

ABBOTT JOHN CABOT

DAVID CROCKETT: HIS
LIFE AND ADVENTURES

John Abbott

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Содержание

PREFACE	5
CHAPTER I	6
CHAPTER II	14
CHAPTER III	23
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	31

John S. C. Abbott

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PREFACE

David Crockett certainly was not a model man. But he was a representative man. He was conspicuously one of a very numerous class, still existing, and which has heretofore exerted a very powerful influence over this republic. As such, his wild and wondrous life is worthy of the study of every patriot. Of this class, their modes of life and habits of thought, the majority of our citizens know as little as they do of the manners and customs of the Comanche Indians.

No man can make his name known to the forty millions of this great and busy republic who has not something very remarkable in his character or his career. But there is probably not an adult American, in all these widespread States, who has not heard of David Crockett. His life is a veritable romance, with the additional charm of unquestionable truth. It opens to the reader scenes in the lives of the lowly, and a state of semi-civilization, of which but few of them can have the faintest idea.

It has not been my object, in this narrative, to defend Colonel Crockett or to condemn him, but to present his peculiar character exactly as it was. I have therefore been constrained to insert some things which I would gladly have omitted.

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

FAIR HAVEN, CONN.

CHAPTER I

Parentage and Childhood

The Emigrant.—Crossing the Alleghanies.—The boundless Wilderness.—The Hut on the Holston.—Life's Necessaries.—The Massacre.—Birth of David Crockett.—Peril of the Boys.—Anecdote.—Removal to Greenville; to Cove Creek.—Increased Emigration.—Loss of the Mill.—The Tavern.—Engagement with the Drover.—Adventures in the Wilderness.—Virtual Captivity.—The Escape.—The Return.—The Runaway.—New Adventures.

A little more than a hundred years ago, a poor man, by the name of Crockett, embarked on board an emigrant-ship, in Ireland, for the New World. He was in the humblest station in life. But very little is known respecting his uneventful career excepting its tragical close. His family consisted of a wife and three or four children. Just before he sailed, or on the Atlantic passage, a son was born, to whom he gave the name of John. The family probably landed in Philadelphia, and dwelt somewhere in Pennsylvania, for a year or two, in one of those slab shanties, with which all are familiar as the abodes of the poorest class of Irish emigrants.

After a year or two, Crockett, with his little family, crossed the almost pathless Alleghanies. Father, mother, and children trudged along through the rugged defiles and over the rocky cliffs, on foot. Probably a single pack-horse conveyed their few household goods. The hatchet and the rifle were the only means of obtaining food, shelter, and even clothing. With the hatchet, in an hour or two, a comfortable camp could be constructed, which would protect them from wind and rain. The camp-fire, cheering the darkness of the night, drying their often wet garments, and warming their chilled limbs with its genial glow, enabled them to enjoy that almost greatest of earthly luxuries, peaceful sleep.

The rifle supplied them with food. The fattest of turkeys and the most tender steaks of venison, roasted upon forked sticks, which they held in their hands over the coals, feasted their voracious appetites. This, to them, was almost sumptuous food. The skin of the deer, by a rapid and simple process of tanning, supplied them with moccasins, and afforded material for the repair of their tattered garments.

We can scarcely comprehend the motive which led this solitary family to push on, league after league, farther and farther from civilization, through the trackless forests. At length they reached the Holston River. This stream takes its rise among the western ravines of the Alleghanies, in Southwestern Virginia. Flowing hundreds of miles through one of the most solitary and romantic regions upon the globe, it finally unites with the Clinch River, thus forming the majestic Tennessee.

One hundred years ago, this whole region, west of the Alleghanies, was an unexplored and an unknown wilderness. Its silent rivers, its forests, and its prairies were crowded with game. Countless Indian tribes, whose names even had never been heard east of the Alleghanies, ranged this vast expanse, pursuing, in the chase, wild beasts scarcely more savage than themselves.

The origin of these Indian tribes and their past history are lost in oblivion. Centuries have come and gone, during which joys and griefs, of which we now can know nothing, visited their humble lodges. Providence seems to have raised up a peculiar class of men, among the descendants of the emigrants from the Old World, who, weary of the restraints of civilization, were ever ready to plunge into the wildest depths of the wilderness, and to rear their lonely huts in the midst of all its perils, privations, and hardships.

This solitary family of the Crocketts followed down the northwestern banks of the Hawkins River for many a weary mile, until they came to a spot which struck their fancy as a suitable place to build their Cabin. In subsequent years a small village called Rogersville was gradually reared upon

this spot, and the territory immediately around was organized into what is now known as Hawkins County. But then, for leagues in every direction, the solemn forest stood in all its grandeur. Here Mr. Crockett, alone and unaided save by his wife and children, constructed a little shanty, which could have been but little more than a hunter's camp. He could not lift solid logs to build a substantial house. The hard-trodden ground was the only floor of the single room which he enclosed. It was roofed with bark of trees piled heavily on, which afforded quite effectual protection from the rain. A hole cut through the slender logs was the only window. A fire was built in one corner, and the smoke eddied through a hole left in the roof. The skins of bears, buffaloes, and wolves provided couches, all sufficient for weary ones, who needed no artificial opiate to promote sleep. Such, in general, were the primitive homes of many of those bold emigrants who abandoned the comforts of civilized life for the solitudes of the wilderness.

They did not want for most of what are called the necessities of life. The river and the forest furnished a great variety of fish and game. Their hut, humble as it was, effectually protected them from the deluging tempest and the inclement cold. The climate was genial in a very high degree, and the soil, in its wonderful fertility, abundantly supplied them with corn and other simple vegetables. But the silence and solitude which reigned are represented, by those who experienced them, as at times something dreadful.

One principal motive which led these people to cross the mountains, was the prospect of an ultimate fortune in the rise of land. Every man who built a cabin and raised a crop of grain, however small, was entitled to four hundred acres of land, and a preemption right to one thousand more adjoining, to be secured by a land-office warrant.

In this lonely home, Mr. Crockett, with his wife and children, dwelt for some months, perhaps years—we know not how long. One night, the awful yell of the savage was heard, and a band of human demons came rushing upon the defenceless family. Imagination cannot paint the tragedy which ensued. Though this lost world, ever since the fall of Adam, has been filled to repletion with these scenes of woe, it causes one's blood to curdle in his veins as he contemplates this one deed of cruelty and blood.

The howling fiends were expeditious in their work. The father and mother were pierced by arrows, mangled with the tomahawk, and scalped. One son, severely wounded, escaped into the forest. Another little boy, who was deaf and dumb, was taken captive and carried by the Indians to their distant tribe, where he remained, adopted into the tribe, for about eighteen years. He was then discovered by some of his relatives, and was purchased back at a considerable ransom. The torch was applied to the cabin, and the bodies of the dead were consumed in the crackling flames.

What became of the remainder of the children, if there were any others present in this midnight scene of conflagration and blood, we know not. There was no reporter to give us the details. We simply know that in some way John Crockett, who subsequently became the father of that David whose history we now write, was not involved in the general massacre. It is probable that he was not then with the family, but that he was a hired boy of all work in some farmer's family in Pennsylvania.

As a day-laborer he grew up to manhood, and married a woman in his own sphere of life, by the name of Mary Hawkins. He enlisted as a common soldier in the Revolutionary War, and took part in the battle of King's Mountain. At the close of the war he reared a humble cabin in the frontier wilds of North Carolina. There he lived for a few years, at but one remove, in point of civilization, from the savages around him. It is not probable that either he or his wife could read or write. It is not probable that they had any religious thoughts; that their minds ever wandered into the regions of that mysterious immortality which reaches out beyond the grave. Theirs was apparently purely an animal existence, like that of the Indian, almost like that of the wild animals they pursued in the chase.

At length, John Crockett, with his wife and three or four children, unintimidated by the awful fate of his father's family, wandered from North Carolina, through the long and dreary defiles of the mountains, to the sunny valleys and the transparent skies of East Tennessee. It was about the

year 1783. Here he came to a rivulet of crystal water, winding through majestic forests and plains of luxuriant verdure. Upon a green mound, with this stream flowing near his door, John Crockett built his rude and floorless hut. Punching holes in the soil with a stick, he dropped in kernels of corn, and obtained a far richer harvest than it would be supposed such culture could produce. As we have mentioned, the building of this hut and the planting of this crop made poor John Crockett the proprietor of four hundred acres of land of almost inexhaustible fertility.

In this lonely cabin, far away in the wilderness, David Crockett was born, on the 17th of August, 1786. He had then four brothers. Subsequently four other children were added to the family.

His childhood's home was more humble than the majority of the readers of this volume can imagine. It was destitute of everything which, in a higher state of civilization, is deemed essential to comfort. The wigwam of the Indian afforded as much protection from the weather, and was as well furnished, as the cabin of logs and bark which sheltered his father's family. It would seem, from David Crockett's autobiography, that in his childhood he went mainly without any clothing, like the papposes of an Indian squaw. These facts of his early life must be known, that we may understand the circumstances by which his peculiar character was formed.

He had no instruction whatever in religion, morals, manners, or mental culture. It cannot be supposed that his illiterate parents were very gentle in their domestic discipline, or that their example could have been of any essential advantage in preparing him for the arduous struggle of life. It would be difficult to find any human being, in a civilized land, who can have enjoyed less opportunities for moral culture than David Crockett enjoyed in his early years.

There was quite a fall on the Nolachucky River, a little below the cabin of John Crockett. Here the water rushed foaming over the rocks, with fury which would at once swamp any canoe. When David was four or five years old, and several other emigrants had come and reared their cabins in that vicinity, he was one morning out playing with his brothers on the bank of the river. There was a canoe tied to the shore. The boys got into it, and, to amuse themselves, pushed out into the stream, leaving little David, greatly to his indignation, on the shore.

But the boys did not know how to manage the canoe, and though they plied the paddies with all vigor, they soon found themselves caught in the current, and floating rapidly down toward the falls, where, should they be swept over, the death of all was inevitable.

