

Caruthers William Alexander

# **The Cavaliers of Virginia. Volume 1 of 2**



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# **William Alexander Caruthers**

## **The Cavaliers of Virginia, vol. 1 of 2 / or, The Recluse of Jamestown; An historical romance of the Old Dominion**

### **CHAPTER I**

The romance of history pertains to no human annals more strikingly than to the early settlement of Virginia. The mind of the reader at once reverts to the names of Raleigh, Smith, and Pocahontas. The traveller's memory pictures in a moment the ivy-mantled ruin of old Jamestown.

About the year 16 — , the city of Jamestown, then the capital of Virginia, was by no means an unapt representation of the British metropolis; both being torn by contending factions, and alternately subjected to the sway of the Roundheads and Royalists.

First came the Cavaliers who fled hither after the decapitation of their royal master and the dispersion of his army, many of whom became permanent settlers in the town or colony, and ever afterwards influenced the character of the state.

These were the first founders of the aristocracy which prevails in Virginia to this day; these were the immediate ancestors of that generous, fox-hunting, wine-drinking, duelling and reckless race of men, which gives so distinct a character to Virginians wherever they may be found.

A whole generation of these Cavaliers had grown up in the colony during the interregnum, and, throughout that long period, were tolerated by those in authority as a class of probationers. The Restoration was no sooner announced, however, than they changed places with their late superiors in authority. That stout old Cavalier and former governor, Sir William Berkley (who had retired to the shades of Accomack,) was now called by the unanimous voice of the people, to reascend the vice-regal chair.

Soon after his second installation came another class of refugees, in the persons of Cromwell's veteran soldiers themselves, a few of whom fled hither on account of the distance from the court and the magnitude of their offences against the reigning powers. It will readily be perceived even by those not conversant with the primitive history of the Ancient Dominion, that these heterogeneous materials of Roundheads and Cavaliers were not the best calculated in the world to amalgamate in the social circles.

Our story commences a short time after the death of Cromwell and his son, and the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne of his fathers.

The city of Jamestown was situated upon an island in the Powhatan, about twenty leagues from where that noble river empties its waters into those of the Chesapeake Bay.

This island is long, flat on its surface, and presents a semicircular margin to the view of one approaching from the southeast; indeed it can scarcely be seen that it is an island from the side facing the river — the little branch which separates it from the main land having doubtless worn its way around by a long and gradual process.

At the period of which we write, the city presented a very imposing and romantic appearance, the landscape on that side of the river being shaded in the back ground by the deep green foliage of impenetrable forests standing in bold relief for many a mile against the sky. Near the centre of the stream, and nearly opposite the one just mentioned, stands another piece of land surrounded by water, known to this day by the very unromantic name of Hog Island, and looking for all the world

like a nest for pirates, so impenetrable are the trees, undergrowth, and shrubbery with which it is thickly covered.

To prevent the sudden incursions of the treacherous savage, the city was surrounded with a wall or palisade, from the outside of which, at the northwestern end, was thrown a wooden bridge, so as to connect the first mentioned island with the main land. A single street ran nearly parallel with the river, extending over the upper half of the island and divided in the centre by the public square. On this were situated the Governor's mansion, state house, church, and other public buildings. Near where the line was broken by the space just mentioned, stood two spacious tenements, facing each other from opposite sides of the street. These were the rival hotels of the ancient city; and, after the fashion of that day, both had towering signposts erected before their respective doors, shaped something like a gibbet, upon which swung monotonously in the wind two huge painted sign-boards. These stood confronting each other like two angry rivals – one bearing the insignia of the Berkley arms, by which name it was designated, – and the other the Cross Keys, from which it also received its cognomen. The Berkley Arms was the rendezvous of all the Cavaliers of the colony, both old and young, and but a short time preceding the date of our story, was honoured as the place of assembly for the House of Burgesses.

The opposite and rival establishment received its patronage from the independent or republican faction.

It was late in the month of May, and towards the hour of twilight; the sun was just sinking behind the long line of blue hills which form the southwestern bank of the Powhatan, and the red horizontal rays fell along the rich volume of swelling waters dividing the city of Jamestown from the hills beyond with a line of dazzling yet not oppressive brilliance.

As the rich tints upon the water gradually faded away, their place was supplied in some small degree from large lanterns which now might be seen running half way up the signposts of the two hotels before mentioned, together with many lights of less magnitude visible in the windows of the same establishments and the various other houses within reflecting distance of the scene. The melancholy monotony of the rippling and murmuring waters against the long graduated beach now also began to give place to louder and more turbulent sounds, as the negroes collected from their work to gossip in the streets – Indians put off from the shore in their canoes, or the young Cavaliers collected in the Berkley Arms to discuss the news of the day or perhaps a few bottles of the landlord's best. On this occasion the long, well-scrubbed oaken table in the centre of the "News Room" was graced by the presence of some half dozen of the principal youths of the city. In the centre of the table stood the half-emptied bottle, and by each guest a full bumper of wine, and all were eager to be heard as the wine brightened their ideas and the company received fresh accessions from without.

"Oh, here comes one who can give us some news from the Governor's," said the speaker *pro tempore*, as a handsome and high-born youth of twenty-one entered the room with a proud step and haughty mien, and seated himself at the table as a matter of course, calling for and filling up a wine glass, and leisurely and carelessly throwing his cap upon the seat and his arm over the back of the next vacant chair, as he replied – "No, I bring no news from the Governor's, but I mistake the signs of the times if we do not soon hear news in this quarter."

All eyes were now turned upon the youth as he tossed off his wine. He was generally known among his companions by the familiar name of Frank Beverly, and was a distant kinsman and adopted son of the Governor, Sir William Berkley. News was no sooner mentioned than our host, turning a chair upon its balance, and resting his chin upon his hand, was all attention.

"What is it, Frank?" inquired Philip Ludwell, his most intimate friend and companion.

"Some mischief is brewing at the Cross Keys to-night," replied Frank, as the landlord moved up his chair nearer to the table, more than ever on the *qui vive*, when the Cross Keys became the subject of discussion.

"There is no one in the Tap of the Keys, as I can see from here," said another of the party, "and there is no light in any other portion of the house except the apartments of the family."

"They hide their lights under a bushel," continued Frank, with an affected nasal twang and a smile of contempt. Taking his nearest companion by the lappel of his doublet, and drawing him gently to where the rival establishment was visible through the door – "Do you not see a line of light just perceptible along the margin of the upper window? and if you will observe steadily for a moment, you will see numerous dim shadows of moving figures upon the almost impenetrable curtain which is drawn over it."

"Master Beverly is right, by old Noll's nose," said the landlord, as they all grouped together to catch a glimpse of the objects mentioned.

"You may well swear by Noll's nose in this case," returned Frank, "for unless I am much mistaken, those motions and gestures proceed from some of his late followers; indeed I know it. I was accidentally coming up the alley-way between the Keys and the next house, when I saw four or five of them cross the fence into the yard, and from thence enter the house by the back door."

"That's true, I'll swear," said the host, "for there they are, some dozen of them at least, and I'm a Rumper if a soul has darkened his front door this night. But couldn't you, Master Beverly, or one of the other young gentry, just step to the stout Sir William's, and make an affidavit to the facts? My word for it, he'd soon be down upon 'em with a fiery facias or a capias, or some such or another invention of the law."

