in the search, on account of the supposed impossibility of the children having been able to penetrate so far through the rocky steeps, and tangled passages which there environed its banks.

This being done the company moved rapidly forward to the foot of the mountains, beyond which the search had not, in this direction, been extended. Here contracting their line so as to bring each man in view of his fellow, they began slowly to ascend the toilsome steeps, carefully searching every covert, and peering under every log, or tree-top, in their way, which might possibly conceal the lost ones.

In this manner about an hour had been spent, and nearly a mile searched over without discovery, when the word was passed by the leader, who had taken station and marched on the extreme right, to "halt, dress the line, and rest." And thankfully indeed, was the order by this time received; for the men, now the excitement recently kindled by their ardent leader had died away, began to feel the effects of these superadded exertions; and most of them immediately dropped down on to the nearest rock, or moss banks, to catch what little rest their brief respite might allow; while they amused themselves in looking off from their elevated situation over the forest clad hills and dales, which, broken only, by the apparently small and thinly scattered openings of the settlers, lay stretching in tranquil beauty beneath and before them, till the scene was closed on the north and west by the lofty mountains of Manchester, and the less elevated ridges of Arlington, whose empurpled sides now met the eye in striking contrast with the splendor which the setting sun was throwing over their burnished summits. But though thus beguiled a short time by the beauty and the novelty of the view here presented, as they looked on the scenes behind; yet as they turned to the rough steeps and deep abysses of the route before them and thought of the toils of the coming night, many a heart again desponded; and they wondered how they could have been induced to re-commence the search with such spirit and hopeful courage. Their sad anticipations, however, were fortunately not to be realized; for while they were gloomily awaiting the expected order to move forward, the whole line were suddenly roused by the loud and startling report of one or more muskets, bursting heavily from the gorge about a mile to the left, and in the direction taken by the detached party, before mentioned. In an instant every man was on his feet, with the unspoken question on his lips,—"was that the first gun of the appointed signal?" And the sharply whispered "hush! hark! list!" were the only sounds that, for the next moment, could be heard along the line, as with brightening eyes, and ears eagerly attent, all stood breathlessly awaiting what they scarcely dared hope for, the completion of the signal. But the next instant it came in another report from the same spot, that sent its reverberating echoes down the gorges towards them more distinctly than before.

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"Found!" shouted the first man on the left; and "found!" "found!" "found!" rang joyously swelling along the line from man to man, till it ended in the stentorian shout of Ethan Allen, who, leaping high from the ground, sent onward the exulting announcement, "found! hallelujah to almighty God, the children are found!"—in a voice that was heard, with a thrill of joy, even to the distant abode of the hitherto despairing parents. The next moment the wilderness shook with the answering discharge of every gun in the company.

The children were now found it was evident; but how found? Whether living or dead no one of the company here knew; and few were willing to utter a loud conjecture, as, with common consent, they all broke from their stations and hurried towards that point in the woods, from which the signal had proceeded. But leaving this exciting scene, we will now follow the small detached party in the still more exciting adventures, which resulted in the discovery just announced to the main company in the manner we have described.

After passing rapidly over that part of their route which had been previously examined in the search, this little party continued to toil on through the tangled thickets and windfalls, or up the wet and slippery declivities, which they every few yards encountered, in following up the stream, till the increasing difficulties of the way at length caused the leader of the party to doubt the use or expediency of attempting to penetrate any further;— and he proposed a halt, for the purpose of consulting his companions.

"Is there any possibility, Barlett," he said, addressing the man nearest to him, "that those children can have made their way through such a place any further than this, or even so far, I might as well have said?"

"I should think not, Captain Ball," responded the person addressed, "but we will have Underwood and Bingham's opinions," he added, turning to the two remaining ones of the party.

"Why, I don't think it impossible," replied Underwood, "that they should get through these wind-falls; for children will creep through smaller holes than we can; but the only question with me has been, whether they would naturally have kept on far in a course, where the ground is so ascending, even as this ravine— much less up the steeps where the main party have gone."

"Well, now, that is no great question with me," remarked Bingham, who was an old and observing hunter,— "I've always noted, that all the brute creatures in the woods, when frightened and confused by pursuit, invariably take up hill courses, and why not frightened and confused children, who, in such case, could have nothing but instinct and natural impulses to guide or govern them. If you can tell me why lost and frightened brutes do this, or why lost and frightened children shouldn't, when brutes do, I should like to hear you?"

This odd theory led to some further discussion among the rest of the party, during which the hunter walked on a short distance to a large hemlock tree, standing near the stream, where some appearance had attracted his attention; and having carefully examined the spot, he called to his companions to approach.

"Here," said he, pointing down between the branching roots of the tree, as the others came up, "here I am quite sure something bedded last night, which I hardly think could have been a four-footed animal, as I can find no hairs in the place. The impression, besure, is slight; for the leaves, at this time, are so dry that nothing will leave one, not even foot-steps, else the children could have been traced before this. But the appearance of this spot, taken in connection with that freshly broken twig, hanging there by the bark between here and the stream, as you see, inclines me to think the children staid here last night.

"I am willing you should have faith, Bingham," remarked Captain Ball, after examining the appearances to which the other had thus invited attention; "but if it is grounded only on these uncertain circumstances, I fear it will avail us but little in our object. However, we will examine the place to some distance around, and if the children have really been here, we shall probably discover indications of it, of a less doubtful character."

The adjoining woods were searched over to a considerable extent; but no additional indications were discovered. And the party, all but the hunter, again began to talk of turning their steps towards home; when the latter, who stood musing a little aloof from the rest, suddenly called on them to be silent and listen."

"What did you think you heard, Bingham?" asked Ball, in a lowered tone.

"I can hardly tell," replied the hunter, in the same tone, as he stood with an ear turned in the direction of the supposed sound, "but if you were not so determined to beat me out of the belief of all my own senses, should say something that sounded like the faintish kind of a yelp, with which a wolf generally begins a call for help,—if it was, it will soon be repeated, now hark!"

All listened in silence, and, in a moment, the long, savage howl, peculiar to the animal just named, was indeed heard rising distinctly on the breeze, from some spot up the ravine, perhaps three quarters of a mile distant.

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"A wolf, sure enough," said Bartlett.