A man chanced to be working in a field not far distant. He heard the cries of the boys and saw their danger. There was not a moment to be lost. He started upon the full run, throwing off coat and waistcoat and shoes, in his almost frantic speed, till he reached the water. He then plunged in, and, by swimming and wading, seized the canoe when it was within but about twenty feet of the roaring falls. With almost superhuman exertions he succeeded in dragging it to the shore.

This event David Crockett has mentioned as the first which left any lasting imprint upon his memory. Not long after this, another occurrence took place characteristic of frontier life. Joseph Hawkins, a brother of David's mother, crossed the mountains and joined the Crockett family in their forest home. One morning he went out to shoot a deer, repairing to a portion of the forest much frequented by this animal. As he passed a very dense thicket, he saw the boughs swaying to and fro, where a deer was apparently browsing. Very cautiously he crept within rifle-shot, occasionally catching a glimpse, through the thick foliage, of the ear of the animal,—as he supposed.

Taking deliberate aim he fired, and immediately heard a loud outcry. Rushing to the spot, he found that he had shot a neighbor, who was there gathering grapes. The ball passed through his side, inflicting a very serious though not a fatal wound, as it chanced not to strike any vital part. The wounded man was carried home; and the rude surgery which was practised upon him was to insert a silk handkerchief with a ramrod in at the bullet-hole, and draw it through his body. He recovered from the wound.

Such a man as John Crockett forms no local attachments, and never remains long in one place. Probably some one came to his region and offered him a few dollars for his improvements. He

abandoned his cabin, with its growing neighborhood, and packing his few household goods upon one or two horses, pushed back fifty miles farther southwest, into the trackless wilderness. Here he found, about ten miles above the present site of Greenville, a fertile and beautiful region. Upon the banks of a little brook, which furnished him with an abundant supply of pure water, he reared another shanty, and took possession of another four hundred acres of forest land. Some of his boys were now old enough to furnish efficient help in the field and in the chase.

How long John Crockett remained here we know not. Neither do we know what induced him to make another move. But we soon find him pushing still farther back into the wilderness, with his hapless family of sons and daughters, dooming them, in all their ignorance, to the society only of bears and wolves. He now established himself upon a considerable stream, unknown to geography, called Cue Creek.

David Crockett was now about eight years old. During these years emigration had been rapidly flowing from the Atlantic States into this vast and beautiful valley south of the Ohio. With the increasing emigration came an increasing demand for the comforts of civilization. Framed houses began to rise here and there, and lumber, in its various forms, was needed.

John Crockett, with another man by the name of Thomas Galbraith, undertook to build a mill upon Cove Creek. They had nearly completed it, having expended all their slender means in its construction, when there came a terrible freshet, and all their works were swept away. The flood even inundated Crockett's cabin, and the family was compelled to fly to a neighboring eminence for safety.

Disheartened by this calamity, John Crockett made another move. Knoxville, on the Holston River, had by this time become quite a thriving little settlement of log huts. The main route of emigration was across the mountains to Abingdon, in Southwestern Virginia, and then by an extremely rough forest-road across the country to the valley of the Holston, and down that valley to Knoxville. This route was mainly traversed by pack-horses and emigrants on foot. But stout wagons, with great labor, could be driven through.

John Crockett moved still westward to this Holston valley, where he reared a pretty large log house on this forest road; and opened what he called a tavern for the entertainment of teamsters and other emigrants. It was indeed a rude resting-place. But in a fierce storm the exhausted animals could find a partial shelter beneath a shed of logs, with corn to eat; and the hardy pioneers could sleep on bear-skins, with their feet perhaps soaked with rain, feeling the warmth of the cabin fire. The rifle of John Crockett supplied his guests with the choicest venison steaks, and his wife baked in the ashes the "journey cake," since called johnny cake, made of meal from corn pounded in a mortar or ground in a hand-mill. The brilliant flame of the pitch-pine knot illumined the cabin; and around the fire these hardy men often kept wakeful until midnight, smoking their pipes, telling their stories, and singing their songs.

This house stood alone in the forest. Often the silence of the night was disturbed by the cry of the grizzly bear and the howling of wolves. Here David remained four years, aiding his father in all the laborious work of clearing the land and tending the cattle. There was of course no school here, and the boy grew up in entire ignorance of all book learning. But in these early years he often went into the woods with his gun in pursuit of game, and, young as he was, acquired considerable reputation as a marksman.

One day, a Dutchman by the name of Jacob Siler came to the cabin, driving a large herd of cattle. He had gathered them farther west, from the luxuriant pastures in the vicinity of Knoxville, where cattle multiplied with marvellous rapidity, and was taking them back to market in Virginia. The drover found some difficulty in managing so many half wild cattle, as he pressed them forward through the wilderness, and he bargained with John Crockett to let his son David, who, as we have said, was then twelve years of age, go with him as his hired help. Whatever wages he gave was paid to the father.

The boy was to go on foot with this Dutchman four hundred miles, driving the cattle. This transaction shows very clearly the hard and unfeeling character of David's parents. When he reached the end of his journey, so many weary leagues from home, the only way by which he could return was to attach himself to some emigrant party or some company of teamsters, and walk back, paying for such food as he might consume, by the assistance he could render on the way. There are few parents who could thus have treated a child of twelve years.

The little fellow, whose affections had never been more cultivated than those of the whelp of the wolf or the cub of the bear, still left home, as he tells us, with a heavy heart. The Dutchman was an entire stranger to him, and he knew not what treatment he was to expect at his hands. He had already experienced enough of forest travel to know its hardships. A journey of four hundred miles seemed to him like going to the uttermost parts of the earth. As the pioneers had smoked their pipes at his father's cabin fire, he had heard many appalling accounts of bloody conflicts with the Indians, of massacres, scalpings, tortures, and captivity.

David's father had taught him, very sternly, one lesson, and that was implicit and prompt obedience to his demands. The boy knew full well that it would be of no avail for him to make any remonstrance. Silently, and trying to conceal his tears, he set out on the perilous enterprise. The cattle could be driven but about fifteen or twenty miles a day. Between twenty and thirty days were occupied in the toilsome and perilous journey. The route led them often through marshy ground, where the mire was trampled knee-deep. All the streams had to be forded. At times, swollen by the rains, they were very deep. There were frequent days of storm, when, through the long hours, the poor boy trudged onward, drenched with rain and shivering with cold. Their fare was most meagre, consisting almost entirely of such game as they chanced to shoot, which they roasted on forked sticks before the fire.

When night came, often dark and stormy, the cattle were generally too much fatigued by their long tramp to stray away. Some instinct also induced them to cluster together. A rude shanty was thrown up. Often everything was so soaked with rain that it was impossible to build a fire. The poor boy, weary and supperless, spattered with mud and drenched with rain, threw himself upon the wet ground for that blessed sleep in which the weary forget their woes. Happy was he if he could induce one of the shaggy dogs to lie down by his side, that he might hug the faithful animal in his arms, and thus obtain a little warmth.

Great was the luxury when, at the close of a toilsome day, a few pieces of bark could be so piled as to protect from wind and rain, and a roaring fire could blaze and crackle before the little camp. Then the appetite which hunger gives would enable him to feast upon the tender cuts of venison broiled upon the coals, with more satisfaction than the gourmand takes in the choicest viands of the restaurant. Having feasted to satiety, he would stretch himself upon the ground, with his feet to the fire, and soon be lost to all earth's cares, in sweet oblivion.

The journey was safely accomplished. The Dutchman had a father-in-law, by the name of Hartley, who lived in Virginia, having reared his cabin within about three miles of the Natural Bridge. Here the boy's contract came to an end. It would seem that the Dutchman was a good sort of man, as the world goes, and that he treated the boy kindly. He was so well pleased with David's energy and fidelity, that he was inclined to retain him in his service. Seeing the boy's anxiety to return home, he was disposed to throw around him invisible chains, and to hold him a captive. He thus threw every possible hindrance in the way of his return, offered to hire him as his boy of all work, and made him a present of five or six dollars, which perhaps he considered payment in advance, which bound the boy to remain with him until he had worked it out.

David soon perceived that his movements were watched, and that he was not his own master to go or stay as he pleased. This increased his restlessness. Four or five weeks thus passed away, when, one morning, three wagons laden with merchandise came along, bound to Knoxville. They were driven by an old man by the name of Dugan, and his two stalwart sons. They had traversed the

road before, and David had seen the old man at his father's tavern. Secretly the shrewd boy revealed to him his situation, and his desire to get back to his home. The father and sons conferred together upon the subject. They were moved with sympathy for the boy, and, after due deliberation, told him that they should stop for the night about seven miles from that place, and should set out again on their journey with the earliest light of the morning; and that if he could get to them before daylight, he might follow their wagons.

It was Sunday morning, and it so happened that the Dutchman and the family had gone away on a visit. David collected his clothes and the little money he had, and hid them in a bundle under his bed. A very small bundle held them all. The family returned, and, suspecting nothing, all retired to sleep.

David had naturally a very affectionate heart. He never had been from home before. His lonely situation roused all the slumbering emotions of his childhood. In describing this event, he writes:

"I went to bed early that night, but sleep seemed to be a stranger to me. For though I was a wild boy, yet I dearly loved my father and mother; and their images appeared to be so deeply fixed in my mind that I could not sleep for thinking of them. And then the fear that when I should attempt to go out I should be discovered and called to a halt, filled me with anxiety."

A little after midnight, when the family were in profoundest sleep, David cautiously rose, and taking his little bundle, crept out doors. To his disappointment he found that it was snowing fast, eight inches having already fallen; and the wintry gale moaned dismally through the treetops. It was a dark, moonless night. The cabin was in the fields, half a mile from the road along which the wagons had passed. This boy of twelve years, alone in the darkness, was to breast the gale and wade through the snow, amid forest glooms, a distance of seven miles, before he could reach the appointed rendezvous.

For a moment his heart sank within him. Then recovering his resolution, he pushed out boldly into the storm. For three hours he toiled along, the snow rapidly increasing in depth until it reached up to his knees. Just before the dawn of the morning he reached the wagons. The men were up, harnessing their teams. The Dunns were astounded at the appearance of the little boy amid the darkness and the tempest. They took him into the house, warmed him by the fire, and gave him a good breakfast, speaking to him words of sympathy and encouragement. The affectionate heart of David was deeply moved by this tenderness, to which he was quite unaccustomed.