The youths all burst into a loud cachinnation at the zeal of the landlord to unmask his rival, and reseating themselves, called for another bottle, which our friend of the Arms was not slow to produce, by way of covering his retreat and hiding his disinterested zeal. As they all refilled their glasses, Frank waved his hand for silence. "Has any gentleman here seen Mr. Nathaniel Bacon very lately?"

"I have not – I have not," replied each of the party, and the interrogator then continued, "I would give the best pair of spurs that ever graced a Cavalier's heels to know whether his long absence has had any thing to do with the getting up of yonder dark conclave?"

Whether any of the party were Bacon's immediate friends, or whether they suspected Frank's motives in the case, we shall not undertake to determine at present; but certain it is they were all silent on the point except his intimate friend Ludwell, who replied – "By St. George, Beverly, I believe you are jealous of Bacon on account of the favourable light in which he is said to stand in the eyes of your fair little mistress."

"If I thought that Virginia Fairfax would entertain a moment's consideration for a person of such doubtful parentage and more doubtful principles as Mr. Nathaniel Bacon, the ill-advised protégé of her father, I would forswear her for ever, and dash this glass against the floor, with which I now invite you all to join me in pledging her, – What say you? Will you join me, one and all?" All rose at the invitation, and while standing with glasses suspended midway to their lips, Ludwell added the name of "the pretty Harriet Harrison." It was drunk with three times three, and then the landlord was brought up by the collar of his jerken between two of the liveliest of the party, and made to tell the reckoning upon the table with his well-worn chalk. Having settled the score, they proceeded to decant full half the remaining bottle into one of his own pint flagons, seized from his shelves for that purpose. "Mine host" made sundry equivocal contortions of the countenance, and practised by anticipation several downward motions of the muscles of deglutition, and then swallowed the enormous potation without a groan.

"There now," said Ludwell, "bear it always in your remembrance that a like fate awaits you, whenever your wine bears evidence of having passed rather far into the state of acetous fermentation." As the party were now leaving the room in pairs, linked arm in arm, "Stop! stop!" cried Beverly; "I have one proposition to make before we separate. It is this. You know that there is to be a grand celebration the day after to-morrow, which is the anniversary of the restoration. The whole to conclude with a ball at the Governor's, to which I feel myself authorized to say that you will all be

invited. Now I propose that we all go at different hours to-morrow and engage the hand of the fair Virginia for the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sets. So that when Mr. Nathaniel Bacon returns, as he assuredly will, to claim her hand, to which he seems to think he has a prescriptive right, he will find no less than six different successful competitors. What say you, gentlemen?"

The proposition was instantly acceded to by all the party, and then the landlord of the Arms was left to digest the pint of his own sour wine in solitude, as he leaned his overgrown person against the casings of the door and watched the youths as they departed one by one in different directions to their respective places of abode.

"Natty Bacon is a goodly youth, however," he muttered in soliloquy; "ha, ha, ha; but he shall know of the plot if I can only clap eyes on him before they see the young lady. Let me see; can it be possible that Natty can have any thing to do with yonder dark meeting of Noll's men? I'll not believe it; he is too good a youth to meddle with such a canting, snivelling set as are congregated there. He always pays his reckoning like any gentleman's son of them all; and a gentleman's son I'll warrant he is, for all that no one knows his father but Mr. Gideon Fairfax."

The Cromwellians alluded to, who were supposed by the youths to be assembled at the Cross Keys, were a few of the late Protector's veteran soldiers, and were the most desperate, reckless and restless of the republicans who, as has been already mentioned, had fled to Jamestown after the restoration. These soldiers were unfitted for any kind of business, and generally lived upon the precarious hospitality of those of their own party who had settled themselves as industrious citizens of the new community.

The names of the leaders of these veteran soldiers and furious bigots were Berkinhead, Worley, Goodenough and Proudfit; and of these the reader will hear more anon.



## CHAPTER II

Late in the afternoon of the day succeeding the one designated in the last chapter, towards the southwestern extremity of the beach and outside of the palisade, a young and gentle creature, of most surpassing loveliness, moved thoughtfully along the sandy shore, every now and then casting a wistful glance over the water, and as often heaving a gentle sigh, as a shade of girlish disappointment settled upon her blooming face. Her dress was simple, tasteful, and exquisitely appropriate to her style of beauty. She had apparently scarce passed her sixteenth birthday; and of course her figure was not yet rounded out to its full perfection of female loveliness. So much of her neck as was visible above a rather high and close cut dress, was of that pure, chaste and lovely white which gives such an air of heavenly innocence to the budding girl of that delightful age. The face although exceeding the neck in the height, variety and richness of its colouring, was not disfigured by a single freckle, scar or blemish. The features were generally well proportioned and suited to each other, the lips full and gently pouting, with a margin of as luxurious tinting as that with which nature ever adorned the first budding rose of spring, and when parted, as they often were, by the most gentle and *naïve* laughter, displayed a set of teeth beautifully white and regular. Yet one could scarcely fasten the eye upon them for the admiration excited by the exquisite expression of the dimpled mouth, ever varying, and as it seemed, more lovely with each succeeding change. The motion of her eyes was so rapid that it was difficult to ascertain their colour; but certain it is they were soft and brilliant, the latter effect produced in no small degree by long fair dewy lashes which rose and fell over the picture, as lights and shadows fall from the pencil of an inspired painter.

The fair flaxen ringlets fell beneath the small gipsy hat in short thick curls, and were clustered around her brow, so as to form the most natural and appropriate shade imaginable to a forehead of polished ivory. She was about the medium height, symmetrically proportioned, with an exquisitely turned ankle and little foot, which *now* bounded over the beach with an impatience only surpassed by her own impetuous thoughts, as her eyes became intently riveted upon a moving speck upon the distant waters. The wild and startled expression, excited in the first moment of surprise, might now be seen merging into one of perfect satisfaction, as the distant object began to grow into distinct outlines at every plunge of the buoyant waves; her heart heaving its own little current to her face in perfect unison with their boisterous movements.

A beautifully painted canoe soon ran its curled and fantastic head right under the bank upon which she stood, and in the next moment a gallant and manly youth leaped upon the shore by her side, and taking her unresisting hand, gently removed the gipsy hat so as to bring into view a certain crimsoning of the neck and half averted face. Nathaniel Bacon, the youth just landed, was about twenty-one, and altogether presented an appearance of the most attractive and commanding character. He wore a green hunting jerken, buttoned close up to his throat so as to show off to the best advantage a broad and manly chest. Upon his head was a broad brimmed unstiffened castor, falling over his shoulders behind, and looped up in front by a curiously wrought broach.

A small brass hunting horn swung beneath one shoulder, while to the other was suspended a short cut and thrust sword. In his hand he bore a fishing rod and tackle.

Few as evidently were his years, much painful thought had already shadowed his handsome and commanding features with a somewhat precocious maturity. It was obviously, however, not the natural temperament of the man which now shone out in his features, after the subsiding of the first glow of delighted feeling visible for an instant as he watched the heightened bloom on the countenance of the maiden.

"You were not irreconcilably offended then at my rash and disrespectful behaviour to your father at our last meeting?"

"Certainly not irreconcilably so, Nathaniel, if offended at all; but I will confess to you candidly, that I was hurt and mortified, as much on your own, as on my father's account."