"Yes, and if the children have gone this way, it is as I feared," added the less experienced Underwood, with a sigh, "the wolves have devoured them."

"Not so fast, Mister," interposed the hunter, "that howl may mean something a little more encouraging. But be quiet, and listen. I am expecting a chorus to that tune in a minute or so."

They all again stood mute, and listened with increasing interest and anxiety;—when the same wild howl, louder and more earnest than before, resounded through the forest. And the next instant another howl was faintly heard, responding from a distant part of the mountain. And another, and another, soon followed from different directions and distances, till the whole wilderness seemed vocal with their terrific music.

"The thing is settled," said the hunter, hastily repriming his gun. "The children are near that wolf which howled first,— alive, too, or he would not have called for help. The pack that have answered him, are most of them a mile or two off; but they will come like the wind. And we must be there before them, or the poor little ones are gone forever. Follow me and keep up who can," he added, striking off like an arrow, in his projected course.

"There is something in this, and in God's name, let us on," exclaimed the now thoroughly aroused Captain Ball, as followed by his two remaining associates, he sprang forward after the hunter.

All, by this time, seemed impressed with the conviction, that the issue of life or death to the children might now depend upon their speed. And on they bounded from log to log, and hillock to hillock, here gliding round an impassable jungle, and there leaping over a fallen tree, or diving under it, with a celerity and progress, which, in such a place, would have seemed incredible to any but the trained woodsman. But as great as was their speed, the hunter, who more than maintained his distance in advance, soon began, by his beckoning gestures, to urge them to greater exertions. Nor were they long at loss to perceive the force of the silent but significant appeals thus made to them; for the rapidly nearing sounds of the gathering wolves, and their short, eager, yells, that told their close approach to the scented prey, all made it evident that they were fast converging to the point of this fearful rivalry between them and the woodsmen, who thus incited, strained every nerve, and inwardly prayed for new powers of speed, to reach the spot in season, but trembled as they prayed, lest they should be one moment too late. A happier return for their exertions, however, was now at hand:— For suddenly the hunter stopped short, and, after peering a moment through an intervening tree—top, down into a valley beyond, he turned to his companions, and motioned them to come on in silence. The next moment they were at his side, gazing down on a scene that caused their hearts to jump into their mouths, and tears to start in their eyes.

In an open space, about fifty yards in front of them, sat a large wolf on his haunches headed from them, and towards his companions, that were now plainly heard, making their way through the surrounding thickets towards him;—while on a flat rock, near the stream, a short distance to the left, stood the lost children, amidst an imperfect bower, which they had constructed from the gathered branches of the hemlock. The youngest was clinging timidly to the oldest, who was menacingly brandishing a small stick towards the unheeding wolf, and with a look of mingled fear and defiance, exclaiming:

"Shoo! shoo! go away, you great ugly dog! we are afraid of you."

With one glance over this exciting scene, every man instinctively brought his cocked gun to his shoulder.

"Stay," whispered the hunter, "more of the pack will be there in a minute; and when they appear, I will give the word and we will let drive together. It will then answer for the signal to our friends, while we have the chance of giving to more of the cowardly imps a different supper from what they are thinking of."

The next moment five or six gaunt, hungry looking wolves, one after another, came galloping in to the open space occupied by the one before described, which now rose, shook himself slightly, and turned to lead the others to the promised repast.

"Here!" said the hunter, catch a quick aim—fire!"

With a single report, the four pieces sent their missiles of death upon the devoted pack. And the sudden sounds of floundering in the leaves, the sharp yelps, and the quickly retreating footsteps, which instantly followed, told the death of one, the wounding of others, and the rapid dispersion of the whole hideous gang of these brute demons of the forest.

"Now for the children," said Captain Ball, hurrying out from behind the screening tree—top. "I will show myself to them first, and alone, lest they be frightened; while the rest of you see to the wolves, if any remain that want finishing,—and then fire another gun to complete the signal."

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While this last injunction was being obeyed, as it almost instantly was by the hunter, by discharging his quickly loaded piece at a limping wolf, of which he caught a glimpse retreating in the distance, the Captain advanced about half-way towards the covert of the poor, terrified little girls, who, at the discharge of the guns, had nestled down in one corner of their rude bower, and there lay clasped together, and trembling in fear and dreadful apprehensions,—less, however, of being devoured by the wolves, which they took, it seemed, to be large grey dogs, than of being seized by those who had fired the guns, and who were imagined by them to be Indians, of whom they had heard so many tales of terror. But on being quietly called by their approaching friend, the eldest girl rose, and, after peering out at him a moment, with a startled and doubtful air, timidly asked,

"Who be you all?"

"We are all friends, so don't be afraid, my little girl," soothingly answered Ball.

"Not Indians, certain?" persisted the former in a smarter tone.

"O, no, we are your friends, as I said, and come to carry you to your father and Mother,—will you go with us?"

"Yes, we will go with you, if you'll carry us to father and mother, if you be Indians," bravely replied she.

While the hunter was stripping off the skin of the slain wolf, which, with a hunter's pride, he claimed as the victim of his own shot, the others employed themselves in gaining the confidence of the recovered children, and refreshing them by feeding them with small portions of buscuits, first soaked in the stream. And the former were so successful in winning upon the confiding hearts of the latter, as soon to draw from them the childish, but affecting little story of their sorrows and adventures, while lost and wandering in the dark and dreary woods. How, when they perceived they were lost, they cried and ran the way which they thought was towards home, till it was quite dark;—when tired with running and crying, they sunk down under a large tree, and slept all night; how, the next day, they kept on in the same way, sometimes finding juniper and patridge berries to eat, till they reached about dark the second day, this place; when, making a bed and covert of leaves and hemlock boughs on the rock, they staid all night, during which the youngest was so sick and thirsty, that they got up and taking hold of hands, crept down to the water, drank and returned; and, finally, how they had been here ever since, making their house better, and fearing to go away, lest they should not find so good a place as this, where they could find berries, and where they had seen nothing to scare them, till the big dog came and lapped his mouth at them, and would have bit them, if then had not thrown sticks at him, and kept him off till the guns killed him, and scared away the others that began to come.