And then, though exhausted by the toil of a three hours' wading through the drifts, he commenced, in the midst of a mountain storm, a long day's journey upon foot. It was as much as the horses could do to drag the heavily laden wagons over the encumbered road. However weary, he could not ride. However exhausted, the wagons could not wait for him; neither was there any place in the smothering snow for rest.

Day after day they toiled along, in the endurance of hardships now with difficulty comprehended. Sometimes they were gladdened with sunny skies and smooth paths. Again the clouds would gather, and the rain, the sleet, and the snow would envelop them in glooms truly dismal. Under these circumstances the progress of the wagons was very slow. David was impatient. As he watched the sluggish turns of the wheels, he thought that he could travel very much faster if he should push forward alone, leaving the wagons behind him.

At length he became so impatient, thoughts of home having obtained entire possession of his mind, that he informed Mr. Dunn of his intention to press forward as fast as he could. His elder companions deemed it very imprudent for such a mere child, thus alone, to attempt to traverse the wilderness, and they said all they could to dissuade him, but in vain. He therefore, early the next morning, bade them farewell, and with light footsteps and a light heart tripped forward, leaving them behind, and accomplishing nearly as much in one day as the wagons could in two. We are not furnished with any of the details of this wonderful journey of a solitary child through a wilderness of one or two hundred miles. We know not how he slept at night, or how he obtained food by day. He informs us that he was at length overtaken by a drover, who had been to Virginia with a herd of cattle, and was returning to Knoxville riding one horse and leading another.

The man was amazed in meeting a mere child in such lonely wilds, and upon hearing his story, his kind heart was touched. David was a frail little fellow, whose weight would be no burden for a horse, and the good man directed him to mount the animal which he led. The boy had begun to be very tired. He was just approaching a turbid stream, whose icy waters, reaching almost to his neck, he would have had to wade but for this Providential assistance.

Travellers in the wilderness seldom trot their horses. On such a journey, an animal who naturally walks fast is of much more value than one which has attained high speed upon the race-course. Thus pleasantly mounted, David and his kind protector rode along together until they came within about fifteen miles of John Crockett's tavern, where their roads diverged. Here David dismounted, and bidding adieu to his benefactor, almost ran the remaining distance, reaching home that evening.

"The name of this kind gentleman," he writes, "I have forgotten; for it deserves a high place in my little book. A remembrance of his kindness to a little straggling boy has, however, a resting-place in my heart, and there it will remain as long as I live."

It was the spring of the year when David reached his father's cabin. He spent a part of the summer there. The picture which David gives of his home is revolting in the extreme. John Crockett, the tavern-keeper, had become intemperate, and he was profane and brutal. But his son, never having seen any home much better, does not seem to have been aware that there were any different abodes upon earth. Of David's mother we know nothing. She was probably a mere household drudge, crushed by an unfeeling husband, without sufficient sensibilities to have been aware of her degraded condition.

Several other cabins had risen in the vicinity of John Crockett's. A man came along, by the name of Kitchen, who undertook to open a school to teach the boys to read. David went to school four days, but found it very difficult to master his letters. He was a wiry little fellow, very athletic, and his nerves seemed made of steel. When roused by anger, he was as fierce and reckless as a catamount. A boy, much larger than himself, had offended him. David decided not to attack him near the school-house, lest the master might separate them.

He therefore slipped out of school, just before it was dismissed, and running along the road, hid in a thicket, near which his victim would have to pass on his way home. As the boy came unsuspectingly along, young Crockett, with the leap of a panther, sprang upon his back. With tooth and nail he assailed him, biting, scratching, pounding, until the boy cried for mercy.

The next morning, David was afraid to go to school, apprehending the severe punishment he might get from the master. He therefore left home as usual, but played truant, hiding himself in the woods all day. He did the same the next morning, and so continued for several days. At last the master sent word to John Crockett, inquiring why his son David no longer came to school. The boy was called to an account, and the whole affair came out.

John Crockett had been drinking. His eyes flashed fire. He cut a stout hickory stick, and with oaths declared that he would give his boy an "eternal sight" worse whipping than the master would give him, unless he went directly back to school. As the drunken father approached brandishing his stick, the boy ran, and in a direction opposite from that of the school-house. The enraged father pursued, and the unnatural race continued for nearly a mile. A slight turn in the road concealed the boy for a moment from the view of his pursuer, and he plunged into the forest and hid. The father, with staggering gait, rushed along, but having lost sight of the boy, soon gave up the chase, and returned home.

This revolting spectacle, of such a father and such a son, over which one would think that angels might weep, only excited the derision of this strange boy. It was what he had been accustomed to all his life. He describes it in ludicrous terms, with the slang phrases which were ever dropping from his lips. David knew that a terrible whipping awaited him should he go back to the cabin.

He therefore pushed on several miles, to the hut of a settler whom he knew. He was, by this time, too much accustomed to the rough and tumble of life to feel any anxiety about the future. Arriving at the cabin, it so chanced that he found a man, by the name of Jesse Cheek, who was just

starting with a drove of cattle for Virginia. Very readily, David, who had experience in that business, engaged to accompany him. An elder brother also, either weary of his wretched home or anxious to see more of the world, entered into the same service.

The incidents of this journey were essentially the same with those of the preceding one, though the route led two hundred miles farther into the heart of Virginia. The road they took passed through Abingdon, Witheville, Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Orange Court House, to Front Royal in Warren County. Though these frontier regions then, seventy-five years ago, were in a very primitive condition, still young Crockett caught glimpses of a somewhat higher civilization than he had ever encountered before in his almost savage life.

Here the drove was sold, and David found himself with a few dollars in his pocket. His brother decided to look for work in that region. David, then thirteen years of age, hoping tremblingly that time enough had elapsed to save him from a whipping, turned his thoughts homeward. A brother of the drover was about to return on horseback. David decided to accompany him, thinking that the man would permit him to ride a part of the way.

Much to his disgust, the man preferred to ride himself. The horse was his own. David had no claim to it whatever. He was therefore left to trudge along on foot. Thus he journeyed for three days. He then made an excuse for stopping a little while, leaving his companion to go on alone. He was very careful not again to overtake him. The boy had then, with four dollars in his pocket, a foot journey before him of between three and four hundred miles. And this was to be taken through desolate regions of morass and forest, where, not unfrequently, the lurking Indian had tomahawked, or gangs of half-famished wolves had devoured the passing traveller. He was also liable, at any time, to be caught by night and storm, without any shelter.

As he was sauntering along slowly, that he might be sure and not overtake his undesirable companion, he met a wagoner coming from Greenville, in Tennessee, and bound for Gerardstown, Berkeley County, in the extreme northerly part of Virginia. His route lay directly over the road which David had traversed. The man's name was Adam Myers. He was a jovial fellow, and at once won the heart of the vagrant boy. David soon entered into a bargain with Myers, and turned back with him. The state of mind in which the boy was may be inferred from the following extract taken from his autobiography. I omit the profanity, which was ever sprinkled through all his utterances:

"I often thought of home, and, indeed, wished bad enough to be there. But when I thought of the school-house, and of Kitchen, my master, and of the race with my father, and of the big hickory stick he carried, and of the fierceness of the storm of wrath I had left him in, I was afraid to venture back. I knew my father's nature so well, that I was certain his anger would hang on to him like a turtle does to a fisherman's toe. The promised whipping came slap down upon every thought of home."

Travelling back with the wagon, after two days' journey, he met his brother again, who had then decided to return himself to the parental cabin in Tennessee. He pleaded hard with David to accompany him reminding him of the love of his mother and his sisters. The boy, though all unused to weeping, was moved to tears. But the thought of the hickory stick, and of his father's brawny arm, decided the question. With his friend Myers he pressed on, farther and farther from home, to Gerardstown.

CHAPTER II

Youthful Adventures

David at Gerardstown.—Trip to Baltimore.—Anecdotes.—He ships for London.—Disappointment.—Defrauded of his Wages.—Escapes.—New Adventures.—Crossing the River.—Returns Home.—His Reception.—A Farm Laborer.—Generosity to his Father.—Love Adventure.—The Wreck of his Hopes.—His School Education.—Second Love Adventure.—Bitter Disappointment.—Life in the Backwoods.—Third Love Adventure.

The wagoner whom David had accompanied to Gerardstown was disappointed in his endeavors to find a load to take back to Tennessee. He therefore took a load to Alexandria, on the Potomac. David decided to remain at Gerardstown until Myers should return. He therefore engaged to work for a man by the name of John Gray, for twenty-five cents a day. It was light farm-work in which he was employed, and he was so faithful in the performance of his duties that he pleased the farmer, who was an old man, very much.

Myers continued for the winter in teaming backward and forward between Gerardstown and Baltimore, while David found a comfortable home of easy industry with the farmer. He was very careful in the expenditure of his money, and in the spring found that he had saved enough from his small wages to purchase him a suit of coarse but substantial clothes. He then, wishing to see a little more of the world, decided to make a trip with the wagoner to Baltimore.

David had then seven dollars in his pocket, the careful savings of the labors of half a year. He deposited the treasure with the wagoner for safe keeping. They started on their journey, with a wagon heavily laden with barrels of flour. As they were approaching a small settlement called Ellicott's Mills, David, a little ashamed to approach the houses in the ragged and mud-bespattered clothes which he wore on the way, crept into the wagon to put on his better garments.

While there in the midst of the flour barrels piled up all around him, the horses took fright at some strange sight which they encountered, and in a terrible scare rushed down a steep hill, turned a sharp corner, broke the tongue of the wagon and both of the axle-trees, and whirled the heavy barrels about in every direction. The escape of David from very serious injuries seemed almost miraculous. But our little barbarian leaped from the ruins unscathed. It does not appear that he had ever cherished any conception whatever of an overruling Providence. Probably, a religious thought had never entered his mind. A colt running by the side of the horses could not have been more insensible to every idea of death, and responsibility at God's bar, than was David Crockett. And he can be hardly blamed for this. The savages had some idea of the Great Spirit and of a future world. David was as uninstructed in those thoughts as are the wolves and the bears. Many years afterward, in writing of this occurrence, he says, with characteristic flippancy, interlarded with coarse phrases:

"This proved to me, if a fellow is born to be hung he will never be drowned; and further, that if he is born for a seat in Congress, even flour barrels can't make a mash of him. I didn't know how soon I should be knocked into a cocked hat, and get my walking-papers for another country."

