

Caruthers William Alexander

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



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

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CHAPTER I

The lightning streamed athwart the heavens in quick and vivid flashes. One peal of thunder after another echoed from cliff to cliff, while a driving storm of rain, wind and hail, made the face of nature black and dismal. There was something frightfully congenial in this uproar of the contending elements with the storm raging in Bacon's heart, as he rushed from the scene of the catastrophe we have just witnessed. The darkness which succeeded the lurid and sulphureous flashes was not more complete and unfathomable than the black despair of his own soul. These vivid contrasts of light and gloom were the only stimulants of which he was susceptible, and they were welcomed as the light of his path! By their guidance he wildly rushed to his stable, saddled, led forth, and mounted his noble charger,

his own head still uncovered. For once the gallant animal felt himself uncontrolled master of his movements, fleet as the wind his nimble heels measured the narrow limits of the island. A sudden glare of intense light served for an instant to reveal both to horse and rider that they stood upon the brink of the river, and a single indication of the rider's will was followed by a plunge into the troubled waves. Nobly and majestically he rose and sank with the swelling surges. His master sat erect in the saddle and felt his benumbed faculties revived, as he communed with the storm. The raging elements appeared to sympathize with the tumult of his own bosom. He laughed in horrid unison with the gambols of the lightning, and yelled with savage delight as the muttering thunder rolled over his head.

There is a sublime stimulus in despair. Bacon felt its power; he was conscious that one of the first laws of our organization, (self-preservation,) was suddenly dead within him.

The ballast of the frail vessel was thrown overboard, and the sails were spread to the gathering storm with reckless desperation. Compass and rudder were alike abandoned and despised – they were for the use of those who had hopes and fears. For himself he spread his sails and steered his course with the very spirit of the storm itself. Nature in her wildest moods has no terrors for those who have nothing to lose or win; no terrors for them who laugh and play with the very elements of her destruction; they are wildly, madly independent. It is the sublimity of the maniac! Nevertheless there is a fascination in his

reckless steps as he threads the narrow and fearful windings of the precipice, or carelessly buffets the waves of the raging waters. There are other sensations of a high and lofty character in this disjointed state of the faculties. The very ease and rapidity with which ordinary dangers are surmounted, serves to keep up the delusion, and were it not for the irresponsible condition of the mind, there would doubtless be impiety in its developments. Such were Bacon's sensations as he wildly stemmed the torrent. He imagined that he was absolved from the ordinary responsibilities and hazards of humanity! and to his excited fancy, it seemed as though petty fears and grovelling cautions were all that lay between humanity and the superior creations of the universe! that power also came with this absolution from the hopes, fears and penalties of man's low estate. In imagination "he rode upon the storm and managed the whirlwind." The monsters of the deep were his playmates, the ill-omened birds of the night his fellows. The wolves howled in dreadful concord with the morbid efforts of his preternaturally distorted faculties, as the noble and panting animal first struck the shore with his forefeet.

Emerging from the water, he stroked down the dripping mane with a wild and melancholy affection. The very consciousness of such a feeling yet remaining in his soul, which he dared indulge, produced for the moment a dangerous and kindred train of emotions. These as before led him upon forbidden ground, and again the wild tumult of his soul revived. Striking his heels into the animal's flanks, and bending upon his neck, he urged

him over the ground at a pace in unison with the impetuosity of his own feelings.

The fire and gravel flew from his heels, as he bounded through the trackless forests of the unsubdued wilderness. The frightened birds of night, and beasts of prey, started in affright, wild at the appearance upon the scene of one darker and wilder than themselves. The very reptiles of the earth shrunk to their hiding places, as the wild horseman and his steed invaded their prescriptive dominions.

Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter, according to the commands of Sir William Berkley, were conveyed to his mansion. To them all places were now alike. The mother after a long and death-like trance, revived to a breathing and physical existence; but her mind was overrun with horrors. Reason was dethroned, and her lips gave utterance to the wildest fantasies. Events with which, and persons with whom, none of those about her were conversant, were alluded to in all the incoherency and unbridled impetuosity of the maniac. The depletion and anodynes of the physician were administered in vain. The ravages upon the seat of nervous power had rendered the ordinary remedies to the more distant chords of communication utterly powerless. From a mild, bland, feeble and sickly state of melancholy, she was suddenly transformed into a frenzied lunatic. Her muscular power seemed to have received multiplied accessions of strength. Yet there was "a method in her madness" – the same names and scenes frequently recurred in her raving paroxysms. That of Charles was

reiterated through the wild intonations of delusion; sometimes madly and revengefully, but more frequently in sorrow.

There was occasionally a moving and touching pathos in these latter demonstrations – tearless it is true, but thrilling and electrifying in the subdued whisper in which they were sometimes uttered. A flood of pent up emotions was poured forth with a thrilling eloquence which had their origin in the foundations of the soul. Scenes of days long past, were revived with a graphic and affecting power, which imagination cannot give if their mysterious source and receptacle be not previously and abundantly stored with the richest treasures of the female heart and mind.

Because the by-standers do not happen to be in possession of all the previous history of the sufferer, so as to put together these melancholy and broken relics, they are generally supposed to be the creations of a distempered fancy.

So it was with Mrs. Fairfax; her detached reminiscences fell upon the dull and uninstructed ears of her attendants as the wildest hallucinations of the brain, yet there was more connexion in these flights than they imagined. They supposed that she thought herself conversing in her most subdued and touching moments with young Dudley, merely because his name was frequently pronounced, and that he happened to be present at the disastrous ceremony, which resulted so dreadfully to all parties.

Among all these, Virginia's was the hardest lot – so delicately and exquisitely organized, so gentle – so susceptible – so full of

enthusiasm – so rich in innocence and hope, and all so suddenly prostrated. Bacon was nerved with the wild yet exalted heroism of manhood in despair. Her mother was wrapt in a blessed oblivion of the present, but she was sensitively and exquisitely alive to the past, present and future. One fainting paroxysm succeeded to another in frightful rapidity, for hours after she was removed to her uncle's house.

The painful intervals were filled up with a concentration of wretched reflections, which none but a finely organized and cultivated female mind could conceive or endure. No proper conception of these can be conveyed in language, unless the reader will suffer his imagination to grasp her whole condition at once. – Beginning at the first inception of the unsuspected passion for the noble youth who is the hero of our tale – in her earliest infancy; and afterwards following her as it matured and strengthened by the reflections of riper years. – Every faculty, both perceptive and intellectual, had combined to impress his image in the most indelible colours upon her heart. He had himself ripened these very faculties into maturity by the most assiduous culture, and won her esteem by the most touching, delicate, and respectful attentions.

All these things in detail were painfully revolved in her mind. Every landscape, every book, every subject, reminded her most forcibly of him whom it was now criminal to think of. Hers was the sorrow that no sympathy could soften, no friendship alleviate. The sight of her intimate and confidential friend drove her mad,

for her presence instantly revived the horrid recollections of the chapel. Long after the clouds had cleared away, the thunder still roared in her ears. The sudden slamming of a door sounded to her nervous irritability, like the report of a cannon. Her own shadow conjured up horrible images. The most violent and the most acute paroxysms of the human organization, however, have a tendency to wear themselves out, when left uninterruptedly to their own action. Such was necessarily, in some measure, the case with Virginia; her mother's more alarming condition calling so much more loudly for attention, and Wyandott having fled, and Harriet's presence proving so evidently hurtful, she was consequently left with a single sable domestic. Essentially she was in profound solitude; and after the first paroxysms which we have described, her mind naturally and irresistibly fell into a train of retrospective thought. Startling and horrifying they certainly were at first, but still the mind clung to them. Many of the circumstances of the late disastrous meeting were to her as yet unexplained. To these she clung as to the last remnants of hope; they were the straws at which she grasped with the desperation of the drowning wretch. She had at first received her mother's tacit acknowledgment of the mysterious stranger's statement, or rather the effect produced by that statement as irresistible confirmation of its truth. But now she doubted the propriety of her hasty conviction. She marvelled at the effect produced upon her mother – yet there were other means of accounting for it. Would she not have exhibited a like sensibility,