Having thus spent a short time in calming, and restoring, with as much food as was deemed prudent, the frightened and famishing children, the party was called together to depart; when two of the men taking each a child in his arms, and the others carrying the guns, and the hunter's wolf skin, the whole set forward with quick, and animated steps, to retrace their way down the gorge to the settlement, where they well knew, minutes would now seem hours till they arrived.

If ever men felt proud and happy at success, it was this little band of honest-hearted woodsmen. And as they strode homewards through woods, with their living trophies, all unharmed and gaily chatting in their arms, their bosoms, at the thought of what they had achieved, together with the anticipated pleasure of restoring the little ones to the arms of their parents,—their grateful bosoms swelled with emotions of happiness more pure, more elevated, more exquisite, than they would have experienced had half the treasures of the earth been unexpectedly won by them.

When about half way out to the clearing, they suddenly encountered the ardent Ethan Allen, hurrying on, at the head of the main body, to meet them. "Ah, ha!" exclaimed the hero, throwing up his hand in joyful surprise, "here they are, alive and well. Glory to God, it is indeed at last accomplished! And now, my merry men," he continued, turning to his followers, "gather up, gather up here, and let every one give voice to his feelings, by joining in a round of cheers which shall make these hills skip like those described by the brave old David of the scriptures,—there, halt, ready now!" he added, himself leading off in the "*three times three*," of such thundering cheers, as never before rose from the wild glens of the Green Mountains!

The company, having thus given vent to their overflowing feelings, were now formed into a sort of triumphal procession, with the recovered children and their deliverers in front; when the whole, headed by their exulting leader, moved briskly on through the remaining part of the woods, till they reached the clearing; when as the long column began to emerge into the open grounds, they were met by the anxious parents, who, having heard the cheering we have described, and, for the first time, found courage to leave the house with any expectation of

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meeting their children alive, were now, with a company of sympathising females, hastening on to receive them. But who can hope adequately to describe that meeting, where tongues were mute, and overcharged hearts only spoke in the dumb tokens of quivering lips, and streaming eyes? The men who had found the lost ones, and still bore them in their arms, had framed gallant speeches for this occasion, but they were all forgotten now, and the children were hurriedly passed to the eagerly extended arms of the parents, and by them convulsively clasped to their bosoms in silence. Even the iron nerved Allen, usually so free and bold of speech, stood by and looked on without daring to trust his voice in words. And, for some moments, not a single articulate sound was heard among that touched and tearful group, till the spell was broken by the simple exclamation of one of the wondering children.

"Why, father and mother, what makes you cry so?"

"True, true, my little one," said Allen, dashing away his tears, and now finding the use of his tongue,— "here we are sure enough, all crying like a pack of great boobies; when if any company on earth had reason to rejoice and be merry, it is we. Come, come, let us try to get our joy into a more natural channel, and then move on to the house." The head of the column was again brought to order, and, passing on through the field, soon entered the yard of that house whose recent sorrows were now to give place to rejoicing and thankfulness. Here the company were formed into two extended lines, a few feet apart, and facing each other;—when the grateful and overjoyed parents, each leading a child, that they might be seen by all, passed through them, followed by Allen, alternately awakening, by his lively sallies, and timely remarks, the mirth and good feeling of all those around him, and declaring for himself that this was the happiest hour of all his life. After this gratifying ceremony was over, he once more mounted the stump, the rostrum of his former successful appeal, and in behalf of the parents of the recovered children, poured forth the warmest expressions of gratitude to the company for their kindness, and long continued exertions, and ended by an ejaculation of thanks to God for his mercy and goodness in permitting those exertions to be rewarded with such signal success.

The assembly then quietly dispersing, returned to their respective homes, each proud of his own share in the achievement, but prouder still of that of the distinguished leader, without whose presence all felt conscious the affair must have terminated in sorrow instead of rejoicing. And who shall say, great as the fame of Ethan Allen is, for deeds of noble daring and brilliant exploit, as a warrior,—who shall say, that his brightest laurel was not won, after all, in that noble, though little known act of his life, which resulted in the recovery of the "lost children" in the wilds of Sunderland?

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A VERMONTNER IN A FIX; OR A New way to Collect an Old Debt.

Young Hobson, not he of *choice* memory, but John Hobson, a plain, hardy, shrewd Vermont farmer, having by dint of delving and scrambling among the rugged rocks of his native hills, gathered a respectable share of the solid lucre, began to bethink him, with certain other secret motives, of rising a little faster in the world by way of a spec. For this purpose he laid out his little stock of cash in fat cattle, and, purchasing enough more on credit to make out a decentish kind of a drove, as he termed it, took up a line of march with his horned regiment through the long woods to Quebec. After undergoing his full share of fatigue and suffering from swimming rivers and worrying through the mud of ten-mile swamps, sustained only by the meagre fare of French taverns, which, but for the name of taverns had been hovels, which a decent farmer in Vermont would have been somewhat ashamed to have housed his hogs in, Hobson arrived safe and sound at the great Northern Market. He soon had a bid that exceeded his most sanguine expectations, and after receiving from a by-stander an assurance of the bidder's pecuniary ability for such a purchase, he struck off the whole lot; while the purchaser, directing him to his lodgings, told him to call the next day and he should receive his money. Chuckling with the thought of his great bargain, and in fact the price was a thumping one, Hobson returned to the Inn where he had bespoken quarters, and informed the landlord of his lucky sale.

"To whom did you sell, friend Hobson?" said the landlord.

"Derrick, he called himself, the good looking man of the Market, there"—

"And you did'nt trust him, man, did you?"

"To be sure, I did, till to-morrow, when he promises the money all on the nail—and another tall fellow told me Derrick was good for thousands."

"Bill Derrick," then said the landlord, "and Catch-Gull Luck, his everlasting surety, suppose they have made another haul. It may be as you expect, Mr. Hobson, but this much I will say, if you get your money to-morrow, or *all* of it ever, I will agree to keep Lent twelve months at least."

"But I shall though," said Hobson, "or by the hocus-pocus of my grand mother, I will soon teach him the true cost of cheating a Yankee."

The landlord shook his head, and Hobson retired for the night with his spirits wofully down towards zero; and though he still could not persuade himself but that the man would be punctual, yet he acknowledged to himself that he had been a little too fast among these city folks, in taking every thing for gold that shines, on their own word or the word of an abettor.