The wagon was quite demolished by the disaster. Another was obtained, the flour reloaded, and they proceeded to Baltimore, dragging the wreck behind them, to be repaired there. Here young Crockett was amazed at the aspect of civilization which was opened before him. He wandered along the wharves gazing bewildered upon the majestic ships, with their towering masts, cordage, and sails, which he saw floating there. He had never conceived of such fabrics before. The mansions, the churches, the long lines of brick stores excited his amazement. It seemed to him that he had been suddenly introduced into a sort of fairy-land. All thoughts of home now vanished from his mind. The

great world was expanding before him, and the curiosity of his intensely active mind was roused to explore more of its wonders.

One morning he ventured on board one of the ships at a wharf, and was curiously and cautiously peering about, when the captain caught sight of him. It so happened that he was in need of a sailor-boy, and being pleased with the appearance of the lad, asked David if he would not like to enter into his service to take a voyage to London. The boy had no more idea of where London was, or what it was, than of a place in the moon. But eagerly he responded, "Yes," for he cared little where he went or what became of him, he was so glad of an opportunity to see more of the wonders of this unknown world.

The captain made a few inquiries respecting his friends, his home, and his past modes of life, and then engaged him for the cruise. David, in a state of high, joyous excitement, hurried back to the wagoner, to get his seven dollars of money and some clothes he had left with him. But Myers put a very prompt veto upon the lad's procedure, assuming that he was the boy's master, he declared that he should not go to sea. He refused to let him have either his clothes or his money, asserting that it was his duty to take him back to his parents in Tennessee. David would gladly have fled from him, and embarked without money and without clothes; but the wagoner watched him so closely that escape was impossible.

David was greatly down-hearted at this disappointment, and watched eagerly for an opportunity to obtain deliverance from his bondage. But Myers was a burly teamster who swung a very heavy wagon-whip, threatening the boy with a heavy punishment if he should make any attempt to run away.

After a few days, Myers loaded his team for Tennessee, and with his reluctant boy set out on his long journey. David was exceedingly restless. He now hated the man who was so tyrannically domineering over him. He had no desire to return to his home, and he dreaded the hickory stick with which he feared his brutal father would assail him. One dark night, an hour or two before the morning, David carefully took his little bundle of clothes, and creeping noiselessly from the cabin, rushed forward as rapidly as his nimble feet could carry him. He soon felt quite easy in reference to his escape. He knew that the wagoner slept soundly, and that two hours at least must elapse before he would open his eyes. He then would not know with certainty in what direction the boy had fled. He could not safely leave his horses and wagon alone in the wilderness, to pursue him; and even should he unharness one of the horses and gallop forward in search of the fugitive, David, by keeping a vigilant watch, would see him in the distance and could easily plunge into the thickets of the forest, and thus elude pursuit.

He had run along five or six miles, when just as the sun was rising he overtook another wagon. He had already begun to feel very lonely and disconsolate. He had naturally an affectionate heart and a strong mind; traits of character which gleamed through all the dark clouds that obscured his life. He was alone in the wilderness, without a penny; and he knew not what to do, or which way to turn. The moment he caught sight of the teamster his heart yearned for sympathy. Tears moistened his eyes, and hastening to the stranger, the friendless boy of but thirteen years frankly told his whole story. The wagoner was a rough, profane, burly man, of generous feelings. There was an air of sincerity in the boy, which convinced him of the entire truth of his statements. His indignation was aroused, and he gave expression to that indignation in unmeasured terms. Cracking his whip in his anger, he declared that Myers was a scoundrel, thus to rob a friendless boy, and that he would lash the money out of him.

This man, whose name also chanced to be Myers, was of the tiger breed, fearing nothing, ever ready for a fight, and almost invariably coming off conqueror. In his generous rage he halted his team, grasped his wagon-whip, and, accompanied by the trembling boy, turned back, breathing vengeance. David was much alarmed, and told his protector that he was afraid to meet the wagoner, who had so often threatened him with his whip. But his new friend said, "Have no fear. The man shall give you back your money, or I will thrash it out of him."

They had proceeded but about two miles when they met the approaching team of Adam Myers. Henry Myers, David's new friend, leading him by the hand, advanced menacingly upon the other teamster, and greeted him with the words:

"You accursed scoundrel, what do you mean by robbing this friendless boy of his money?" Adam Myers confessed that he had received seven dollars of the boy's money. He said, however, that he had no money with him; that he had invested all he had in articles in his wagon, and that he intended to repay the boy as soon as they got back to Tennessee. This settled the question, and David returned with Henry Myers to his wagon, and accompanied him for several days on his slow and toilsome journey westward.

The impatient boy, as once before, soon got weary of the loitering pace of the heavily laden team, and concluded to leave his friend and press forward more rapidly alone. It chanced, one evening, that several wagons met, and the teamsters encamped for the night together. Henry Myers told them the story of the friendless boy, and that he was now about to set out alone for the long journey, most of it through an entire wilderness, and through a land of strangers wherever there might chance to be a few scattered cabins. They took up a collection for David, and presented him with three dollars.

The little fellow pressed along, about one hundred and twenty-five miles, down the valley between the Alleghany and the Blue ridges, until he reached Montgomery Court House. The region then, nearly three quarters of a century ago, presented only here and there a spot where the light of civilization had entered. Occasionally the log cabin of some poor emigrant was found in the vast expanse. David, too proud to beg, when he had any money with which to pay, found his purse empty when he had accomplished this small portion of his journey.

In this emergence, he hired out to work for a man a month for five dollars, which was at the rate of about one shilling a day. Faithfully he fulfilled his contract, and then, rather dreading to return home, entered into an engagement with a hatter, Elijah Griffith, to work in his shop for four years. Here he worked diligently eighteen months without receiving any pay. His employer then failed, broke up, and left the country. Again this poor boy, thus the sport of fortune, found himself without a penny, with but few clothes, and those much worn.

But it was not his nature to lay anything very deeply to heart. He laughed at misfortune, and pressed on singing and whistling through all storms. He had a stout pair of hands, good nature, and adaptation to any kind of work. There was no danger of his starving; and exposures, which many would deem hardships, were no hardships for him. Undismayed he ran here and there, catching at such employment as he could find, until he had supplied himself with some comfortable clothing, and had a few dollars of ready money in his purse. Again he set out alone and on foot for his far-distant home. He had been absent over two years, and was now fifteen years of age.

He trudged along, day after day, through rain and sunshine, until he reached a broad stream called New River. It was wintry weather. The stream was swollen by recent rains, and a gale then blowing was ploughing the surface into angry waves. Teams forded the stream many miles above. There was a log hut here, and the owner had a frail canoe in which he could paddle an occasional traveller across the river. But nothing would induce him to risk his life in an attempt to cross in such a storm.

The impetuous boy, in his ignorance of the effect of wind upon waves, resolved to attempt to cross, at every hazard, and notwithstanding all remonstrances. He obtained a leaky canoe, which was half stranded upon the shore, and pushed out on his perilous voyage. He tied his little bundle of clothes to the bows of the boat, that they might not be washed or blown away, and soon found himself exposed to the full force of the wind, and tossed by billows such as he had never dreamed of before. He was greatly frightened, and would have given all he had in the world, to have been safely back again upon the shore. But he was sure to be swamped if he should attempt to turn the boat broadside to the waves in such a gale. The only possible salvation for him was to cut the approaching billows

with the bows of the boat. Thus he might possibly ride over them, though at the imminent peril, every moment, of shipping a sea which would engulf him and his frail boat in a watery grave.

In this way he reached the shore, two miles above the proper landing-place. The canoe was then half full of water. He was drenched with spray, which was frozen into almost a coat of mail upon his garments. Shivering with cold, he had to walk three miles through the forest before he found a cabin at whose fire he could warm and dry himself. Without any unnecessary delay he pushed on until he crossed the extreme western frontier line of Virginia, and entered Sullivan County, Tennessee.

An able-bodied young man like David Crockett, strong, athletic, willing to work, and knowing how to turn his hand to anything, could, in the humblest cabin, find employment which would provide him with board and lodging. He was in no danger of starving. There was, at that time, but one main path of travel from the East into the regions of the boundless West.

As David was pressing along this path he came to a little hamlet of log huts, where he found the brother whom he had left when he started from home eighteen months before with the drove of cattle. He remained with him for two or three weeks, probably paying his expenses by farm labor and hunting. Again he set out for home. The evening twilight was darkening into night when he caught sight of his father's humble cabin. Several wagons were standing around, showing that there must be considerable company in the house.

With not a little embarrassment, he ventured in. It was rather dark. His mother and sisters were preparing supper at the immense fireside. Quite a group of teamsters were scattered around the room, smoking their pipes, and telling their marvellous stories. David, during his absence of two years, had grown, and changed considerably in personal appearance. None of the family recognized him. They generally supposed, as he had been absent so long, that he was dead.

David inquired if he could remain all night. Being answered in the affirmative, he took a seat in a corner and remained perfectly silent, gazing upon the familiar scene, and watching the movements of his father, mother, and sisters. At length supper was ready, and all took seats at the table. As David came more into the light, one of his sisters, observing him, was struck with his resemblance to her lost brother. Fixing her eyes upon him, she, in a moment, rushed forward and threw her arms around his neck, exclaiming, "Here is my brother David."

Quite a scene ensued. The returning prodigal was received with as much affection as could be expected in a family with such uncultivated hearts and such unrefined habits as were found in the cabin of John Crockett. Even the stern old man forgot his hickory switch, and David, much to his relief, found that he should escape the long-dreaded whipping. Many years after this, when David Crockett, to his own surprise, and that of the whole nation, found himself elevated to the position of one of our national legislators, he wrote:

"But it will be a source of astonishment to many, who reflect that I am now a member of the American Congress, the most enlightened body of men in the world, that, at so advanced an age, the age of fifteen, I did not know the first letter in the book."