had a like statement been made, however false, under such circumstances? – did she not deny it, positively deny it at the moment? Such was the train of reasoning by which her mind began to reassure itself; and it must be recollected that she had never heard more of her mother's history, than that she was a childless widow when her father married her. Sufficient was left however of first impressions to render her situation one of intense suffering and suspense. She dared not ask for Bacon, yet a restless and gnawing anxiety possessed her, to know whether he acknowledged the truth of the dreadful tale without a murmur, and without investigation. But her physical organization could not keep pace with the ever elastic mind; her gentle frame gave sensible evidence that the late violent shocks had made sad inroads upon her system. One chill was succeeded by another, until they were in their turn followed by a burning fever. In this condition she fell again into the hands of the physician, and all mental distress was soon lost in the paramount demands of the suffering body.

Toward the hour of midnight, the storm subsided. Fragments of the black curtain which had hung over the face of the heavens, shot up from the eastern horizon in stupendous blue masses, every now and then illuminated to their summits with the reflection of the raging elements beyond. The violence of the conflict in Bacon's breast had also subsided. He rode along the banks of the Chickahominy, his charger dripping with wet and panting with the exhaustion of fatigue. The bridle hung

loose upon his neck, and his rider bent over his mane like a worn-out soldier. His own locks had unbent their stubborn curls to the driving storm, and hung about his neck in drooping masses. His silken hose were spattered with mud, and his gay bridal dress hung about his person in lank and dripping folds. His horse had for some time followed the bent of his own humour, and was now leading his master in the neighbourhood of human habitations. The boughs of the tall gloomy pines were fantastically illuminated with broad masses of light, which ever and anon burst from the smouldering remnants of a huge pine log fire. Its immediate precincts were surrounded by some fifty or more round matted huts, converging toward the summit like a gothic steeple. Around the fire, and under a rude shelter, lay some hundred warriors, wrapped in profound slumber while one of their tribe stood sentinel over the camp.

When Bacon had approached within a short distance of this picturesque group, the sentinel sprung upon his feet, and uttered a shrill war-whoop. The horse stood still, erected his neck and pricked up his ears, while his master folded his arms upon his breast and calmly surveyed the scene. Those warriors who slept under the sheds near the fire, assumed the erect attitude with a simultaneous movement, joining in the wild chorus of the sentinel's yell as they arose.

Hundreds of men, women, and children poured from the surrounding huts, – most of the grown males, with their faces painted in blue and red stripes, their heads shaved close to the

cranium, except a tuft of hair upon the crown, and all armed in readiness for battle. Bacon assumed the command of his horse and rode into the very centre of this wild congregation, – the fore hoofs resting upon the spent embers of the fire.

He was greeted with another yell, after which the savages stood back and viewed his strange and untimely appearance with wonder not unmixed with awe. His bridle again fell from his hand, and his arms were crossed upon his breast. His countenance was wild and haggard, and a flash of maniacal enthusiasm shot athwart his pale features. His dress under present circumstances was fantastical in the extreme.

A grim old warrior with savage aspect after staring some time intensely at the intruder, was suddenly struck with something in his appearance, and stepping out a few paces from the mass of his companions began to address them in his own language, now and then pointing to the horseman, and using the most violent gesticulations. At another time the youth would have been not a little alarmed at certain significant signs which the speaker used when pointing to himself. These consisted in twirling his war club round and round, as if he was engaged in the most deadly conflict. Then he placed his hand to the side of his head and bent it near the earth as if about to prostrate himself, and finally pointing to Bacon. When he had done this, several of the crowd closed in toward his horse, and seemed intensely to examine the lineaments of his countenance. Having satisfied themselves, they set up a simultaneous yell of savage delight. He was quickly

drawn from the saddle, his hands tied behind him, and then placed in the centre of the assembled throng.