The next day Hobson waited on Derrick according to agreement, and was received with all possible politeness by the smooth tongued dealer—Mr. Hobson was very welcome, but really he had ten thousand pardons to beg, that in the great hurry he had entirely forgotten to make arrangements to meet his promise, but the man he was to receive the money from he supposed would require a day's notice or so, but he would see him immediately, and by calling again to-morrow, every thing would be regulated to Mr. Hobson's wishes, he presumed. All this, however, Hobson was not quite as ready to take for gospel now as before; and in order that he might know a little better the state in which he stood with this ready promise, he diligently betook himself to making inquiries into the man's situation and character.—

From these he soon learnt that Derrick had disposed of the cattle as soon as he had purchased, and that although in reality he might be worth some property, yet his promise was considered good for nothing, for he always contrived to conceal his effects from his crediters, and, acting the bankrupt as occasion required, he always put the law at defiance.—In fine, that he was an arrant knave and had before played the same game on several unwary drovers, who in their eagerness, to close a bargain at the great price which he was ever ready to offer, had neglected the precaution of making inquiries, and sold their cattle to him on a short credit, and after being amused and dallyed by his promises a few weeks, had given up their debts as lost and gone off in despair. "So ho! John," said our hero, soliloquizing along as he trudged back to his lodgings, with the feelings of one whose own folly had made him the dupe of a knave, and whose anger is so nearly balanced between himself for his own stupidity, and him who had taken advantage of it by an act of baseness, that he is perfectly at a loss on which he shall give vent to his laboring resentment. "So, ho! John, then it seems you're bit.—Yes, I John Hobson,

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who about home was thought to be up to any thing for a bargain, who out-witted old Clenchfist the shave, and Screwfast the pettifogger, I John Hobson, am bit, cursedly bit, like a great gull, as I am, by this palavering quintessence of a pack of d—d rascals, it's a good one though, by the pipers if it a'nt!

The next day Hobson renewed his visit to Derrick with no better success than before. The next, and the next, it was put off with some new and ingenious excuse, and, his hopes excited with a fresh promise of payment, till he entirely lost all faith in the fellow's promises. What must be done? He could never go back and face his neighbors in Vermont of whom he had purchased part of his drove on credit till he returned, without the money to pay them; besides, nearly all his own property was vested in the drove. Yes, said he to himself, something must be done to get me out of this dilemma—so now John Hobson for your wits, and let them be stretched to their prettiest. With this view of his case he sought the landlord.

"Is this evil genius of mine, this Derrick, said he, at all tinctured with notions of a religious or superstitious nature?"

"No! as it regards a future reckoning he neither fears God or Devil."

"Well, then, does he wish to be tho't a man of honor and honesty with any of the big fishes of your city?"

"No, he has nothing to hope from them, nor does he care what they think of him."

"And what say you of his courage, can he face?"

"No! he is said to be a great coward and always a sneak from danger."

"Ah! that is something," said Hobson, "hold easy and say nothing."

Our hero now mused awhile and retired to bed with a brightened look, and the air of one who has got a new maggot in his head, as he probably would have himself expressed it. The next morning he was stirring as soon as it was light. Sallying out into the town he soon came across a couple of Indians lazily lounging about the street.

"Sawnies, or whatever they call ye," says he, "I want to hire you to-day."

"Me go," said the spokesman of the two, "me go for the money or de rum."

"Well, then, do you know Derrick there about the market, with a white coat and a black cane?"

"Me know him."

"Very well, I will give you a broad shiner apiece if you will dog that fellow untill bed time; don't touch him, or say one word to him, but always keep your eyes on him; if he turns a corner, you turn too; if he goes into a house, you watch till he comes out, and if he comes near you, run till he stops and then turn and watch again. Will you do it?"

"Yes! me do him," was the reply.

Hobson now returned to his lodgings and remained there till night, when he set out for Derrick's, to see if his plan of operations had produced any effect; and if so, to give it such a turn as he might think best calculated to accomplish his purpose.

Derrick was at home, and obviously, in no very cheerful mood. After framing his usual excuses for not having the money ready, he soon fell into a sort of reverie. Hobson now began to have some hopes that his scheme would succeed; and while he was endeavoring, by various questions to draw out something which would open a way for him to act his own part in the plan, Derrick observed,—

"I have noticed a rather mysterious circumstance to day Mr. Hobson; a thing I can't exactly account for."

"What may that be," said Hobson, "if I may so bold with your honor?"

"Why there has been a couple of Indians dogging and spying me out in every spot and place I have been in since morning.— I tried to come up with them once or twice, and they vanished like apparitions, but as soon as I turned, I could see them peeping out after me from some other place; they kept at a distance, to be sure, but they looked d—n'd evil, and I don't know exactly what it all means."

"It *is* quite singular said Hobson, "but what kind of looking fellows were they?"

Derrick described them.

"Why, sir," said Hobson, "they must be the very fellows that helped me with my cattle through the long woods; I am rather sorry that I employed them, for I begin to suspect they are desperate and bloody minded fellows, though they stuck to me as close as brothers on the way, and I should have paid them, but I told them I could not until you paid me for the cattle; then I mean to pay them well and get rid of them, for they begin to look rather askew at me, and I confess, between you and I, that I feel rather shy of the imps myself; but I believe I must be jogging; you say I may call to-morrow?"

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"Yes—yes, certainly," said Derrick.

Hobson retired, and signing to the Indians, who were lurking round the house to follow him, he took them aside.

"Well my lads, you have done well—here are your wheels— go and drink, then come back to your business; be seen once or twice more to night, and be at your post early to-morrow morning, and keep up the same game till to-morrow night; here are ofnother pair of shiners for you—will you do it?"

"Yes! me do him, was again the laconic answer.

The next day, Hobson again waited on Derrick and found him looking extremely ill and haggard, with the appearance of one who had been sadly disturbed of his rest.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Hobson," said he, "I am very happy at length to be able to pay you; but you must be sensible Mr. Hobson, that the sum I promised you for your cattle was a hundred dollars over the market price; I made a losing go of it, and I think that you will discount the hundred dollars at least.,'

"I fear that cannot be," said Hobson, "for I have already made a contract to pay away all this money, before I leave the city, except enough to pay my expenses home and pay off the bloody Indians; perhaps I could get away, however, by dodging the knaves; could I not?"