By the laws and customs of our land, David was bound to obey his father and work for him until he was twenty-one years of age. Until that time, whatever wages he might earn belonged to his father. It is often an act of great generosity for a hard-working farmer to release a stout lad of eighteen or nineteen from this obligation, and "to give him," as it is phrased, "his time."

John Crockett owed a neighbor, Abraham Wilson, thirty-six dollars. He told David that if he would work for Mr. Wilson until his wages paid that sum, he would then release him from all his obligations to his father, and his son might go free. It was a shrewd bargain for the old man, for he had already learned that David was abundantly capable of taking care of himself, and that he would come and go when and where he pleased.

The boy, weary of his wanderings, consented to the arrangement, and engaged to work for Mr. Wilson for six months, in payment for which, the note was to be delivered up to his father. It was characteristic of David that whatever he undertook he engaged in with all his might. He was a rude,

coarse boy. It was scarcely possible, with his past training, that he should be otherwise. But he was very faithful in fulfilling his obligations. Though his sense of right and wrong was very obtuse, he was still disposed to do the right so far as his uncultivated conscience revealed it to him.

For six months, David worked for Mr. Wilson with the utmost fidelity and zeal. He then received the note, presented it to his father, and, before he was sixteen years of age, stood up proudly his own man. His father had no longer the right to whip him. His father had no longer the right to call upon him for any service without paying him for it. And on the other hand, he could no longer look to his father for food or clothing. This thought gave him no trouble. He had already taken care of himself for two years, and he felt no more solicitude in regard to the future than did the buffalo's calf or the wolf's whelp.

Wilson was a bad man, dissipated and unprincipled. But he had found David to be so valuable a laborer that he offered him high wages if he would remain and work for him. It shows a latent, underlying principle of goodness in David, that he should have refused the offer. He writes:

"The reason was, it was a place where a heap of bad company met to drink and gamble; and I wanted to get away from them, for I know'd very well, if I staid there, I should get a bad name, as nobody could be respectable that would live there."

About this time a Quaker, somewhat advanced in years, a good, honest man, by the name of John Kennedy, emigrated from North Carolina, and selecting his four hundred acres of land about fifteen miles from John Crockett's, reared a log hut and commenced a clearing. In some transaction with Crockett he took his neighbor's note for forty dollars. He chanced to see David, a stout lad of prepossessing appearance, and proposed that he should work for him for two shillings a day taking him one week upon trial. At the close of the week the Quaker expressed himself as highly satisfied with his work, and offered to pay him with his father's note of forty dollars for six months' labor on his farm.

David knew full well how ready his father was to give his note, and how slow he was to pay it. He was fully aware that the note was not worth, to him, the paper upon which it was written. But he reflected that the note was an obligation upon his father, that he was very poor, and his lot in life was hard. It certainly indicated much innate nobility of nature that this boy, under these circumstances, should have accepted the offer of the Quaker. But David did this. For six months he labored assiduously, without the slightest hope of reward, excepting that he would thus relieve his father, whom he had no great cause either to respect or love, from the embarrassment of the debt.

For a whole half-year David toiled upon the farm of the Quaker, never once during that time visiting his home. At the end of the term he received his pay for those long months of labor, in a little piece of rumpled paper, upon which his father had probably made his mark. It was Saturday evening. The next morning he borrowed a horse of his employer and set out for a visit home. He was kindly welcomed. His father knew nothing of the agreement which his son had made with Mr. Kennedy. As the family were talking together around the cabin fire, David drew the note from his pocket and presented it to his father. The old man seemed much troubled. He supposed Mr. Kennedy had sent it for collection. As usual, he began to make excuses. He said that he was very sorry that he could not pay it, that he had met with many misfortunes, that he had no money, and that he did not know what to do.

David then told his father that he did not hand him the bill for collection, but that it was a present from him—that he had paid it in full. It is easy for old and broken-down men to weep. John Crockett seemed much affected by this generosity of his son, and David says "he shed a heap of tears." He, however, avowed his inability to pay anything whatever, upon the note.

David had now worked a year without getting any money for himself. His clothes were worn out, and altogether he was in a very dilapidated condition. He went back to the Quaker's, and again engaged in his service, desiring to earn some money to purchase clothes. Two months thus passed away. Every ardent, impetuous boy must have a love adventure. David had his. A very pretty young

Quakeress, of about David's age, came from North Carolina to visit Mr. Kennedy, who was her uncle. David fell desperately in love with her. We cannot better describe this adventure than in the unpolished diction of this illiterate boy. If one would understand this extraordinary character, it is necessary thus to catch such glimpses as we can of his inner life. Let this necessity atone for the unpleasant rudeness of speech. Be it remembered that this reminiscence was written after David Crockett was a member of Congress.

"I soon found myself head over heels in love with this girl. I thought that if all the hills about there were pure chink, and all belonged to me, I would give them if I could just talk to her as I wanted to. But I was afraid to begin; for when I would think of saying anything to her, my heart would begin to flutter like a duck in a puddle. And if I tried to outdo it and speak, it would get right smack up in my throat, and choke me like a cold potato. It bore on my mind in this way, till at last I concluded I must die if I didn't broach the subject. So I determined to begin and hang on a-trying to speak, till my heart would get out of my throat one way or t'other.

"And so one day at it I went, and after several trials I could say a little. I told her how I loved her; that she was the darling object of my soul and body, and I must have her, or else I should pine down to nothing, and just die away with consumption.

"I found my talk was not disagreeable to her. But she was an honest girl, and didn't want to deceive nobody. She told me she was engaged to her cousin, a son of the old Quaker. This news was worse to me than war, pestilence, or famine. But still I know'd I could not help myself. I saw quick enough my cake was dough; and I tried to cool off as fast as possible. But I had hardly safety pipes enough, as my love was so hot as mighty nigh to burst my boilers. But I didn't press my claims any more, seeing there was no chance to do anything."

David's grief was very sincere, and continued as long as is usually the case with disappointed lovers.

David soon began to cherish some slight idea of the deficiency in his education. He had never been to school but four days; and in that time he had learned absolutely nothing. A young man, a Quaker, had opened a school about a mile and a half from Mr. Kennedy's. David made an arrangement with his employer by which he was to go to school four days in the week, and work the other two days for his board. He continued in this way for six months. But it was very evident that David was not born for a scholar. At the end of that time he could read a little in the first primer. With difficulty he could make certain hieroglyphics which looked like his name. He could also perform simple sums in addition, subtraction, and multiplication. The mysteries of division he never surmounted.

This was the extent of his education. He left school, and in the laborious life upon which he entered, never after improved any opportunity for mental culture. The disappointment which David had encountered in his love affair, only made him more eager to seek a new object upon which he might fix his affections. Not far from Mr. Kennedy's there was the cabin of a settler, where there were two or three girls. David had occasionally met them. Boy as he was, for he was not yet eighteen, he suddenly and impetuously set out to see if he could not pick, from them, one for a wife.

Without delay he made his choice, and made his offer, and was as promptly accepted as a lover. Though they were both very young, and neither of them had a dollar, still as those considerations would not have influenced David in the slightest degree, we know not why they were not immediately married. Several months of very desperate and satisfactory courtship passed away, when the time came for the nuptials of the little Quaker girl, which ceremony was to take place at the cabin of her uncle David and his "girl" were invited to the wedding. The scene only inflamed the desires of David to hasten his marriage-day. He was very importunate in pressing his claims. She seemed quite reluctant to fix the day, but at last consented; and says David, "I thought if that day come, I should be the happiest man in the created world, or in the moon, or anywhere else."

In the mean time David had become very fond of his rifle, and had raised enough money to buy him one. He was still living with the Quaker. Game was abundant, and the young hunter often

brought in valuable supplies of animal food. There were frequent shooting-matches in that region. David, proud of his skill, was fond of attending them. But his Quaker employer considered them a species of gambling, which drew together all the idlers and vagrants of the region, and he could not approve of them.

There was another boy living at that time with the Quaker. They practised all sorts of deceptions to steal away to the shooting-matches under pretence that they were engaged in other things. This boy was quite in love with a sister of David's intended wife. The staid member of the Society of Friends did not approve of the rude courting frolics of those times, which frequently occupied nearly the whole night.

The two boys slept in a garret, in what was called the gable end of the house. There was a small window in their rough apartment. One Sunday, when the Quaker and his wife were absent attending a meeting, the boys cut a long pole, and leaned it up against the side of the house, as high as the window, but so that it would not attract any attention. They were as nimble as catamounts, and could run up and down the pole without the slightest difficulty. They would go to bed at the usual early hour. As soon as all were quiet, they would creep from the house, dressed in their best apparel, and taking the two farm-horses, would mount their backs and ride, as fast as possible, ten miles through the forest road to where the girls lived. They were generally expected. After spending all the hours of the middle of the night in the varied frolics of country courtship, they would again mount their horses and gallop home, being especially careful to creep in at their window before the dawn of day. The course of true love seemed for once to be running smoothly. Saturday came, and the next week, on Thursday, David was to be married.

It so happened that there was to be a shooting match on Saturday, at one of the cabins not far from the home of his intended bride. David made some excuse as to the necessity of going home to prepare for his wedding, and in the morning set out early, and directed his steps straight to the shooting-match. Here he was very successful in his shots, and won about five dollars. In great elation of spirits, and fully convinced that he was one of the greatest and happiest men in the world, he pressed on toward the home of his intended bride.

He had walked but a couple of miles, when he reached the cabin of the girl's uncle. Considering the members of the family already as his relatives, he stepped in, very patronizingly, to greet them. He doubted not that they were very proud of the approaching alliance of their niece with so distinguished a man as himself—a man who had actually five dollars, in silver, in his pocket. Entering the cabin, he found a sister of his betrothed there. Instead of greeting him with the cordiality he expected, she seemed greatly embarrassed. David had penetration enough to see that something was wrong. The reception she gave him was not such as he thought a brother-in-law ought to receive. He made more particular inquiries. The result we will give in David's language.