"You are always kind, considerate and forgiving, Virginia, and it behoves me in presence of so much gentleness, to ease my conscience in some measure by a confession. You have sometimes, but I have never, forgotten that I was thrown upon your father's hospitality an orphan and an outcast. This fact constantly dwells upon my mind, and sometimes harrows up my feelings to such a degree that I am scarcely conscious of my words or actions. It was so on the occasion alluded to. I forgot your presence, the respect due to your father and my benefactor, as well as what was due to myself. I had been endeavouring to revive some of the drunken reminiscences of that eccentric fellow who sits in the canoe there, but they tended only to inflame my ardent desire to know something more of myself. Certainly some allowances must be made for me, Virginia, under the mortifying circumstances in which I am placed. I thought your father could and ought to relieve this cruel suspense!"

"He will if he can, Nathaniel; and that he does not do so immediately, is the best evidence to my mind either that he knows nothing on the subject, or that some powerful reason exists why he should not disclose his knowledge at present. Come, then, return with me to our house; my father will take no notice of your absence or its cause, unless to jest with you upon your want of success in your fishing expedition, which it seems was the ostensible motive of your absence."

"It was my purpose to return, but I had not so amiably settled the how and the when; indeed the objects I had in view were so urgent that I determined to brave even your father's continued anger in order to obtain an interview with you."

"With me, Nathaniel!"

"Ay, with you, Virginia! You know that there are on the island some restless and turbulent spirits – late soldiers of the Protector. They have some dangerous project brewing I am well satisfied, from circumstances which accidentally fell under my own observation. You know too that the Recluse is said to have unbounded influence with these desperate men, and to be familiar with all their designs and movements. And notwithstanding your childish dread of him, you know that he loves you more than any living creature."

"I know all the things you speak of, except the last, and for that I suspect I am indebted to your imagination; but to what does all this lead?"

"I have just returned from a visit to that strange and mysterious old man, and as I have already hinted, hastened hither for the purpose of seeking an interview with you, which fortune has so opportunely thrown in my way."

"But I am yet in the dark. Why did you hasten from the Recluse to me, after discovering the things you speak of?"

"I will tell you; but you must be cool, calm and considerate while I do so, because I have that to tell and that to propose which will astound you!"

"Oh do tell it at once then, and not play upon my feelings thus."

"Your father's and your uncle's life is in danger, Virginia! Heaven, what have I done?" he continued, as he saw his companion turn deadly pale and lean against the palisade for support. But instantly recovering herself she asked —

"Whence does this danger come?"

"That I do not know exactly; but the Recluse knows, and I have been vainly endeavouring to learn it from him; and this brings me to the proposition which I have to make. You must visit him this night! 'Ay, Virginia! start not, you must do it for your father's and your uncle's sake!"

"Visit the Recluse, and at night! What will my parents say to it, think you?"

"They must not know one word of it."

"Then it is absolutely out of the question."

"Do not say so, Virginia, till you hear me out. As I have already said, the Recluse loves you better than he does any creature in the colony. He knows all the plots and counterplots that are going on, and if you will surprise him with a visit to-night, he will divulge the whole affair to you."

"Why must it be to-night?"

"Because there is no time to be lost. To-morrow is the anniversary of the Restoration. There is to be a grand celebration during the day, and a ball at night; this opportunity is to be taken advantage of in some way or other by the desperate men alluded to. If we wait till to-morrow, and make our visit publicly, these men will all know of it, and its very object be counteracted by that circumstance."

"Your reasons are plausible I confess, Nathaniel, and secret enemies are at all times dreadful, but your alternative is scarcely less so."

"I will pledge my life for your safety. You have the keys of your father's house at command, you can go and return through the servants' hall when they are all asleep. No sentinels are placed on the walls since the general peace with the confederated tribes of Indians. My canoe lies under the first abutment of the bridge. I will watch you from your father's door till you arrive there. We can then cross the creek in the canoe, so that no one will see us at the bridge. Brian O'Reily shall wait on the opposite shore with my horse and pillion for you, and another for himself. What then is there so much to be dreaded in this simple nocturnal excursion to a retired old man, who, to say the worst of him, is nothing more than fanatical on religious subjects, and certainly he is very wise and learned upon all others."

"It is the clandestine nature of the expedition that I object to, Nathaniel; it is so hurried – at such a strange hour too. At all events I must have a little time to consider of the propriety of the step."

"Certainly, you shall have as much time as the nature of the case will admit of. But see, the long shadows of the trees are already extending across the river and the birds are seeking their resting places for the night."

"Oh, happy little songsters! would to Heaven that my rest could be as sweet and tranquil as theirs this night? But Nathaniel, at what hour shall I meet you at the bridge, provided I determine upon the step you propose?"

"As the clock from the tower of the church strikes eleven I will be at my post." And as he stepped into his canoe, he continued, "Remember, Virginia, that it is your own peace and your father's safety that I am endeavouring to secure in the course I urge you to adopt."

As the little vessel rose and sunk over the swelling waves in its passage round the town, Virginia stood on the brink of the river and gazed upon the scene in a deeply meditative mood, very new to her young and hitherto careless heart. At length when her late companion had long disappeared from her sight, and the sombre shadows of evening were fast closing around the ancient city, she slowly passed into the gates of the palisade and sought her father's dwelling.

## CHAPTER III

Violent was the struggle of contending emotions within the bosom of Virginia Fairfax, when she had gained her own apartment, and strove to form her determination in the matter proposed by Nathaniel Bacon. On such occasions feeling usurps the place of reason, and the longer we deliberate, the more perplexing seem to grow our doubts and difficulties. If, however, there were powerful feelings contending against the enterprise, there were equally if not more powerful ones operating in its favour. Not the least among these was the estimation in which she held both him who proposed the nocturnal expedition and him whose advice and aid were expected to be gained. Bacon himself, it was generally believed, had acquired most of his knowledge of books from the mysterious personage alluded to, and he in his turn had been the instructor of his fair young associate and playmate. It is true that these relations of the several parties had somewhat changed of late years, as the two younger ones approached the age at which their continuance might be deemed improper, to say nothing of any little misgivings of which, they might themselves be conscious, as to the nature of many strange and novel impressions, the growth of years and intimacy, perhaps, but not suspected until with advancing years came change of relative situation and prospect for the future.

All the various relations of our heroine to the other parties presented themselves in successive aspects to her view, as she endeavoured honestly to decide the matter according to the dictates of duty. While she was thus deliberating, the usual evening meal was announced. As she entered the apartment, and beheld her father and mother waiting for her to assume the head of the table, which on account of the latter's delicate health had been her custom of late, all the contending emotions which had so lately occupied her mind were renewed with increasing force by the sight of the beloved objects in whose behalf she was solicited to undertake the strange adventure.

Gideon Fairfax, the father of Virginia, was one of the Cavaliers, before alluded to, who fled to Jamestown during the interregnum. He was brother-in-law to the Governor of the colony, and was, at the time of which we write, a member of the council. He was one of that remarkable race of men which has so powerfully influenced the destinies of the Ancient Dominion from that day to the present. He was rather above the medium height, with light hair and eyes, and although he had considerably passed the prime of life, there was a sparkling of boyish vivacity in his eyes, and a cheerful expression always hovering about his mouth, which instantly dispelled any thing like formality in his intercourse with others. Yet withal there was a bold, reckless daring in his look, together with an open-hearted sincerity which served to give a manly dignity to the lighter expressions already mentioned. To his only daughter he was most devotedly attached.