"O no," said Derrick eagerly.

"No, for heaven's sake no; pay them well, why, last night, they waylaid my house and have been seen several times this morning, though I have been so unwell that I have not been out to-day; not that I fear them Mr. Hobson, but on your own account, pay them off to the last farthing, for otherwise, depend on it they will do you some cursed mischief, I was only in jest about the discount."

With this, Derrick brought out a bag of gold, and without further ceremony counted out the full sum to the inwardly exulting Hobson, who, pocketing the guineas with great composure, bid Derrick good morning and marched off in triumph to his lodgings and recounting his good fortune to his admiring landlord, took a hearty breakfast, and departed, having good-naturedly absolved the landlord from his promise of perpetual secret, and leaving the Indians to earn their days wages to the sad discomfeiture of the nerves of poor Derrick. In two hours Hobson had crossed the great river, on his way homeward, and pronouncing his parting blessing on the walled city, "And you didn't knab John Hobson after all," said he, turning his head and spurring his pony into a round trot up the great road towards the States; "you didn't knab him so easily, ye mongrel, scurvy, rascalious crew of beef-eating John Bulls, and *parley vou francez* frigazee, frog-eating Frenchmen, so leaving this specimen of Vermont fashions in turning the tables on a rascal for your benefit, good bye says I and be hanged to you."

It was about a month after the occurrences we have described that a gay wedding party was assembled at the house of Esquire— at the Four corners in Slab City. The balance that had been, for more than a year, doubtfully trembling at equipoise between our young farmer and a more wealthy, but a less loved suitor of the Squire's fair daughter, had at length turned in favor of our hero, who always attributed his subsequent happiness to his lucky speculation at the walled city.

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AN INDIAN'S REVENGE.

Some twenty–five or thirty years ago, circumstances made me, for a few days, an inmate of a family situated in the heart of the Green Mountains. It was the family of a hardy young farmer, who, with a wife, young, active and ambitious as himself, had in a few years before, made his pitch on a lot of wild land, and was now, by the steady efforts of his industry, rapidly transforming the patch of brown wilderness, which he had selected as his home, into a cultivated field. It was now the night of a beautiful summer's day, and the sun was slowly sinking behind the woody hills which, deeply environing the log house and the little opening around it, stood clothed in all the green majesty of nature sending forth on the fine atmosphere, cooled and moistened by the evaporating spray of a thousand falling rills, their sweet and healing breath impregnated with all the blooming fragrance of the blooming wilderness. The farmer had returned from his labor in the field, and was silently pacing the room with an air of dejection and pensiveness. He gave no reason for this change in his deportment, and remained silent until he was kindly interrogated by his wife: "I know not how it is Rebecca, but I have felt this day a sensation of uncommon uneasiness, rather of mind than of body I believe, the same unaccountable feeling that I have always experienced when some hidden danger was lurking about me. "I think it all your own fancyings" replied she, with some apparent concern. "My husband she continued," turning to me with the air of one who seems to consider some explanation called for by the circumstances; "my husband is a little subject at times, to dark and moody turns, and often starts at imaginary dangers, while real ones appear to be the least of his concern." While she was speaking, the husband had approached the side of the house and was intently looking through a large crevice between the logs from which the moss, a substance in common use to stop the crevices of log buildings, had been partly removed. In a moment, he started back with a look of dismay, seized his rifle from the wooden hooks by which it was suspended from a beam above him, and instantly cocked it. "Rebecca," said he in a hurried tone, "come here!" She tremblingly obeyed, and looking through the crevice in the direction of his quivering finger. She instantly recoiled from the view, with her husband who was now in the attitude of raising the muzzle of the piece to the crevice. Seizing it with both hands, "you cannot be so thoughtless," said she, "as to fire upon them—O! fly, fly out of the other window, and you can reach the woods unseen."

The husband pausing a moment and giving a quick glance in every direction around him, replied, "You are right,"—while she, as if reading at a look his wishes, reached his powder horn and ball pouch, and was hurrying him to the window. As he passed me he said "stay here and protect my family till I return, and all but life shall reward you." He then threw himself out of the window, and bowing almost to the ground and sometimes creeping, he pursued his way hastily through the weeds and bushes that bordered a small rivulet, till he reached the woods and disappeared. "There, said she," drawing her suspended breath, "thank heaven, he is safe!" Amazed at what I had witnessed, I hastily asked for an explanation. Convulsively seizing my arm she conducted me to the crevice. "Look beneath yonder clump of trees," said she. I did so, and to my surprise, I beheld three Indians apparently holding a consultation and watching the house, They were armed with rifles, tomahawks, cords, and such other implements as their warriors are known to carry when on expeditions of massacre or capture. "There, sir, is the cause of our fears. We have before been alarmed in this manner, but my husband, then, as he has now, providentially escaped them. Had he been seen here, it would probably have been their endeavor to have taken him to night and carried him off to their tribe, to murder him after their own fashion; or, had they failed in this, they would have ambushed and shot him. But now they have not seen him, they will watch for a day or two and depart as noiseless as they came." I expressed some doubts of their hostile intentions, and suggested the improbability that they would here dare to seek the life of an individual, since the country had become so far settled, that on the least alarm, a force could soon be rallied sufficient to exterminate the whole tribe. "My husband," said she, "was formerly a hunter on the lakes, and he then innocently was the cause of an accident which terminated fatally to an Indian, and which, it seems, they think he can only atone for with his life. Though they pass peaceably through the country, and as yet have committed no violence, still my husband too well knows their deadly purpose. How they have discovered his present residence is still unknown to him. But I choose that he should tell his own story. Stay with us over to–morrow; they will depart, and he will return." I consented. The Indians after reconnoitering the house from different positions disappeared for the night. They repeated the same

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several times the next day, when, towards night they disappeared, and were soon heard of several miles off, making their way northward. The farmer returned the next day, when he related the following adventure of his early days:

"Several years ago, I made an excursion to lake Memphremagog for the purpose of spending the fall in hunting and catching furs around the shores of that lake, which is now associated with recollections which I fear will always be fatal to my happiness. I had been there several weeks, when, one day being out in quest of a deer which my dog had started, I heard the report of a rifle at some distance, and pursuing my way in the direction of the sound, I soon came across an Indian who lay wounded and bleeding on the ground. From appearances, as well as his signs, I learned that being in the range of the game and his companions, he had been wounded by the ball from one of their rifles, and that they, unconscious of what they had done, had pursued the chase and left him in this condition, fainting from the loss of blood. I staunched his wound the best way I could, revived and conveyed him to my tent. The wound was not dangerous, and in a few days, during which I paid all the attention in my power, he was enabled to depart to his tribe who were encamped round the other end of the lake. After this, he frequently visited my tent, bringing me game and taking various ways to express his gratitude, spending considerable time with me, and often joining me in hunting excursions, I soon became much attached to him, and repaid his kindness with many little presents of various kinds of trinkets which I had brought with me. This probably awakened the jealousy of his companions, as I afterwards noticed an uncommon coolness and reserve in their manner towards me when I met them. While matters continued thus, one night as I lay in my tent, I was awakened by a furious barking of my dog. The terrified animal, by his unnatural cries, and the manner in which he ventured forth and frequently retreated back into the door of my tent, told me that no common animal was near me. I arose, renewed the priming of my gun, and looked out in the direction where the attention of the dog was confined. At length my sight was caught by two hideously glaring eye-balls that were beaming out from the boughs of a thick pine that stood but eight or ten rods from my tent. I at once knew it to be an enormous catamount. And, judging from the of the animal that he was about to leap towards me, I resolved to hazard a shot, although sensible of the uncertainty of my aim in the dark. I accordingly levelled my piece, and carefully directing my aim between the two bright orbs that were glowing down upon me with the intenseness of a furnace, I fired, and the animal with a tremendous leap and a scream that echoed for miles among the mountains of the lake, fell to the ground about half way from the tree to where I stood, my dog still refusing to approach the spot, and knowing the animal to be dangerous, even with the last gasp of life, I hastily reloaded for another fire. At this moment I heard a rustling among the bushes, and discerning some dark object to move in the direction of the animal, and supposing he was preparing for another leap, I fired, something fell to the ground, and my blood curdled as I heard the sounds of the human voice in the hollow groan that accompanied the fall! I hastened to the spot: the lifeless body of the catamount lay upon the ground—and a little further, I beheld a human being writhing in the agonies of death. I applied a torch light to his face, and to my unutterable grief, discovered him to be my Indian friend. Having been belated on an excursion, he was probably approaching the tent for the night at the time I was reconnoitering the catamount; and having seen him fall he was cautiously approaching the animal when arrested by my fatal shot, which it was my luckless destiny to give him. Though unable to speak, a fierce and vengeful expression was beaming in his eyes, as he beheld me. In a moment, however, as if satisfied of the innocence of my motives on witnessing the agony of my feelings, his countenance assumed a mild and benignant expression. He stretched out his hand to receive mine; and with this last convulsive effort of appeased and friendly feeling, he immediately expired. I soon began to feel sensible of the peculiar difficulties and dangers of my situation. If I should call in the Indians, I doubted greatly whether I should be able to prevent them from suspecting me of intentionally killing their companion; and such suspicions, I feared, would be fostered by some of the tribe in their present feelings towards me. And as suspicion, in the creed of the Indian, is but little better than conviction, and fearful of the fiery tortures that must follow such a conclusion in their minds, I concluded, perhaps unwisely, to dispose of the body secretly. With this determination, I took the rifle and several steel traps which the deceased had with him, and lashing them to the body, conveyed it to my canoe and rowed to the deepest part of the lake. I shall never forget the painful and gloomy feeling that attended the performances of this sad and fearful office. Though conscious of my innocence, and of being only dictated by prudence in thus disposing of him to whom I could have wished an honorable interment, still a kind of guilty feeling, and self-condemnation, weighed deeply on my mind. Even the murmuring winds that were sighing mournfully through the tall pines that stood towering along the shores of the

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lake, seemed to upbraid me; and the low wailings of the waves, dashing sullenly on the distant beach, seemed to fall on my ear in the sounds of reproach for the deed I was committing; dark presentiments of approaching danger oppressed and sunk gloomily on my spirits. On arriving into the deep waters of the lake, I lifted the body over the side of the canoe into the water, and it immediately sunk by the weight of iron by which it was encumbered, and disappeared from my sight. I then turned and rowed back hastily to the shore. As I was about to step out of my canoe, I heard the splash of an oar at a distance down the lake. This circumstance, though I could discern nothing, much alarmed me, as I supposed the Indians were abroad on the lake, and had probably observed my movement—in which case I feared that a discovery was inevitable; for though they must be perfectly ignorant of my business at the time, yet on missing their companion, they would be sure to revolve this circumstance in their minds, in every bearing, and perhaps with some ingenious conclusion, connect it with his fate; for there are no people who can vie with the natives of our forests in the scrutinizing closeness of their observations, the minuteness and accuracy of comparing circumstances, and the faculty of drawing conclusions from presumptive evidence. I returned to my tent and lay down—but not to sleep. Alone, in a dark wilderness, many miles from the dwelling of a civilized being, and deprived of my only friend by the very blow that had brought me into the situation where he was the most needed—the gloomy stillness of the house, and the dark forebodings of the future, rushed on my mind, and conspired to fill my bosom with feelings of grief, anxiety, and utter loneliness.