"She then burst into tears, and told me that her sister was going to deceive me; and that she was to be married to another man the next day. This was as sudden to me as a clap of thunder of a bright sunshiny day. It was the capstone of all the afflictions I had ever met with; and it seemed to me that it was more than any human creature could endure. It struck me perfectly speechless for some time, and made me feel so weak that I thought I should sink down. I however recovered from the shock after a little, and rose and started without any ceremony, or even bidding anybody good-bye. The young woman followed me out to the gate, and entreated me to go on to her father's, and said she would go with me.

"She said the young man who was going to marry her sister had got his license and asked for her. But she assured me that her father and mother both preferred me to him; and that she had no doubt that if I would go on I could break off the match. But I found that I could go no farther. My heart was bruised, and my spirits were broken down. So I bid her farewell, and turned my lonesome and miserable steps back again homeward, concluding that I was only born for hardship, misery, and

disappointment. I now began to think that in making me it was entirely forgotten to make my mate; that I was born odd, and should always remain so, and that nobody would have me.

"But all these reflections did not satisfy my mind, for I had no peace, day nor night, for several weeks. My appetite failed me, and I grew daily worse and worse. They all thought I was sick; and so I was. And it was the worst kind of sickness, a sickness of the heart, and all the tender parts, produced by disappointed love."

For some time David continued in a state of great dejection, a lovelorn swain of seventeen years. Thus disconsolate, he loved to roam the forest alone, with his rifle as his only companion, brooding over his sorrows. The gloom of the forest was congenial to him, and the excitement of pursuing the game afforded some slight relief to his agitated spirit. One day, when he had wandered far from home, he came upon the cabin of a Dutchman with whom he had formed some previous acquaintance. He had a daughter, who was exceedingly plain in her personal appearance, but who had a very active mind, and was a bright, talkative girl.

She had heard of David's misadventure, and rather unfeelingly rallied him upon his loss. She however endeavored to comfort him by the assurance that there were as good fish in the sea as had ever been caught out of it. David did not believe in this doctrine at all, as applied to his own case. He thought his loss utterly irretrievable. And in his still high appreciation of himself, notwithstanding his deep mortification, he thought that the lively Dutch girl was endeavoring to catch him for her lover. In this, however, he soon found himself mistaken.

She told him that there was to be a reaping frolic in their neighborhood in a few days, and that if he would attend it, she would show him one of the prettiest girls upon whom he ever fixed his eyes. Difficult as he found it to shut out from his mind his lost love, upon whom his thoughts were dwelling by day and by night, he very wisely decided that his best remedy would be found in what Dr. Chalmers calls "the expulsive power of a new affection;" that is, that he would try and fall in love with some other girl as soon as possible. His own language, in describing his feelings at that time, is certainly very different from that which the philosopher or the modern novelist would have used, but it is quite characteristic of the man. The Dutch maiden assured him that the girl who had deceived him was not to be compared in beauty with the one she would show to him. He writes:

"I didn't believe a word of all this, for I had thought that such a piece of flesh and blood as she had never been manufactured, and never would again. I agreed with her that the little varmint had treated me so bad that I ought to forget her, and yet I couldn't do it. I concluded that the best way to accomplish it was to cut out again, and see if I could find any other that would answer me; and so I told the Dutch girl that I would be at the reaping, and would bring as many as I could with me."

David seems at this time to have abandoned all constant industry, and to be loafing about with his rifle, thus supporting himself with the game he took. He traversed the still but slightly broken forest in all directions, carrying to many scattered farm-houses intelligence of the approaching reaping frolic. He informed the good Quaker with whom he had worked of his intention to be there. Mr. Kennedy endeavored to dissuade him. He said that there would be much bad company there; that there would be drinking and carousing, and that David had been so good a boy that he should be very sorry to have him get a bad name.

The curiosity of the impetuous young man was, however, by this time, too much aroused for any persuasions to hold him back. Shouldering his rifle, he hastened to the reaping at the appointed day. Upon his arrival at the place he found a large company already assembled. He looked around for the pretty girl, but she was nowhere to be seen. She chanced to be in a shed frolicking with some others of the young people.

But as David, with his rifle on his shoulder, sauntered around, an aged Irish woman, full of nerve and volubility, caught sight of him. She was the mother of the girl, and had been told of the object of David's visit. He must have appeared very boyish, for he had not yet entered his eighteenth year, and though very wiry and athletic, he was of slender frame, and rather small in stature.

The Irish woman hastened to David; lavished upon him compliments respecting his rosy cheeks, and assured him that she had exactly such a sweet heart for him as he needed. She did not allow, David to have any doubt that she would gladly welcome him as the husband of her daughter.

Pretty soon the young, fresh, blooming, mirthful girl came along; and David fell in love with her at first sight. Not much formality of introduction was necessary: each was looking for the other. Both of the previous loves of the young man were forgotten in an instant. He devoted himself with the utmost assiduity, to the little Irish girl. He was soon dancing with her. After a very vigorous "double shuffle," as they were seated side by side on a bench intensely talking, for David Crockett was never at a loss for words, the mother came up, and, in her wonderfully frank mode of match-making, jocosely addressed him as her son-in-law.

Even David's imperturbable self-possession was disturbed by this assailment. Still he was much pleased to find both mother and daughter so favorably disposed toward him. The rustic frolicking continued nearly all night. In the morning, David, in a very happy frame of mind, returned to the Quaker's, and in anticipation of soon setting up farming for himself, engaged to work for him for six months for a low-priced horse.

CHAPTER III

Marriage and Settlement

Rustic Courtship.—The Rival Lover.—Romantic Incident.—The Purchase of a Horse.—The Wedding.—Singular Ceremonies.—The Termagant.—Bridal Days.—They commence Housekeeping.—The Bridal Mansion and Outfit.—Family Possessions.—The Removal to Central Tennessee.—Mode of Transportation.—The New Home and its Surroundings.—Busy Idleness.—The Third Move.—The Massacre at Fort Mimms.

David took possession of his horse, and began to work very diligently to pay for it. He felt that now he was a man of property. After the lapse of a few weeks he mounted his horse and rode over to the Irishman's cabin to see his girl, and to find out how she lived, and what sort of people composed the family. Arriving at the log hut, he found the father to be a silent, staid old man, and the mother as voluble and nervous a little woman as ever lived. Much to his disappointment, the girl was away. After an hour or two she returned, having been absent at some meeting or merry-making, and, much to his chagrin, she brought back with her a stout young fellow who was evidently her lover.

The new-comer was not at all disposed to relinquish his claims in favor of David Crockett. He stuck close to the maiden, and kept up such an incessant chatter that David could scarcely edge in a word. In characteristic figure of speech he says, "I began to think I was barking up the wrong tree again. But I determined to stand up to my rack, fodder or no fodder." He thought he was sure of the favor of her parents, and he was not certain that the girl herself had not given him sundry glances indicative of her preference. Dark night was now coming on, and David had a rough road of fifteen miles to traverse through the forest before he could reach home. He thought that if the Irishman's daughter cherished any tender feelings toward him, she would be reluctant to have him set out at that late hour on such a journey. He therefore rose to take leave.

His stratagem proved successful. The girl immediately came, leaving her other companion, and in earnest tones entreated him not to go that evening. The lover was easily persuaded. His heart grew lighter and his spirit bolder. She soon made it so manifest in what direction her choice lay, that David was left entire master of the field. His discomfited rival soon took his hat and withdrew, David thus was freed from all his embarrassments.

It was Saturday night. He remained at the cabin until Monday morning, making very diligent improvement of his time in the practice of all those arts of rural courtship which instinct teaches. He then returned home, not absolutely engaged, but with very sanguine hopes.

At that time, in that region, wolves were abundant and very destructive. The neighbors, for quite a distance, combined for a great wolf-hunt, which should explore the forest for many miles. By the hunters thus scattering on the same day, the wolves would have no place of retreat. If they fled before one hunter they would encounter another. Young Crockett, naturally confident, plunged recklessly into the forest, and wandered to and fro until, to his alarm, he found himself bewildered and utterly lost. There were no signs of human habitations near, and night was fast darkening around him.

Just as he was beginning to feel that he must look out for a night's encampment, he saw in the distance, through the gigantic trees, a young girl running at her utmost speed, or, as he expressed it in the Crockett vernacular, "streaking it along through the woods like all wrath." David gave chase, and soon overtook the terrified girl, whom he found, to his surprise and delight, to be his own sweetheart, who had also by some strange accident got lost.

Here was indeed a romantic and somewhat an embarrassing adventure. The situation was, however, by no means so embarrassing as it would have been to persons in a higher state of civilization. The cabin of the emigrant often consisted of but one room, where parents and children and the chance

guest passed the night together. They could easily throw up a camp. David with his gun could kindle a fire and get some game. The girl could cook it. All their physical wants would thus be supplied. They had no material inconveniences to dread in camping out for a night. The delicacy of the situation would not be very keenly felt by persons who were at but one remove above the native Indian.

The girl had gone out in the morning into the woods, to hunt up one of her father's horses. She missed her way, became lost, and had been wandering all day long farther and farther from home. Soon after the two met they came across a path which they knew must lead to some house. Following this, just after dark they came within sight of the dim light of a cabin fire. They were kindly received by the inmates, and, tired as they were, they both sat up all night. Upon inquiry they found that David had wandered ten miles from his home, and the young girl seven from hers. Their paths lay in different directions, but the road was plain, and in the morning they separated, and without difficulty reached their destination.

David was now anxious to get married immediately. It will be remembered that he had bought a horse; but he had not paid for it. The only property he had, except the coarse clothes upon his back, was a rifle. All the land in that neighborhood was taken up. He did not even own an axe with which to build him a log cabin. It would be necessary for him to hire some deserted shanty, and borrow such articles as were indispensable. Nothing could be done to any advantage without a horse. To diminish the months which he had promised to work in payment for the animal, he threw in his rifle.