Mrs. Emily Fairfax seemed about the same age as her husband, and though she still preserved some evidence of former beauty, her countenance was now mostly indebted for any charm that it possessed to a mild, lady-like and placid serenity, which was occasionally shadowed by an air of melancholy so profound, that more than once her friends were alarmed for her reason. As Virginia assumed her place at the board, the conflict in her mind was in nowise subdued by observing that one of these melancholy visitations was just settling upon her mother's countenance; indeed there seemed to be a mutual discovery on the part of mother and daughter, that each had some secret cause of uneasiness; but the effect was by far the most painful to the mother's heart, as it was the first time that she had ever seen her daughter's gay and happy temperament seriously disturbed. The parting hour for the night arrived, without making either of them wiser as to the cause of the other's pre-occupation and evident anxiety; the mother having sought an explanation in vain, and the daughter being too much accustomed to her present state of mind to intrude farther upon her sorrows, whatever might be their cause or nature. Bacon's arguments prevailed, and long before the hour appointed, Virginia was sitting at the window, her light extinguished, mantle drawn close around her to exclude the damp air from the river, and her hat tied on in readiness for the expedition.

At length the town clock began to send its slow and solemn sounds across the water. The house was still and dark, and the inmates apparently wrapped in profound slumber. Her own clandestine movements, so new to her, seemed like the trampling of armed heels rather than the footfalls of her own slight figure. More than once she was on the point of retracing her steps, so tumultuous and painful were her emotions in prosecuting an adventure which still appeared to her of such questionable propriety. The servants' hall, garden, and postern gate were all passed without the slightest interruption, save an occasional start at her own shadow, or the impetuous beating of her agitated heart. The moon was at her zenith, and the clouds coursing high in the heavens, so as every now and then to obscure her reflected beams, and present alternate and fantastic contrasts of light and shade upon the surrounding objects. The river for one moment looked like a dark abyss, and the next a mirror of light as the silver rays fell sparkling upon the rippling waters beneath the bridge. The interminable forest beyond was at one moment dark as Erebus, and the next as light as fairy land. There is no appearance of the heavens, perhaps, which produces a greater tendency in the mind to undefined and superstitious terror than that which we have attempted to describe. Our own shadow, visible as it is only for an instant, will startle us; and the ill-omened birds of night acquire huge and unnatural proportions as they flit swiftly by on noiseless wings in this rapid alternation of light and gloom. The wolves and other beasts of prey might be heard at long intervals, as their wild and savage howls broke upon the ear, reverberating from cliff to cliff as they fell upon and were borne across the water. Under these circumstances it may be readily imagined that our heroine was not a little relieved at the sight of Bacon leaning against the nearest abutment of the bridge, anxiously watching for her approach. In a few moments he had seated his companion in the boat, upon a cushion formed of his cloak, and was rapidly approaching the opposite shore. When they arrived at the appointed rendezvous, a very unexpected source of uneasiness was speedily discovered. As has been already intimated, Bacon had early in the evening despatched his usual attendant, Brian O'Reily, across the bridge to wait their arrival. The horses were indeed there – and O'Reily was there, but so intoxicated as to be apparently in no condition to guide the motions of a horse, even should he be able to keep the saddle. Bacon lost all patience at this discovery, and would perhaps have taken summary and not very agreeable means to sober his attendant, had he not been reminded by his gentle companion of the peculiar and privileged position which Brian had from time immemorial enjoyed in his service, as well as that of their own family. "How comes it, sir," said the young man, "that I find you in this predicament when I gave you such strict injunctions to keep yourself sober? Now of all other times! – when I had taken so much trouble to instruct you whom you were to guard, and upon what expedition?"

"By the five crasses, but you've hit the very nail upon the head. By the contints of the book but that's the very rason I took a dhrop of the crathur!"

"What is the reason, you drunken old fool?"

"The business were an to be sure! you wouldn't be after axing a sinner like Brian O'Reily to ixpose himself to sich a temptation widout taking a dhrop, and may be your haner would do that same for all your spaking aginst it so intirely."

"And what may the nature of the temptation be of which you speak?"

"And is it Brian you're after axin? O begorra, but that's runnin away wid the story intirely, so it is; sure it's me should be axin your haner after that same!"

"None of your subterfuges, sir! I am determined to know your ideas of this dreadful temptation."

"By my purty an is it Brian's idaas you're axin after, divil a miny o' them he's got any way, barrin a small bit of a smotherin about the heart whenever I think of the business we're on, and the gentleman we're goin to see, savin your prisence and the beauty o' the world by your side."

"What gentleman – speak out and I will forgive your drunkenness, provided you give me up that bottle I see peeping from the pouch of your jerkin."

"An is'nt it the man widout the shadow you're after making a tay party wid?"

"And who is the man without a shadow, Brian?" inquired Virginia, willing to forget her own misgivings in the more ludicrous superstition of the son of the Emerald Isle, whose countrymen, it may be remarked, formed no inconsiderable part of the inferior population of the city at that day.

"Oh bad cess to me, but I'm as glad to see you as two tin pinnies, you beauty o' the world; but it bates all the love I had for you and ever had these ten years past to see where you'r going."

"Well, where is it, Brian?"

"Hav'nt I tould your ladyship it was to a tay party wid the inimy himself."

"Come, see if you can assist Virginia to the pillion," said Bacon, as he sprang into the saddle.

"By my purty and I'll do that same;" kneeling upon one knee and taking one foot in his hand, and then seating her as easily and gracefully as if he had been a stranger to the bottle for a month.

"I had no idea that you were such a coward, Brian," continued his master.

"Sorra a dhrop o' coward's blood runs in Brian O'Reily's heart, iny way. It's one thing to trate the grate inimy with dacent respect, and its another to fight the yellow nagres that go dodgin from tree to tree like so many frogs; the devil fly away wid the one and the t'other o' them for me, I say."

"And who is the great enemy?"

"Sure hav'nt I tould your haner and the beauty o' the world by your side, it was the man widout a shadow what lives in the stone house widout windows, as well he may, seein the light o' his own counthenance may be seen across the river the darkest night any day."

"Sit your horse straight, you drunken piece of stupidity, or you will break your neck."

"Oh! an if Brian never breaks his neck till he falls from a horse, sure he'll live to take many a dhrop of the crathur yet before he dies. Sure I was only crassin myself, divil a word o' lie's in that, iny way."

"There, I have broken one of your necks at least," said Bacon, as with the butt of his riding whip he struck the neck from a bottle which every now and then peeped from Brian's pocket as the motions of the horse raised him in the saddle.

"Oh! murther all out, but you'll come to want yet before you die. Oh sure, but the crathur's safe after all. Wo, ye divil of a baste, don't you hear the crathur all runnin down the wrang side o' me. Wo, I say! Oh but the bottle sticks as tight to the pouch as if it growed there. Oh murther all out, I'm ruined, I'm ruined intirely."

"Draw your arm from your jerken, Brian, and then you can drink out of your pocket," said Virginia, suppressing a laugh.

"Oh you beauty o' the world, see what it is to have the larnin," replied the Irishman, immediately adopting the expedient; but here a new difficulty presented itself. "Oh murther, but the gable end's all knocked off and fax the chimney went along with it. Oh, but the crokery sticks up all round like pike staffs. Wo you murthur'n baste; Now I've got it, now I've got it, you beauty; sorra one of the lane cows at Jamestown gives sich milk as that, fax if they did, I'd be head dairyman to the Governor any way."