Their savage orgies now commenced; a procession of all the grown males moved in a circle of some fifty feet in diameter round his person. Several of the number beat upon rude drums, formed of large calabashes with raw hides stretched tight and dried over the mouths; while others dexterously rattled dried bones and shuffled with their feet to their own music. Others chanted forth a monotonous death song; the whole forming the rudest, wildest, and most savage spectacle imaginable.

Bacon himself stood an unmoved spectator of all these barbarous ceremonies. He felt a desperate and reckless indifference to what might befall him. Human endurance had been stretched to its utmost verge, and he felt within him a longing desire to end the vain struggle in the sleep of death. To one like him, who had in the last few hours endured the mental tortures of a hundred deaths, their savage cruelties had no terrors. A faint hope indeed may have crossed his mind, that some warrior more impetuous than his comrades, might sink his tomahawk deep into his brain in summary vengeance for the death of their chief. But they better understood the delights of vengeance. After performing their rude war-dance for some time, they commenced the more immediate preparations for the final tragedy. His hands were loosed, his person stripped and tied to a stake, while some dozen youths of both sexes busied themselves in splitting the rich pine knots into minute pins.

These being completed, a circular pile of finely cleft pieces of the same material was built around his body, just near enough for the fire to convey its tortures by slow degrees without too suddenly ending their victim. A deafening whoop from old and young announced the commencement of the ceremony. Each distinguished warrior present had the privilege of inserting a given number of splinters into his flesh. The grim old savage who had first identified Bacon as the slayer of their chief, stepped forward and commenced the operation. He thrust in the tearing torments with a ferocious delight, not a little enhanced by the physical convulsive movements of his victim at every new insertion. Worn out nature however could not endure the uninterrupted completion of the process, and the victim swooned away.

His body hung by the thongs which had bound his waist and hands to the stake, his head drooping forward as if the spirit had already taken its flight. He was immediately let down and the tenderest care observed to resuscitate him, in order that they might not be cheated of their full revenge. His head and throat were bathed in cold water and his parched lips moistened through the medium of a gourd. At length he revived, and strange as it may appear, to a keener consciousness of his situation than he had felt since he left the church. All the wild horrors of his fate stared him in the face. The savages screamed with delight at his returning animation. Copious drafts of water were administered as he called for them. The most intense pain was

already experienced from the festering wounds around each of the wooden daggers driven into his flesh. Again he prayed that some of them might instantaneously reach his heart, but his prayer was not destined to be granted. He was again fastened to the stake, and the second in dignity and authority proceeded to perform his share of the brutal exhibition. At this moment a piercing scream rent the air, and all tongues were mute, all hands suspended.

The sound proceeded from the extreme right of the encampment. Here a larger hut than the rest stood in solitary dignity apart from the others, like an officer's *marquée* in a military encampment. In a few moments the rude door was thrust aside and an Indian female of exquisite proportions rushed to the scene of butchery, and threw herself between the half immolated victim and his bloodthirsty tormentors. Upon her head she wore a rude crown, composed of a wampum belt tightly encircling her brows, and surmounted by a circlet of the plumes of the kingfisher, facing outwards at the top. Around her waist was belted a short frock of dressed deer-skin, which fell in folds about her knees, and was ornamented around the fringed border with beads and wampum. Over her left shoulder and bust she gracefully wore a variegated skin dressed with the hair facing externally; from this her right arm extended, bare to the shoulder, save a single clasp at the wrist; and she carried in her hand a long javelin mounted at the end with a white crystal. The remaining parts of her figure exhibited their beautiful proportions neatly