After a few weeks of toil the horse was his. He mounted his steed, deeming himself one of the richest men in the far West, and rode to see his girl and fix upon his wedding-day. He confesses that as he rode along, considering that he had been twice disappointed, he experienced no inconsiderable trepidation as to the result of this third matrimonial enterprise. He reached the cabin, and his worst fears were realized.

The nervous, voluble, irritable little woman, who with all of a termagant's energy governed both husband and family, had either become dissatisfied with young Crockett's poverty, or had formed the plan of some other more ambitious alliance for her daughter. She fell upon David in a perfect tornado of vituperation, and ordered him out of the house. She was "mighty wrathful," writes David, "and looked at me as savage as a meat-axe."

David was naturally amiable, and in the depressing circumstances had no heart to return railing for railing. He meekly reminded the infuriate woman that she had called him "son-in-law" before he had attempted to call her "mother-in-law," and that he certainly had been guilty of no conduct which should expose him to such treatment. He soon saw, to his great satisfaction, that the daughter remained faithful to him, and that the meek father was as decidedly on his side as his timid nature would permit him to be. Though David felt much insulted, he restrained his temper, and, turning from the angry mother, told her daughter that he would come the next Thursday on horseback, leading another horse for her; and that then he would take her to a justice of the peace who lived at the distance of but a few miles from them, where they would be married. David writes of the mother:

"Her Irish was too high to do anything with her; so I quit trying. All I cared for was to have her daughter on my side, which I know'd was the case then. But how soon some other fellow might knock my nose out of joint again, I couldn't tell. Her mother declared I shouldn't have her. But I knowed I should, if somebody else didn't get her before Thursday."

The all-important wedding-day soon came. David was resolved to crush out all opposition and consummate the momentous affair with very considerable splendor. He therefore rode to the cabin with a very imposing retinue. Mounted proudly upon his own horse, and leading a borrowed steed, with a blanket saddle, for his bride, and accompanied by his elder brother and wife and a younger brother and sister, each on horseback, he "cut out to her father's house to get her."

When this cavalcade of six horses had arrived within about two miles of the Irishman's cabin, quite a large party was found assembled from the log huts scattered several miles around. David, kind-hearted, generous, obliging, was very popular with his neighbors. They had heard of the approaching

nuptials of the brave boy of but eighteen years, and of the wrath of the brawling, ill-tempered mother. They anticipated a scene, and wished to render David the support of their presence and sympathy. This large party, some on foot and some on horseback, proceeded together to the Irishman's cabin. The old man met them with smiles, whiskey bottle in hand, ready to offer them all a drink. The wife, however, was obdurate as ever. She stood at the cabin door, her eyes flashing fire, and quite bewildered to decide in what way to attempt to repel and drive off her foe.

She expected that the boy would come alone, and that, with her all-potent tongue, she would so fiercely assail him and so frighten her young girl as still to prevent the marriage. But here was quite an army of the neighbors, from miles around, assembled. They were all evidently the friends of David. Every eye was fixed upon her. Every ear was listening to hear what she would say. Every tongue was itching to cry out shame to her opposition, and to overwhelm her with reproaches. For once the termagant found herself baffled, and at her wits' end.

The etiquette of courts and cabins are quite different. David paid no attention to the mother, but riding up to the door of the log house, leading the horse for his bride, he shouted to her to come out. The girl had enjoyed no opportunity to pay any attention to her bridal trousseau. But undoubtedly she had contrived to put on her best attire. We do not know her age, but she was ever spoken of as a remarkably pretty little girl, and was probably about seventeen years old.

David did not deem it necessary to dismount, but called upon his "girl" to jump upon the horse he was leading. She did so. The mother was powerless. It was a waterloo defeat. In another moment they would disappear, riding away along the road, which wound through the gigantic trees of the forest. In another hour they would be married. And then they would forever be beyond the reach of the clamor of her voluble tongue. She began to relent. The old man, accustomed to her wayward humors, instinctively perceived it. Stepping up to David, and placing his hand upon the neck of his horse, he said:

"I wish you would stay and be married here. My woman has too much tongue. You oughtn't mind her."

Having thus, for a moment, arrested their departure, he stepped back to the door, where his discomfited wife stood, and entreated her to consent to their being married there. After much persuasion, common sense triumphed over uncommon stubbornness. She consented. David and his expectant bride were both on horseback, all ready to go. The woman rather sullenly came forward and said:

"I am sorry for the words I have spoken. This girl is the only child I have ever had to marry. I cannot bear to see her go off in this way. If you'll come into the house and be married here, I will do the best I can for you."

The good-natured David consented. They alighted from their horses, and the bridal party entered the log hut. The room was not large, and the uninvited guests thronged it and crowded around the door. The justice of peace was sent for, and the nuptial knot was tied.

The wedding ceremonies on such occasions were sufficiently curious to be worthy of record. They certainly were in very wide contrast with the pomp and splendor of nuptials in the palatial mansions of the present day. A large party usually met at some appointed place, some mounted and others on foot, to escort the bridegroom to the house of the bride. The horses were decorated with all sorts of caparisons, with ropes for bridles, with blankets or furs for saddles. The men were dressed in deerskin moccasins, leather breeches, leggings, coarse hunting-shirts of all conceivable styles of material, and all homemade.

The women wore gowns of very coarse homespun and home-woven cloth, composed of linen and wool, and called linsey-woolsey, very coarse shoes, and sometimes with buckskin gloves of their own manufacture. If any one chanced to have a ring or pretty buckle, it was a relic of former times.

There were no carriages, for there were no roads. The narrow trail they traversed in single file was generally a mere horse-path, often so contracted in width that two horses could not pass along

abreast. As they marched along in straggling line, with shouts and jokes, and with the interchange of many gallant acts of rustic love-making between the coquettish maidens and the awkward swains, they encountered frequent obstacles on the way. It was a part of the frolic for the young men to throw obstructions in their path, and thus to create surprises. There were brooks to be forded. Sometimes large trees were mischievously felled across the trail. Grape-vines were tied across from tree to tree, to trip up the passers-by or to sweep off their caps. It was a great joke for half a dozen young men to play Indian. They would lie in ambuscade, and suddenly, as the procession was passing, would raise the war-whoop, discharge their guns, and raise shouts of laughter in view of the real or feigned consternation thus excited.

The maidens would of course shriek. The frightened horses would spring aside. The swains would gallantly rush to the rescue of their sweethearts. When the party had arrived within about a mile of the house where the marriage ceremony was to take place, two of the most daring riders among the young men who had been previously selected for the purpose, set out on horseback on a race for "the bottle." The master of the house was expected to be standing at his door, with a jug of whiskey in his hand. This was the prize which the victor in the race was to seize and take back in triumph to his companions.

The start was announced by a general Indian yell. The more rough the road—the more full of logs, stumps, rocks, precipitous hills, and steep glens, the better. This afforded a better opportunity for the display of intrepidity and horsemanship. It was a veritable steeple-chase. The victor announced his success by one of those shrill, savage yells, which would almost split the ears of the listener. Grasping the bottle, he returned in triumph. On approaching the party, he again gave forth the Indian war-whoop.

The bottle or jug was first presented to the bridegroom. He applied the mouth of the bottle to his lips, and took a dram of raw whiskey. He then handed it to his next of kin, and so the bottle passed through the whole company. It is to be supposed that the young women did not burn their throats with very copious drafts of the poisonous fire-water.

When they arrived at the house, the brief ceremony of marriage immediately took place, and then came the marriage feast. It was a very substantial repast of pork, poultry, wild turkeys, venison, and bear's meat. There was usually the accompaniment of corn-bread, potatoes, and other vegetables. Great hilarity prevailed on these occasions, with wonderful freedom of manners, coarse jokes, and shouts of laughter.

The table was often a large slab of timber, hewn out with a broad-axe, and supported by four stakes driven into auger-holes. The table furniture consisted of a few pewter dishes, with wooden plates and bowls. There were generally a few pewter spoons, much battered about the edges, but most of the spoons were of horn, homemade. Crockery, so easily broken, was almost unknown. Table knives were seldom seen. The deficiency was made up by the hunting-knives which all the men carried in sheaths attached to their hunting-shirts.

After dinner the dancing began. There was invariably some musical genius present who could play the fiddle. The dances were what were called three or four handed reels, or square sets and jigs. With all sorts of grotesque attitudes, pantomime and athletic displays, the revelry continued until late into the night, and often until the dawn of the morning. As there could be no sleeping accommodations for so large a company in the cabin of but one room, the guests made up for sleep in merriment.

The bridal party stole away in the midst of the uproar, one after another, up a ladder into the loft or garret above, which was floored with loose boards made often of split timber. This furnished a very rude sleeping apartment. As the revelry below continued, seats being scarce, every young man offered his lap as a seat for the girls; and the offer was always promptly accepted; Always, toward morning, some one was sent up into the loft with a bottle of whiskey, to offer the bridegroom and his bride a drink. The familiar name of the bottle was "Black Betty." One of the witticisms ever prominent on the occasion was, "Where is Black Betty? I want to kiss her sweet lips." At some

splendid weddings, where the larder was abundantly stored with game, this feasting and dancing was continued for several days.

Such, in the main, was the wedding of David Crockett with the Irishman's daughter. In the morning the company dispersed. David also and his young bride left, during the day, for his father's cabin. As the families of the nuptial party both belonged to the aristocracy of the region, quite a splendid marriage reception was held at John Crockett's. There were feasting and dancing; and "Black Betty received many a cordial kiss. The bridegroom's heart was full of exultant joy. David writes:

"Having gotten my wife, I thought I was completely made up, and needed nothing more in the whole world."

He soon found his mistake, and awoke to the consciousness that he needed everything, and had nothing. He had no furniture, no cabin, no land, no money. And he had a wife to support. His only property consisted of a cheap horse. He did not even own a rifle, an article at that time so indispensable to the backwoodsman.

After spending a few days at David's father's, the bridegroom and bride returned to the cabin of her father, the Irishman. Here they found that a wonderful change had taken place in the mother's feelings and conduct. She had concluded to submit good-naturedly to the inevitable. Her "conversational powers" were wonderful. With the most marvellous volubility of honeyed words she greeted them. She even consented to have two cows given them, each with a calf. This was the dowry of the bride—her only dowry. David, who had not expected anything, felt exceedingly rich with this herd.