Thus our adventurers beguiled the way through a dreary and trackless forest of some miles, until they approached a spot where Bacon signified to the party that they had accomplished so much of their journey as was to be performed on horseback. What farther befell them will be described in the ensuing chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

Bacon and his companion having left O'Reily with the horses, now commenced descending an immense hill which formed one side of a dark and dismal looking glen. The tall pine trees with which the higher grounds were covered seemed to reach half way to the clouds. A cold midnight breeze swept through the damp and dewy foliage of the trees and shrubbery. The birds of night chimed mournfully and dismally in unison with the monotonous rustling of the leaves, and the rippling of a little brook just before them. When they had stepped across the stream, and cast their eyes up the face of the opposite hill, the rays of the moon suddenly broke through a fissure of the clouds, revealing to them rather the darkness around than any distinct traces of the path which they were to pursue. Bacon stood for an instant, and gazed intently upon a little spot of partially cleared ground half way to the summit, then gently drawing his companion to the same place where he stood, and pointing upwards, he said "Do you not perceive something moving yonder? It is he! you must now proceed alone!"

"Alone, Nathaniel? Impossible!"

"You must, Virginia; he will not admit more than one person at a time within his cell. Fear not there is no earthly danger; I will be within call. Rouse your drooping courage! the worst half of your undertaking is now accomplished."

"By far the worst half is yet to come, Nathaniel; you can form no conception of the awe with which I look upon that being! You forget that I have never seen more of him than I see now, notwithstanding you say that he is so much attached to me."

"It is strange, I confess Virginia, but it is nevertheless true."

"His affection, if it exists, must be the fruit of your representations as to some imaginary proficiency in my studies."

"Not at all; he seems to know every one in Jamestown, and all the circumstances connected with their history: but come, Virginia, we are losing precious time. Move on and fear nothing."

Clasping her hands, and internally summoning up all her resolution, she advanced with a sort of desperate determination. Having arrived within some forty yards of the spot before alluded to, the outlines of a gigantic figure could easily be discerned as his footfalls were distinctly heard moving restlessly to and fro on a sort of platform or level space, left by nature or formed by art, in the side of the hill. His head towered far above the stunted undergrowth, interspersed among the rugged outlines of the scene. And as he impatiently measured the narrow limits of this outer court to his castle, he seemed not unlike a chafed and hungry monarch of the forest when making the narrow rounds of his iron bound limits. Having gone thus far, she was sensible that it was nearly as bad to recede as go forward, and that if she retreated now upon the very eve of the fulfilment of all that Bacon had promised, her past anxieties would have been endured for nothing: she braced her nerves therefore, and endeavoured to subdue the overpowering terror which the distant view of this strange and mysterious man had excited. Summoning all her resolution for one desperate effort, she threw herself forward and fell at the feet of the huge mortal, who stood apparently astounded at the abrupt appearance of his unwonted and untimely visitor. When Virginia found courage enough to raise her lately closed eyes, she was not a little astonished to see him leaning against the stone walls of his cell, no less agitated than herself. He was apparently about sixty years of age, his hair slightly silvered, and his features worn and weatherbeaten, yet eminently handsome. His person was very remarkable, being about six feet and a half in height and perfectly proportioned. His dress conformed in some degree to the military fashions of the day, having however rather the appearance of undress than full uniform. The expression of his countenance was decidedly intellectual; and about the lower part of his face there were some indications of a disposition to sensuality, but tempered and controlled in no ordinary degree by some other fierce and controlling passion. His eye was wild and unsettled at

times, and again assumed the mild serenity of the profound student. Altogether, his presence was intellectual and commanding in the highest degree.

As he stood against the wall of his cell quaking like an aspen, an indifferent observer would have been at a loss to determine which was the most agitated, he or his gentle visiter. Virginia noted with more than one furtive glance his strange and unexpected embarrassment, still however, preserving her humble and supplicating posture. At length, struggling with the emotions which unmanned him, muttering all the while broken sentences which fell strangely upon her ear, and among which she could distinguish repeated allusions to herself, and to events of long passed years, recalled as it appeared by some fancied resemblance traced by his excited imagination in her form and features. He approached the kneeling maiden, and taking her hand, he raised her from the ground, and said in a tone of kindness, "My wayward fancies frighten thee, my child; be not alarmed, however – there is nothing here to harm thee. My house is poor and cheerless, but such as it is, thou art welcome to its shelter, and to any services which I can render to thee. Come, my daughter, let us in from the damps of the night."

The cell of the Recluse was formed on three sides by stone walls without windows, as O'Reily had described them, the fourth being furnished by the side of the hill, and the roof an arch of masonry overgrown with moss, grass and weeds.<sup>1</sup>

Pressing open the rude door, he entered, followed by Virginia. Near one corner of the room stood a common deal table, on which was placed a small iron lamp, and near to it a three legged stool of the rudest construction. These were the only articles of furniture of which the apartment could boast. The floor, which consisted of the earth, as nature had made it, was overgrown with weeds and bushes. "This," said he, with a bitter smile upon his countenance, "is my hall of audience! Here I receive my guests, with one solitary exception; thou shalt be another." Having thus spoken, he took the lamp from the table, and drawing aside some dried bushes which were piled against the side formed by the hill in apparent carelessness, he exhibited to her view the mouth of a cavern, not sufficient in height by several feet to admit his person in the erect position. "This," said he as he stooped to enter, "is not a house made with hands, and it is built upon a rock of ages. The rains may descend, floods may come, winds blow and beat upon it, but it falleth not. It is proper that thou shouldst see it, and such has long been my intention. I have much to say to thee, and doubtless thou hast something to communicate to me, or thou wouldst not have made this visit. But not a whisper of what thou mayst see or hear must ever pass thy lips, save to those I shall authorize thee to make partakers of thy knowledge. This is a condition which thou must impress upon thy mind." Stepping in a bent position within the mouth of the cavern, he moved forward and downward, motioning her to follow. They descended many rude and natural steps, which were imperfectly seen by the light of the lamp borne by her singular guide, the rays being often obscured by the bulk and great height of his person in the narrow passages of the cave, so that she was more than once compelled to grope her way by sliding her hand along the cold damp and dripping walls, and by slipping her feet over the uneven ground, without raising them in the act of stepping. Having completed the descent, she found herself in a long natural vestibule to the inner apartments. Her guide had gained rapidly upon her, so that when once more upon level ground, some thirty feet below the outer surface of the earth, he was almost out of sight. She would have cried out, had she not been restrained by a counteracting feeling, which placed her in a grievous dilemma between horror at the dismal place, and fear of the singular being who had undertaken to guide her through its recesses. Commending herself however to her Maker in mental prayer, and trusting in his protection the more confidently on account of the motive for her undertaking, she hastened forward so as with great exertions to keep within sight of the rising and sinking light of the lamp, and the devious windings of the cavern. The footfalls of her Herculean guide reëchoed along the damp and gloomy tunnels with an awful and dismal effect,

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<sup>1</sup> A house very similar to that we have described stands to this day near the Ancient City. Its former objects and uses are entirely unknown.



amidst the grave-like stillness of the place. Occasionally flickering shadows were reflected against the walls, when the light turned suddenly round a projecting rock, affording to her imagination the most startling and frightful images. While her mind was combatting these unreal terrors, she was surprised by the tone of a deep hoarse voice abruptly rumbling through the high dark arches far above her head, with that reverberating sound peculiar to these secret places of the earth. But her amazement was still greater, when lifting her eyes in the direction of the lamp she beheld the Recluse standing upon a lofty but narrow ledge of rock, the lamp flickering and sinking every now and then so as to threaten total darkness. He was pointing with his finger, and directing her to a projecting and winding pathway by which she must ascend to the platform upon which he stood. This once gained, she had a complete view of the resting place of her mysterious guide.