fitted with a pair of buck-skin leggins, extended and fringed on the seam with porcupine quills, copper and glass ornaments. Similar decorations were visible on her exquisitely proportioned feet and ankles. Thrusting her javelin in the ground with energy, and proudly raising her head, she cast a withering glance of scorn and indignation upon the perpetrators of the cruelty. Her address, translated into English, was to the following purport: "Is it for this," and she pointed to Bacon's bleeding wounds, "that I have been invested with the authority of my sires? Was it to witness the perpetration of these cruelties that I have been almost dragged from the house of my pale faced friends? Scarcely has the fire burned out which was kindled to celebrate my arrival among you, before it is rekindled to sacrifice in its flames him who redeemed me from captivity. Is this the return which Chickahominies make for past favours? If so, I pray you to tear from my person these emblems of my authority among you."

She was immediately answered by the old warrior who had commenced the tortures; "Did not the long knife¹ slay the chief of our nation?"

He was answered by a yell of savage delight from all the warriors present. Wyanokee (for it was she, as the reader has no doubt already surmised) continued, "Ay, he did slay King Fisher and his son – but were they not unjustly attempting to take away the property of the pale faces? and did they not commit the deed against their solemn promise and treaty, and after they had

¹ This term originated in Virginia.

smoked the pipe of peace? For shame, warriors and men – would ye turn squaws, and murder a brave and noble youth because he had fought for his own people and for the preservation of his own life?"

Her harangue was not received with the submission and respect which she expected – many murmured at her defence, and claimed the death of the captive as a prescriptive right and an act of retributive justice. She advanced to cut the cords which bound the prisoner, but twenty more powerful arms instantly arrested her movement. Tomahawks were raised in frightful array, while deep and loud murmurs of discontent, and demands for vengeance rent the air. She placed herself before the captive, and elevating her person to its utmost height, and extending her hands before him as a protection, she cried, "Strike your tomahawks here, into the daughter of your chief, of him who led you on to battles and to victory, but harm not the defenceless stranger." The principal warriors held a consultation as to the fate of the prisoner. It was of but short duration, there being few dissenting voices to the proposition of the old savage, already mentioned as principal spokesman of the party. They soon returned and announced to their new queen that the council of the nation had decreed the prisoner's death. "Never, never!" exclaimed the impassioned maiden, "unless you first cleave off these hands with which I will protect him from your fury. Ha!" she cried, as a sudden thought seemed to strike her; "there is one plan of redemption by your own laws. I will be

his wife!" A deep blush suffused her cheeks as she forced the reluctant announcement from her lips. An expression of sadness and disappointment soon spread itself over the countenances of the revengeful warriors, for they knew that she had spoken the truth. Another council was immediately held; at which it was determined that their youthful queen, might according to the usages of the nation, take the captive for her husband, in the place of her kinsman who was slain. When this was proclaimed, Wyanokee slowly and doubtingly turned her eyes upon Bacon to see whether the proposition met a willing response in his breast. A single glance sufficed to convince her that it did not. Instantly, however, recovering her self-possession, she cut the cords and led him to her hut, where after having been reinvested with the sad remnants of his bridal finery, we must leave him for the night.

CHAPTER II

"The several causes of discontent in the colony of Virginia long nourished in secret, or manifesting themselves in partial riots and insurrections, were now rapidly maturing, and only the slightest incident was wanting to precipitate them into open rebellion.

"Since the death of Opechancanough, the Indians, deprived of the benefits of federative concert, had made but few attempts to disturb the tranquillity of the colony. Several of the tribes had retired westward, and those which remained, reduced in their numbers and still more in strength by the want of a common leader, lingered on the frontiers, exchanging their superfluous productions at stated marts with their former enemies. A long peace, added to a deportment almost invariably pacific, had in a great measure relaxed the vigilance of the colonists, and the Indians were admitted to a free intercourse with the people of all the counties. It was scarcely to be expected that during an intercourse so irregular and extensive no grounds of uneasiness should arise. Several thefts had been committed upon the tobacco, corn, and other property of the colonists."