Near by there was a vacated log cabin with a few acres of land attached to it. Our boy bridegroom and bride hired the cabin at a very small rent. But then they had nothing whatever to put into it. They had not a bed, or a table or a chair; no cooking utensils; not even a knife or a fork. He had no farming tools; not a spade or a hoe. The whole capital with which they commenced life consisted of the clothes they had on, a farm-horse, two cows, and two calves.

In this emergence the good old Quaker, for whom David had worked, came forward, and loaned him fifteen dollars. In that wilderness, food, that is game and corn, was cheap. But as nearly everything else had to be brought from beyond the mountains, all tools and furniture commanded high prices. With the fifteen dollars, David and his little wife repaired to a country store a few miles distant, to furnish their house and farm. Under these circumstances, the china-closet of the bride must have been a curiosity. David says, "With this fifteen dollars we fixed up pretty grand, as we thought."

After a while, in some unexplained way, they succeeded in getting a spinning-wheel. The little wife, says David, "knowed exactly how to use it. She was also a good weaver. Being very industrious, she had, in little or no time, a fine web of cloth ready to make up. She was good at that too, and at almost anything else a woman could do."

Here this humble family remained for two years. They were both as contented with their lot as other people are. They were about as well off as most of their neighbors. Neither of them ever cherished a doubt that they belonged to the aristocracy of the region. They did not want for food or clothing, or shelter, or a warm fireside. They had their merry-makings, their dances, and their shooting-matches. Let it be remembered that this was three quarters of a century ago, far away in the wilds of an almost untamed wilderness.

Two children were born in this log cabin. David began to feel the responsibilities of a father who had children to provide for. Both of the children were sons. Though David's family was increasing, there was scarcely any increase of his fortune. He therefore decided that the interests of his little household demanded that he should move still farther back into the almost pathless wilderness, where the land was not yet taken up, and where he could get a settler's title to four hundred acres, simply by rearing a cabin and planting some corn.

He had one old horse, and a couple of colts, each two years old. The colts were broken, as it was called, to the halter; that is, they could be led, with light burdens upon their backs, but could not be

ridden. Mrs. Crockett mounted the old horse, with her babe in her arms, and the little boy, two years old, sitting in front of her, astride the horse's neck, and occasionally carried on his father's shoulders. Their few articles of household goods were fastened upon the backs of the two colts. David led one, and his kind-hearted father-in-law, who had very generously offered to help him move, led the other. Thus this party set out for a journey of two hundred and fifty miles, over unbridged rivers, across rugged mountains, and through dense forests, whose Indian trails had seldom if ever been trodden by the feet of white men.

This was about the year 1806. The whole population of the State then amounted to but about one hundred thousand. They were generally widely dispersed through the extensive regions of East Tennessee. But very few emigrants had ventured across the broad and rugged cliffs of the Cumberland Mountains into the rich and sunny plains of Western Tennessee. But a few years before, terrible Indian wars desolated the State. The powerful tribes of the Creeks and Cherokees had combined all their energies for the utter extermination of the white men, seeking to destroy all their hamlets and scattered cabins.

At a slow foot-pace the pioneers followed down the wild valley of the Holston River, often with towering mountains rising upon each side of them. If they chanced, at nightfall, to approach the lonely hut of a settler, it was especial good fortune, as they thus found shelter provided, and a fire built, and hospitable entertainment ready for them. If, however, they were overtaken in the wilderness by darkness, and even a menacing storm, it was a matter of but little moment, and caused no anxiety. A shelter, of logs and bark, was soon thrown up, with a crackling fire, illuminating the wilderness, blazing before it. A couch, as soft as they had ever been accustomed to, could speedily be spread from the pliant boughs of trees. Upon the pack-colts there were warm blankets. And during the journey of the day they had enjoyed ample opportunity to take such game as they might need for their supper and their morning breakfast.

At length they reached the majestic flood of the Tennessee River, and crossed it, we know not how. Then, directing their steps toward the setting sun, they pressed on, league after league, and day after day, in toilsome journey, over prairies and through forests and across mountain-ridges, for a distance of nearly four hundred miles from their starting-place, until they reached a small stream, called Mulberry Creek which flows into the Elk River, in what is now Lincoln County.

At the mouth of Mulberry Creek the adventurous emigrant found his promised land. It was indeed a beautiful region. The sun shines upon none more so. The scenery, which, however, probably had but few attractions for David Crockett's uncultivated eye, was charming. The soil was fertile. The streams abounded with fish and waterfowl; and prairie and forest were stocked with game. No family need suffer from hunger here, if the husband had a rifle and knew how to use it. A few hours' labor would rear a cabin which would shut out wind and rain as effectually as the gorgeous walls of Windsor or Versailles.

No jets of gas or gleam of wax candles ever illumined an apartment more brilliantly than the flashing blaze of the wood fire. And though the refectories of the Palais Royal may furnish more scientific cookery than the emigrant's hut, they cannot furnish fatter turkeys, or more tender venison, or more delicious cuts from the buffalo and the bear than are often found browning before the coals of the log cabin. And when we take into consideration the voracious appetites engendered in those wilds, we shall see that the emigrant needed not to look with envy upon the luxuriantly spread tables of Paris or New York.

Upon the crystal banks of the Mulberry River, David, aided by his father-in-law, reared his log cabin. It is a remote and uncultivated region even now. Then it was an almost unbroken wilderness, the axe of the settler having rarely disturbed its solitude.

A suitable spot for the cabin was selected, and a space of about fifteen feet by twenty feet was marked out and smoothed down for the floor. There was no cellar. Trees near by, of straight trunks, were felled and trimmed, and cut into logs of suitable length. These were piled one above another,

in such a way as to enclose the space, and were held in their place by being notched at the corners. Rough boards were made for the roof by splitting straight-grained logs about four feet long.

The door was made by cutting or sawing the logs on one side of the hut, about three feet in width. This opening was secured by upright pieces of timber pinned to the end of the logs. A similar opening was left in the end for the chimney, which was built of logs outside of the hut. The back and jambs of the fireplace was of stone. A hole about two feet square constituted the window. Frequently the floor was the smooth, solid earth. A split slab supported by sticks driven into auger-holes, formed a table. A few three-legged stools supplied the place of chairs. Some wooden pins, driven into holes bored in the logs, supported shelves. A bedstead was framed by a network of poles in one corner.

Such was the home which David and his kind father reared in a few days. It will be perceived that it was but little in advance of the wigwam of the Indian. Still it afforded a comfortable shelter for men, women, and children who had no aspirations above a mere animal life; who thought only of warmth, food, and clothing; who had no conception of intellectual, moral, or religious cravings.

The kind-hearted father-in-law, who had accompanied his children on foot upon this long journey, that he might see them settled in their own home, now bade them adieu, and retraced the forest trails back to his own far-distant cabin. A man who could develop, unostentatiously, such generosity and such self-sacrifice, must have possessed some rare virtues. We regret our inability to record the name of one who thus commands our esteem and affection.

In this humble home, David Crockett and his family resided two years. He appears to have taken very little interest in the improvement of his homestead. It must be admitted that Crockett belonged to the class of what is called loafers. He was a sort of Rip Van Winkle. The forest and the mountain stream had great charms for him. He loved to wander in busy idleness all the day, with fishing-rod and rifle; and he would often return at night with a very ample supply of game. He would then lounge about his hut, tanning deerskins for moccasins and breeches, performing other little jobs, and entirely neglecting all endeavors to improve his farm, or to add to the appearance or comfort of the miserable shanty which he called his home.

He had an active mind, and a very singular command of the language of low, illiterate life, and especially of backwoodman's slang. Though not exactly a vain man, his self-confidence was imperturbable, and there was perhaps not an individual in the world to whom he looked up as in any sense his superior. In hunting, his skill became very remarkable, and few, even of the best marksmen, could throw the bullet with more unerring aim.

At the close of two years of this listless, solitary life, Crockett, without any assigned reason, probably influenced only by that vagrancy of spirit which had taken entire possession of the man, made another move. Abandoning his crumbling shanty and untilled fields, he directed his steps eastwardly through the forest, a distance of about forty miles, to what is now Franklin County. Here he reared another hut, on the banks of a little stream called Bear's Creek. This location was about ten miles below the present hamlet of Winchester.

An event now took place which changed the whole current of David Crockett's life, leading him from his lonely cabin and the peaceful scenes of a hunter's life to the field of battle, and to all the cruel and demoralizing influences of horrid war.

For many years there had been peace with the Indians in all that region. But unprincipled and vagabond white men, whom no law in the wilderness could restrain, were ever plundering them, insulting them, and wantonly shooting them down on the slightest provocation. The constituted authorities deplored this state of things, but could no more prevent it than the restraints of justice can prevent robberies and assassinations in London or New York.

The Indians were disposed to be friendly. There can be no question that, but for these unendurable outrages, inflicted upon them by vile and fiend-like men, many of whom had fled from the avenging arm of law, peace between the white man and the red man would have remained undisturbed. In the extreme southern region of Alabama, near the junction of the Alabama River with

the almost equally majestic Tombeckbee River, there had been erected, several years before, for the protection of the emigrants, a fort called Mimms. It consisted of several strong log huts, surrounded by palisades which enclosed several acres. A strongly barred gate afforded entrance to the area within. Loop-holes were cut through the palisades, just sufficiently large to allow the barrel of a musket to be thrust through, and aim to be taken at any approaching foe.

The space within was sufficient to accommodate several families, who were thus united for mutual protection. Their horses and other cattle could be driven within the enclosure at night. In case of a general alarm, the pioneers, occupying huts scattered through the region for miles around, could assemble in the fort. Their corn-fields were outside, to cultivate which, even in times of war, they could resort in armed bands, setting a watch to give warning of any signs of danger.

The fort was in the middle of a small and fertile prairie. The forest-trees were cut down around, and every obstacle removed which could conceal the approach of a foe or protect him from the fire of the garrison. The long-continued peace had caused vigilance to slumber. A number of families resided in the fort, unapprehensive of danger.

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