Immediately fronting the platform was a natural doorway, about as high as her own head, leading into the inner chamber. From the high and vaulted arches hung thousands of the fantastic creations of hoary time, and from the centre of these a cord swung into the middle of the area, to which was suspended a burning lamp, the rays of which were brilliantly reflected from a thousand shining mirrors of nature's forming. In one corner she discovered, as they entered, several pieces of firearms, and against the wall on one side hung huge swords, long enough for two-handed weapons to ordinary mortals, together with Indian war clubs, moccasins, wampum, pipes, tomahawks, spears, arrows, and other implements of savage warfare. In another corner stood a rude bedstead, evidently constructed by the hands of its nightly occupant, a small table, two or three chairs, and a few culinary articles, – some the manufacture of the savages, and others the product of civilized ingenuity. By far the largest part of one side of the room was occupied by coarsely constructed shelves, bearing many volumes of the most venerable appearance. One of these was lying open upon the table, a pair of horn spectacles upon the page to mark the place where the owner had last been engaged. The very letters in which it was printed were entire strangers to the eyes of our heroine. Some thirty yards distant, in the remotest part of the room, a little furnace diffused a narrow circle of glowing light through its otherwise gloomy precincts. These completed the establishment, so far as the eye could discover its arrangement.

When he had led Virginia into the habitable part of this area, he placed a chair, and motioned for her to be seated, drawing a stool near the table at the same time for himself, and resting his head upon the palm of his hand. "I will not affect ignorance of thy name and person, my daughter, nor yet of thy errand here. The first I should most certainly have known, if I had not surmised the last. Alas! my child, thou wilt think no doubt that I speak in riddles when I tell thee that those features have been engraven upon the heart of one who has forsworn the world for many a long and irksome year. Thou mayest well look amazed, my poor bewildered child, but it is true! I cannot explain it to thee now, however; some day perhaps thou mayest know all. Oh, if thou couldst imagine what events must take place in this little isolated world around Jamestown, before the mysteries of which I speak can rightfully be made clear to thee, thou wouldst fall upon thy knees and pray that such disastrous knowledge might never come to thy understanding!"

As his eye rested from time to time, while he spoke, upon the features of the beautiful girl, he covered his face with his hands, and seemed for an instant to give way to an agitation similar to that which unnerved him at her first appearance on the platform. Occasionally too, when not speaking himself, he became profoundly abstracted for a moment, and his eye was wild and restless, and not a little alarming to his gentle visiter, as it ever and anon fell upon herself, and seemed to gather in her face the solution of some subtle doubt of his troubled mind. But observing that his glances, wild as they were, always became humanized and softened as they rested upon her face, she seized the first opportunity to complete the object of her journey, not well knowing how it might terminate, being herself ignorant of its especial object, and indeed of the very nature of the threatened danger.

"Father, I came here to seek your aid and protection for those who are near and dear to me; My honoured parents – my mother" – she would have proceeded, but at the mention of her mother's

name he was seized with such a convulsive shudder that she paused in astonishment. It seemed as if the hand of death was already laying its cold grasp upon his vitals. His eye gleamed wildly – his lips trembled, and his hands shook as one stricken with the palsy, or overwhelmed by some sudden stroke of calamity. By a desperate effort of resolution, he speedily resumed his attention to the discourse, and she proceeded: "I have been advised and urged in my resort to this step by one not unknown to you, under the vain hope, I fear, that you were cognizant of some threatened danger to my dear parents and kindred, and that you would communicate the knowledge to me rather than to him."

"As I have already said, my daughter, I surmised that something of this nature was the object of thy visit, and I will now confess to thee that this appeal places me in an embarrassing position between some friends of former and better days and my desire to grant thy request." Pausing and apparently soliloquizing, he continued: "But have they not acted against my advice? Did I not tell them, that we had had enough of that already? Did I not warn them against this very result? I cannot betray them, however; no, no, my old comrades, I will give you another warning, and then your blood, if it must flow, be upon your own heads." He was about to resume his discourse to his visitor, but stopping suddenly and raising his finger in the attitude of one listening in the profoundest attention, he seized the small lamp, rushed past the little furnace in the direction of the cave through the hill opposite the entrance, at one time rising and anon descending, until Virginia (who had followed, fearing to be left alone) supposed they must be again near the surface of the earth. He paused once more to listen, motioning her at the same time to be silent. He had scarcely done so, when the distant sound of running water struck upon her ear, – sometimes distinct, and again as if buried in the bowels of the earth. Then came the noise as of a stone splashing in the water. The eye of the Recluse sparkled as he turned with a quick and expressive glance towards his companion. He hastily applied his ear to the rocky side of the cavern and listened for a second, then hurried back, taking Virginia by the hand in his return, and leading her to her former seat. He then busied himself for a few moments in exchanging the short cutlass by his side for one of the huge weapons hanging on the wall, and placed a pair of large and richly inlaid petronels in his belt, as if about to march on some secret and desperate expedition.

Whether these were really for such a purpose, or were his usual preparations for repose, Virginia was entirely at a loss to determine. Meantime she had an opportunity to survey the features and expression of his countenance, as he from time to time faced towards her, intently engaged with his occupation, and muttering all the while words to her altogether inexplicable at the time.

His large and light blue eye had an expression of forced resignation and calmness, drops of cold perspiration stood upon his brow, lip, and bald head, which was now uncovered. His features were large and striking, but well proportioned, the lips protuberant, the teeth large, white, and regular, and as a smile, indicative more of wretchedness than mirth, played upon his face, the impression was irresistible that the wrinkles which marked his features were the impress of suffering rather than of age. In his personal as well as mental attributes he was eminently gifted, though there seemed to be a settled design, as much to clothe the one in the garb of age, as to exhibit the other, if at all, in meekness and humility.

"It is not consistent with my duty to all parties in this business, my daughter, to enlighten thee as to the nature of the danger which threatens thy friends, or as to the means of preventing it. I owe it to myself, first to warn those from whom it comes, yet once more against their undertaking, as I have already done – but thus far in vain. If they are still deaf to my admonition and entreaties, rest assured that I will leave no power or influence within my control unexerted to thwart their purposes. Thou mayest therefore direct him who must have conducted thee hither, to see me early on the morrow, and I will inform him as to the result of my endeavours and the best means to pursue in case they are unsuccessful. Rest thou contented yet a little while; I see thou art impatient, but I have some things to say to thee concerning other matters than those which brought thee hither. I see thou art studying these evidences of years in my features as the forester examines the rings in the fallen tree to estimate

its age, but these (pointing to the wrinkles) are records which years alone could not have wrought. Few of us, my daughter, can read these marks of time and destiny, and trace through them one by one, the disappointed hopes, the cruel mishaps, the hair-breadth adventures, their failure, sealed perhaps in the blood of those who had basked together with us in the sunshine of youth and hope, without a sinking of the heart within us, and a deep sense of the utter worthlessness of all those gay illusions which beam so brightly on thy own youthful features.

"I allude to this subject now, my daughter, because there seems to be some connexion between it and the one upon which I have been so anxious to commune with thee. Although we have never met before, it is not the first time I have seen thee, nor is this, which thou hast given me, the first information I have received concerning thee and thine. I have taken some pains to learn even the minutest circumstances connected with thy past history, present occupation and future prospects. I see thy surprise, but it was not done in idle gossip thou mayest be well assured. My motives will all be made plain enough to thee some day. In the mean time I must approach a subject which I fear will give thee pain, but my duty is imperative, I mean the state of thy mind and feelings."

"Alas, father, I fear you will find them but too deeply engrossed with the cares and pleasures of this world."