The next day I went out and was absent nearly all day. As I was returning, when I came in sight of my tent, I saw two Indians intently examining the spot where the deceased had fallen. They then took the trail I had made in carrying the body to the lake, carefully noticing each leaf on the way till they reached the canoe, and after looking at it minutely awhile, they raised a kind of wailing whoop and departed towards their encampment. Judging from their appearance that they had formed conclusions unfavorable to me, I packed up my most valuable furs and other articles, and building a good fire at the door of the tent, I took a bear skin and laid down in a thicket at a distance, from which I could see directly into the tent. During the evening several Indians appeared around the tent, and finally entered it. Finding my moveables gone, they immediately raised the war-hoop and scattered in every direction. One came near me, pursuing his way down the lake. I remained awhile, then rose, and taking my pack, directed my course to the south end of the lake, from whence I intended to steer to the nearest white settlement. I reached the place before day, unmolested, and sought a concealment in an old tree top on the ground, where I laid still till nearly dark the next day. I then rose and was making my way homeward, when two Indians rose from a thicket and rushed upon me. I run for the shore of the lake which I had not yet left, and reached it as the Indians were within two rods of me. It was a precipice of rocks hanging perpendicularly fifty feet above the waters. I must be taken or leap the rock. I paused an instant, plunged headlong and was quickly buried in the deep waters beneath. When I arose, I saw my faithful dog, who had followed the desperate fortunes of his master, floating apparently lifeless on the surface, having so flatly struck the water in his fall that the shock had deprived him of breath and the power of motion. With as little of my head above water as possible, I swam under the shelving rocks so as to get out of the view of the Indians. Several balls were in quick succession sent into the body of the unconscious dog, it being now so dark the Indians could not distinguish it from me. Supposing they had done their bloody work, they ran up the lake, where they could get down to the water, to swim in after what they mistook to be my body. While doing this, I had swam in an opposite direction, till, unseen, having effected a landing, I took my course with rapid strides towards the settlements, and had proceeded some distance before I heard the whoop which told the disappointment of the Indians. I however travelled all night unmolested, and the next day at noon was safely lodged in the house of an old acquaintance."

After the narrator had concluded his story, I partook of some refreshment and soon took my leave of the family. Several years after, I was journeying through the town, and passed by the same dwelling. It was desolate and tenantless, and the weeds and bushes had grown up where I had before seen fields of waving grain. On inquiry, I learned that the former occupant, having again been haunted by the Indians, and, perhaps still more by his own imagination, had removed into the western country, without informing even his nearest neighbors of his intended residence.

THE BRAVO HUSBAND! A Tale of Italy.

Ludovico Salvati was the captain of a troop of bandits infesting the Lower Alps. Of lofty stature, muscular frame, and undaunted temperament, he seemed especially fitted for the desperate post in which his evil stars had placed him. We say his evil stars, for Salvati was the cadet of a noble family, of which honorable mention is made in the archives of Florence. He was a man of cultivated intellect and high aspirations: one who was never destined to tread the obscure path of mindless mediocrity. But maddened by disappointment and despair, the miseries of Salvati would have made a maniac of a less desperate nature; they made *him* a robber. His name was the byword of terror to the travellers and merchants, and the sound of fear by which the matrons of the Alpine hamlets soothed their wayward nurselings into submission; "Hark! Salvati!" sufficed alike to silence the most turbulent, and to subdue the most refractory.

Meanwhile, Salvati himself knew no happiness on earth, save that in the consciousness that his name could thus strike terror to the hearts of those who in early youth had taught his own to quail. He had been injured, deeply injured; and he had vowed vengeance—nor was he one to breathe such a vow lightly.

In his first manhood Ludovico had loved; not as worldlings love, but with deep devotedness. By day he walked through the marble halls of the Salvati Palace, musing on the idol of his soul; by night he closed his eyes only to dream of her. Beatrice Monti was a Florentine, with eyes like midnight when it is bright with stars, and a voice like that of the bird which loves the darkness; the brow of a Madonna, high, calm, and pale, looking as though earthly passion could never overshadow it; and a smile which shed sunshine where it rested. She was so young and gentle that it seemed as if she were scarce fitted to contend with the care's of life, and so light-hearted that she appeared never to have had one dream of sorrow. Such was she when she listened to Salvati's tale of love, as they sat together beneath the boughs of a pomegranate tree, from which he pilfered the rich red blossoms to twine them in her hair; while the sound of minstrelsy came faintly from the distant palace, swelling and dying as the wind rose and fell among the orange trees. What recks it what he said, or how he said it, beneath the moon-lighted sky, amid breeze and blossom; enough that she heard it without a frown—that she answered with a smile; and that, as Salvati pressed her to his heart, he called her his—*his own!* his love—his world! 'Twas a sweet dream; and they walked hand in hand, his arm around her, and her rich warm cheek resting upon his shoulder—slowly, pausingly, under the delicious night wind; and they told each other the history of their secret affection—how it had grown and strengthened since they first met; and if Beatrice blushed at the confession, he kissed away her blushes, and she did not repent her confidence. Ludovico told a less embarrassed tale, and she pressed her small hand upon his lips to stay their utterance; but the lover heeded not the gentle hindrance, and he showed her how long and how ardently he had loved her—for days are centuries in a lover's calendar; and the moon had risen high in heaven, and the orange buds were shedding the perfumed dew from their snowy cups, ere they remembered that the world was peopled by others besides themselves, and prepared again to mingle with its denizens.

A fearful year followed that blissful evening. A rival's blood crimsoned the blade of Salvati; but the stab was deeper at his own heart's core! Could it be that Beatrice loved the smooth lipped stranger? His own Beatrice? He could not think that it was thus: and yet, she wept over the corse—such tears as women weep only for those whom they have enshrined in their hearts. But Beatrice—the beautiful, the fond, the timid Beatrice? No, no; it could not be; and Salvati held her to his heart, and loathed himself that he had dared to doubt her.

He became a husband. Not a word, not a look of his young bride, but was to him all as light and music. All that tenderness which woman loves so well, he lavished upon her with a prodigality which proved that his whole heart was in the homage; and yet, she was not happy. The smile fled from her lip, her step became less buoyant, and her voice more sad. Ludovico mourned, wondered, yet never doubted; and when Beatrice placed in his arms her infant girl, he forgot all sorrow in the contemplation of its cherub face.

One day he had led his fair wife forth into the sunshine, and the child slumbered upon his bosom. He talked to Beatrice of all which that child might one day be to them, gifted as she seemed with her mother's beauty—that mother who was to him fairer than aught else on earth. Suddenly a messenger approached them,—the bearer of strange tidings,—he was a kinsman of Salvati, and he came, with joy in his heart, to tell him that the rival whom

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he had smitten he had nevertheless not slain; that he yet lived, though his friends had borne him across the sea, when they rescued him from death—there was no blood upon the soul of the young husband.