"Thy mistake is a natural one," said he, (one of those smiles of wretchedness passing over his pale countenance, as a flash of electricity darting along the horizon sometimes shows us the extent and depth of the darkness beyond) "my situation and past misfortunes would indeed seem to fit me for a teacher of holy things, but my present business is with thy worldly affections. Start not, my daughter; I have the most urgent reasons which a mortal can have for thus endeavouring to intrude myself into thy feminine secrets; believe me, no trifling cause could impel me thus to startle thy maidenly delicacy, nor indeed needest thou be startled on one account which I see agitates thee. Thou very naturally supposest me to have some charge to bring against thee for want of proper spirit and maidenly reserve; I see it by thy blushes; but there is no such thought within my breast; thou mayest have been even more guarded than is customary with females of thy age. My business is with facts, and facts of such a nature that however stubborn they may be, I fear that thou art unconscious of them, though they relate to thyself and one other person only. However, without bringing thee to confessional, I think I can sufficiently put thee upon thy guard without wounding thy delicacy. The only question in my own mind is, whether the time to speak has not already passed."

"I am at a loss to comprehend you, father."

"I will speak more plainly then. Thou hast been associating for some years with a youth of little more than thine own age. He is noble and gifted with every manly and generous attribute; well instructed too for his time and country. To thee I will give credit for corresponding qualities suitable to thy own sex, and I have no doubt that thou possessest them. Thinkest thou then that two such persons could grow up together constantly within the influence of each other's expanding personal attractions, besides the nobler ones of mind and heart, without feeling more towards each other than two ordinary mortals of the same sex? Oh, I see the crimson tell-tale mounting in thy cheeks; thou hangest thy head too in tacit acknowledgement, that I have surmised no more than the truth." His visiter for some time made a vain effort to speak, and at length overcoming her confusion and surprise, in broken sentences exclaimed, "Indeed" indeed, father, you wrong me! indeed you wrong us both! such a subject was never mentioned between us to this hour! Nay more, it never entered our" – as she looked up and perceived his searching glance riveted upon her countenance, her head again sunk in embarrassment, and the words died upon her lips.

"Cease, cease, my daughter, to punish thyself. I will give thee credit for all thou wouldst say. I am willing to believe that neither of you has ever mentioned this subject, and perhaps that neither has ever been conscious of more than a brotherly affection towards the other. Nevertheless, the last half hour has fully convinced me that self-examination, some sudden prospect of separation, or some untoward circumstance in the ordinary current of your intercourse was only necessary to awaken both

to the perception of the truth. But my business now is of a far more painful nature than the mere finding of the facts. I am bound in duty to warn thee! solemnly warn thee that this passion must be subdued in its inception. I beg of thee not to suppose for one moment, that my warning has reference merely to obstacles which commonly obstruct the current of young and mutual affection! They are absolutely insurmountable, – far more so than any that could arise from difference of rank, or faith, or country! Nay, if death itself had put its seal upon one or both, the gulf could not have been more impassable!" His language began gradually to grow more impassioned, his eye shot forth a continued instead of occasional gleam of wildness – he rose upon his feet, and as he pronounced the barrier to be impassable, he took down a large and ancient manuscript volume, bound in leather, threw it open upon the table, and to her astonishment a bloody hand was all that was visible upon the page which seemed to have been accidentally turned up. He pointed to this singular sign-manual – his finger trembling with emotion – "See there," said he – "see what it is to neglect a solemn warning. There is the diary of my eventful life – the transactions of every day for more than twenty-seven years are there written, save one! There is the only record of that day! Its history is written in blood! The seal of Cain is stamped upon all the events of the succeeding pages. Since that bloody token was placed there, its author has been a wanderer and an outcast. I was born among the haughty and the proud of a proud land – there is my coat of arms," said he, with a horrid laugh which sent the blood coursing back to the heart of our heroine chilled and horrified. "These are not or should not be uninteresting records to thee! – had that crimson attestation never been imprinted there, thou wouldst never have been born! but this will suffice for the first lesson," (and he closed the book and replaced it upon the shelf;) "at some more convenient season I will reveal another page of the history of one with whom henceforth thou wilt be more connected than thou now imaginest. Now, my daughter, before thou takest leave, let me entreat thee to remember and ponder well upon what I have said to thee. Shouldst thou ever be in any sudden strait of danger or difficulty send to me a memento of the bloody seal and I will come to thee, if within the compass of mortal means; and remember likewise, should I ever send such an emblem to thee – pause well upon what thou art about to do. Now thou mayest depart in peace, but say nothing of what thou hast seen or heard farther than I have directed thee to do." And thus speaking he took the lamp and conducted her out by the same opening at which they had entered.

They stood upon the platform overlooking the shadowy mazes of moonlit foliage down the glen; all nature was as silent as when it first came from the hands of its Creator. Looking towards heaven, and placing his hand upon her flaxen ringlets, now wafted about in the richest reflections and deepest contrasts of light and shadow, as a cold breeze from the valley beneath sought an opening to the plains beyond, he said, "May God Almighty bless and preserve thee, my daughter!" And then led her some distance down the hill – bade her adieu, and left her to seek her more youthful guide, and to ponder upon some novel and not very pleasing passages in the diary of her own experience.

Her ideas were any thing but clear and definite. The whole scene of her late interview was so new – the subject so startling to her young and innate delicacy. Taking it for granted, however, that all the surmises of the Recluse were true with regard to herself, that person has studied human nature to little purpose, who supposes that she, after all that had been so solemnly announced, admitted the undefined obstacles mentioned to be as insuperable as the person who suggested them seemed to imagine. Nevertheless an injunction so grave and authoritative had its minor effects – the first of which were visited upon the head of our hero, who impatiently awaited her approach at the foot of the hill.

## CHAPTER V

When Virginia arrived at the foot of the hill, and looked back, she could see the Herculean figure of the Recluse, throwing its tall shadow far down the face of the cliff, as he paced his narrow court exactly as she had found him doing.

The surrounding scenery now looked doubly brilliant to her confused senses, after the gloomy contrasts of her late subterranean journey. The fleeting clouds were entirely dispersed, and the moonbeams shone clearly forth in undimmed splendour, tipping with silver light each tree and shrub, on the hill side and in the dale, and sparkling like gems along the rippling current of the purling brook on the banks of which Bacon waited her approach.

Although the language of the Recluse was somewhat dark and oracular, it was sufficiently explicit to produce a very sensible effect upon the mind of Virginia, which our hero was not long in discovering; for as he extended his hand to assist her across the brook, she tacitly declined the proffered aid, as if unobservant of his intention, and leaped the streamlet unassisted. He was the more astonished, that in the whole of their long intercourse he could not recollect such a whim or freak occurring towards himself. She seemed reserved and formal too, as they moved up the opposite hill; but without remarking on her altered mood, he sought to draw from her the result of her expedition. Barely communicating so much as she had been directed to do, however, she remained to him inexplicably silent.

While he was revolving these things in his mind his companion, silently and moodily walking at his side, without availing herself of his offered arm, they met Brian O'Reily somewhat farther down the hill than the spot where they had left him – the bridle of a horse slung upon each arm – a handkerchief tied round his waist, into which were stuck two petronels from his own saddlebow; and in his hand his master's ready for use.

"In the name of all the saints in Ireland, what is the matter, Brian?" exclaimed Bacon.

"Oh! an be the Holy Father at Rome, is it there'ye are? Sure as death, but I'm the boy that thought ye were clane murdered iny'way."

"Murdered! why who was to murder us?"

"Faix, an there's enough iv them to do that same in *this* bloody place. Barrin the tay party wid the great inimy in the side iv the hill yonther, a'int there enough iv the bloody nagurs (the savages,) ranting about like so many wild bastes, ready to peale the tap iv your heads like a pair of onions or murpheys – divil a word a lie's in that iny way."

"Are there any of the savages abroad to-night?"

"Be the contints iv the book, but there is five yallow rascals gone over the hill towards the city half an hour since. Oh, by my purty, but I was as near putting a key note to one of their whistles, as two tin pinnies, only, that I was jalous iv your own safety, and the beauty by your side at that same reckning."

"I commend your discretion in not shooting – and I wonder at your sobriety, considering the condition in which we left you."

"Oh, is it Brian O'Reily's discretion your haner's after namin? – an is'nt it me that's a pathern o' sobriety? Oh, by the five crasses, but it all comes iv the dhrap o' the crathur I got by the larnin iv you, ye beauty; divil a word a lie's in that."

"Gone towards the town have they?" said Bacon, musing – and then examining the priming of his petronels, he took them – placed them in their holsters, and mounted his horse, motioning to his attendant at the same time, to assist Virginia to the pillion. She being mounted, he continued his discourse to her. "Keep up your courage my brave pupil; no danger shall molest you unencountered."

"Strange as it may appear," replied she, for the first time uttering something more than a monosyllable. "The real danger in which we seem placed, has few terrors, after my late subterranean visit." This last part of the sentence was said in an under tone, as they cantered over the hill.

"You have done bravely, Virginia, and now Brian it is our turn. Do you ride foremost – but on no account pull trigger, or draw your sword, without my orders. We are at peace with the confederated tribes of the peninsula: – should the party therefore prove to be any of these, bloodshed will be, unnecessary. Remember, and be watchful!"

"Oh! be the powers iv mud and darkness, but there's no more profit in watchin these skulking nagurs, than there is in spakin to the fish to make them take the bate; both the one and the tother o' them bites when you laste expect it. Oh! would'nt it be a fine thing to have a praste to walk along afore ye wid the contints of the book spread out before him?"

"Get along O'Reily with your nonsense; one would suppose, to hear you talk, that you were the greatest coward in Christendom."

The conversation of the Hibernian was at all times amusing to our adventurers, and was enjoyed with more zest, doubtless, on account of the many excellent qualities which they knew him to possess, being as they knew, brave, devotedly attached to them both, and of unvarying good humour. On the present occasion, Bacon encouraged his volubility in order to divert his companion's attention from dwelling upon the danger which he but too clearly saw might await them on their passage to the city; and thus was the time beguiled, until they arrived at the top of the hill commanding the town and river, without encountering a single foe, or meeting with any adventure worth recording. As they descended towards the river, and O'Reily was just felicitating himself "that there was a clane path intirely across the stream." A sudden exclamation of surprise from Bacon, induced him to rein up his steed, in order to ascertain the cause. This however was clearly seen before the retrograde movement was completed.

"Oh! the murtherin thaves iv the world," said O'Reily, "there they are in our boat too, as sure as my name's Brian O'Reily. Your haner's a good shot across that same little river, any way, and by these pair o' beauties that never lie nor chate" he continued, unslinging his arms, "but I'll be bound for a couple or three more iv them. By the vestments but we'll put some o' them to slape, wid a tune that'll ring in their ears to the day o' their deaths."

"Softly! softly, O'Reily" said Bacon, "you are as far on the one extreme now as I thought you on the other a while ago. Don't you see that two watch on this side, besides the three in the boat? And as I live, they are preparing to push off. Quick, Brian, dismount and follow me behind these bushes! we must despatch these two, at least, without the use of firearms. And you, my gentle pupil, must remain with the horses. If we fall, remain quiet until they have carried off whatever it is they are endeavouring to steal, and then leave the horses, and seek a passage by the bridge. I know your situation is a trying one, but it is the best we can do under the circumstances."

"Oh! no, no, Nathaniel!" said Virginia, suddenly recovering her feelings as well as her voice. "It is not the best we can do. Stay here yourself, and I can slip round, unperceived, to the gate of the bridge, and from thence alarm the city. Do, Nathaniel, suffer me to go."

"Not for worlds!" answered Bacon; "do you not perceive that it would be impossible for you to pass the two on this side unnoticed? Besides, were you even to gain the gate, they would tomahawk you before you could arouse one person in the town. No, no, you must remain. Seat yourself on the sward and hide your eyes, if you will, until we despatch these two, and then we can hold the others at bay."

"But what is the necessity of attacking them at all, Nathaniel?"

"Do you not see that they have been committing some depredation? – perhaps worse, and would be sure to make fight were we to show ourselves in so small force. But come, O'Reily, we are losing precious time; follow me, and for your life do not shoot."

This short and earnest dialogue was held in whispers, and in much less time than we have taken to record it.

The precaution against using firearms was doubtless given for fear of betraying to the inhabitants of the town the delicate and apparently equivocal position in which Virginia was placed. "We must be upon these two with our good swords, O'Reily," said Bacon, "before the others can join them, and if possible before they perceive us."

"Devil burn me but my hand itches to get acquainted wid the taste o' their skulls any way. Oh! if we can only smash these two but we'll keep the others to see their own funerals iny way."

In a few moments, Bacon and his trusty follower were silently gliding through the bushes on the banks of the river, and advanced to within a few rods of the savages, unperceived either by the party on the beach or those loading the boat on the opposite shore. But as they were just emerging from the last bush which protected their movements, a characteristic and startling exclamation "hugh!" from the watch stationed in the boat, at once precipitated their movements, and put the two on their guard whom they were about to attack.

There was at that day no male inhabitant of Jamestown or the surrounding Colony, arrived at the years and vigour of manhood, who was entirely unacquainted with the mode and usual end of Indian warfare. Of course, on such occasions as the present, the contest was for life or death.

Bacon, notwithstanding his youth, had already acquired some renown as a warrior in these desperate single-handed conflicts, which doubtless gave him and his companion more assurance of success on this occasion, notwithstanding the fearful odds which it was possible might be brought against them. Springing upon their adversaries, who, as has been seen, were on their guard, the conflict at once became desperate, while those in the boat made the utmost efforts to join their companions and overpower their unexpected enemies. No sooner were the two good swords of Bacon and O'Reily flashing in the moonbeams, than corresponding motions of the savage war clubs gave evidence that they also were ready for battle. Many and hard were the blows which were given on both sides in the struggle, a mere protraction of which Bacon perceived was destruction. Accordingly bracing up his own nerves, and cheering O'Reily, he made a vigorous and successful lunge at his immediate antagonist, but not before the reinforcement of the enemy was on the ground to take his place. A contest of this kind, when the parties were any thing like equal in number, was generally not long doubtful – victory in most instances being upon the side of superior skill and weapons. But O'Reily, although a veteran soldier, had met his match in this instance, his antagonist being a tall and brawny warrior of most fearful proportions. Yet he laid about him stoutly, while Bacon, merely having time to catch his breath, renewed the unequal contest with two of the new assailants, the third at the same time joining his already too powerful chief against the Irishman. The conflict was now desperate and bloody; our adventurers fought well and skilfully, every blow was followed by a crimson stream, and they too in their turn were more than once beaten to their knees by the terrific sweep of the war clubs. At one time Bacon was entirely prostrated, but instantly recovering and rising to his knees he continued to defend himself until he had once more regained his feet.

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