Ludovico smiled scornfully in doubt, but the doubt was vain. The stranger had been seen since his return to Florence: he still bore the trace of Salvati's blade, but he lived.

Then, indeed, light returned to the eyes of Beatrice, though she uttered not a word, as Ludovico gloomily led the way back to their splendid home.

One more short month and the infant of the Count Salvati was motherless. Beatrice had fled! The father and the child were alike deserted. The wretched and bereaved man caught up the weeping child—weeping it knew not wherefore—and, in turn, abandoned the home which to him was now desolate. He wandered, he cared not whither, for many weary days; the peasants whom he encountered in his way shared with him, and with his motherless infant, their simple, and often scanty, meal; and he slept with the child nestled in his bosom, under the bright clear sky, or beneath a cotter's roof. It was thus the bandits found him. He was a reckless man. They urged him to become their chief; and he started at once from his lethargy of sorrow. By their means he might yet taste revenge! The very thought was of itself cabalistic. He told them all his wrongs, and they talked of vengeance; that was enough; he was thence-forward theirs—body and soul. He girt the pistols and the dagger in his belt; he pressed the plumed hat upon his brow; and he placed his little Beatrice in the arms of the gentlest of the bandit's wives. It is true that he shuddered as he gave her into such rude keeping, but he was anticipating vengeance; and he turned away with a smile upon his lip.

He watched and watched for years, and yet his longing was unappeased; and meanwhile, his child grew healthfully among the Alpine breezes, with all the loveliness and grace of her mother floating about her like an atmosphere of light, and all the hardihood of a young mountaineer.

Salvati's revenge had been so long delayed, that the thirst for its indulgence became demoniacal, when he heard that his enemy was at length within his grasp—and Beatrice, too!—she who had won his heart only to break it!—she who was once the wife of his bosom—the mother of his infant girl! She was even now with the man upon whom his curse rested—to whom it had clung for years—upon whom it was now so soon to fall. * * The seducer and the seduced were there, within arrow's flight; and they breathed the same air with the outlaw and his child. Salvati writhed with agony: the fair browed lover had been watched into a palace at the foot of the very mountain whose fastnesses were bivouacked the band of Ludovico. The false one and her guilty companion could sun themselves boldly beneath the blue sky of heaven, while the bereaved husband and his innocent babe were hidden from the gaze of men, lest the arm of justice should overtake them. The reflection was maddening; and excited by this bitter thought, engendering memories still more wretched, Ludovico took his deserted daughter by the hand, just as a glorious sunset had flashed and faded into those sober tints which steep the world in twilight, and tried to find comfort in the sweet looks and tones of the only being who loved him; but he could not support even the converse of the light-hearted child; and casting himself gloomily down, with his rifle in his hand, in a chasm of the rock, he bade Beatrice go forth and gambol in the soft air. For awhile the girl stood pensively beside him, her hands folded upon her breast, and her large dark eyes riveted on his countenance; but after a time she looked forth over the ledge of rocks against which she leant, and watched the wild birds as they winged their joyous way to their nightly resting places.

Suddenly Ludovico was startled by her scream, and he hurriedly sprang from the earth; in another instant he heard the report of a rifle, and Beatrice sunk down beside him,—the ball had entered her heart,—she was dead! Salvati laid her gently down again upon the earth from which in his first terror he had lifted her; and then fiercely gazing down into the valley from a point whence he could not be perceived from beneath, he discerned two human figures. The foremost was that of a tall cavalier, and farther in the distance the bandit distinguished a party of attendants. He saw the truth at once—the cavalier was engaged in shooting with his rifle at the birds which were flying homeward to their eyries in the rock, and the lady was witnessing his prowess. The little Beatrice had attracted their attention by her movements, and the sportsman, believing it to be some mountain eagle watching in fancied security the destruction of its feathered associates, and anxious to exhibit to his fair companion a proof of his skill as a marksman, had but too fatally taken his aim. But Ludovico, in another instant, learnt still more than this,—it was not enough that the sweet spirit which had so long and so lovingly ministered to his own, when all else had forsaken him, lay quenched at his feet—it was not enough that the pure and beautiful image in which that spirit had been enshrined, was now a ghastly, senseless, gory heap—destiny had not yet done with him. A light

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laugh came on his ear—a laugh of mirth as a requiem for his dead infant—he could not be mistaken—he had heard such laughter in by-gone years, ere the blight of misery had withered him—it was the voice of Beatrice—of his false wife! He turned, and looked at his lost child, bent over her for an instant, as if to convince himself that there was indeed no hope, and then seizing his rifle, he took a steady aim, and again the sharp quick sound reverberated among the heights—another peal of laughter rang out at its echo, but this time it was the laugh of Ludovico. The cavalier, the murderer of his little one, fell as that horrible mirth swelled on the evening breeze. As quick as thought the rifle of the bandit was reloaded: and he looked for a second with a glad and gloating look upon the affrighted party who cowered around the fallen man; then again he raised his weapon; but this time his hand was unsteady, and his frame shook—the strong man quivered like a leaf! Again he glanced back on the dead object of all his hope, and of all his tenderness, and that sufficed. In the next instant a shout of horror rang upward from the plain: mother and child were alike lifeless. Salvati had taken no coward aim.

A few months subsequently, Florence was thronged by curious crowds, who came to witness the execution of Ludovico, the bandit chief. He had surrendered himself to justice; he had avowed the murder of his wife; the pillage of travellers, the control of a fierce band which had long been the terror of the country. No voice was raised in mercy; it was a forgotten word in Florence; while all cried aloud for justice. Men do not judge by the racked heart and the wrung spirit; but by the peril and the spoil—what to them were the anguish and the despair which had wrought their ruin? their pity had been unchallenged, for Salvati had borne a haughty brow before his accusers—he had himself supplied them both the charge and the culprit; and the morning at length arrived—two slowly for those who were to be merely the lookers on at the legal tragedy—when all might see if his high courage would still uphold him—what marvel then that they panted for the trial? But they knew not Ludovico Salvati! he had done with the world, and the world with him. A busy throng entered his dungeon to summon him to the death scene; his chains were lying on the earth beside him, for he had wrenched them asunder, though his tortured limbs had suffered in the effort; he was no longer to be a gaze for the Florentines—his dagger had freed him.