These depredations were becoming daily more numerous and alarming, and repeated petitions had been sent in from all parts of the colony calling upon Sir William Berkley in the most urgent terms to afford them protection. The Governor

remained singularly deaf to these reasonable demands, and took no steps to afford that protection to the citizens for which government was in a great measure established. Some excuse was offered by his friends and supporters by pleading his great age and long services. Sir H. Chicerly, who had some time before arrived in the colony, clothed with the authority of Lieutenant Governor, and who had till now remained an inactive participator of the gubernatorial honours, began to collect the militia of the state; but Sir William was no sooner informed of these proceedings, so well calculated to allay the rising popular ferment, than he at once construed it into an attempt to supersede his authority, and forthwith disbanded the troops already collected, and countermanded the orders for raising more, which had been sent by his subordinate through the several counties. These high-handed measures of an obstinate and superannuated man, inflamed the public mind. Meetings were called without any previous concert in almost every county in the province, and the most indignant remonstrances were sent in to the Governor. These, however, only served to stimulate his obstinacy, while the continued depredations of the Indians wrought up the general feeling of dissatisfaction into a blaze of discontent. While these things were in progress, a circumstance happened, which, while it brought the contest to an immediate issue, had at the same time an important bearing upon all the principal personages of our narrative. On the night succeeding the melancholy catastrophe at the chapel, related in the last

chapter, the tribes of Indians which had formerly been leagued together in the Powhatan confederacy, simultaneously rose at dead of night and perpetrated the most horrid butcheries upon men, women, and children, in every part of the colony. The council had scarcely convened on the next morning before couriers from every direction arrived with the dreadful tidings. Among others, there came one who announced to the Governor that his own country seat had been consumed by the fires of the savage incendiaries, and that Mrs. Fairfax, who had been removed thither for change of scene by the advice of her physician, was either buried in its ruins or carried away captive by the Indians. Public indignation was roused to its highest pitch, but it was confidently expected, now that his excellency himself was a sufferer both in property and feelings, that he would recede from his obstinate refusal to afford relief. But strange to say, in defiance of enemies, and regardless of the remonstrances of his friends, he still persisted. The result ensued which might have been expected; meetings of the people, which had before been called from the impulse of the moment, and without concert, were now regularly organized, and immediate steps taken to produce uniformity of action throughout the different counties.

While these elements of civil discord are fermenting, we will pursue the adventures of our hero, whom we left just rescued from the hands of the relentless savages. The new queen of the Chickahominies, after having conducted Bacon to her own rude palace, retired for a short period in order to allow him

just time to prepare himself for her reception. An Indian doctor was immediately summoned and directed to extract the splinters and dress the wounds. The departure of this wild and fantastical practitioner of the healing art was the signal for her own entrance. Slowly and doubtfully she approached her visiter, who was reclining almost exhausted upon a mat. Upon her entrance he attempted to rise and profess his gratitude, but overcome with pain, sorrow, and weakness, he fell back upon his rude couch, a grim smile and wild expression crossing his features. She gracefully and benignantly motioned him to desist, and at once waived all ceremony by seating herself on a mat beside him. Both remained in a profound and painful silence for some moments. Bacon's mind could dwell upon nothing but the horrid images of the preceding hours of the night. Regardless of her presence and her ignorance of those circumstances which dwelt so painfully upon his memory, he remained in a wild abstraction, now and then casting a glance of startled recognition and surprise at his royal hostess.

She examined him far more intently and with not less surprise, after the subsidence of her first embarrassment. Her sparkling eyes ran over his strange dress and condition, with the rapidity of thought, but evidently with no satisfactory result. She was completely at a loss to understand the cause of his visit, and the singular time and appearance in which he had chosen to make it. It is not improbable that female vanity, or the whisperings of a more tender passion, connected it in some way with her own

recent flight. These scarcely recognised impressions produced however an evident embarrassment in her manner of proceeding. She longed to ask if Virginia was his bride, yet dreaded to do so both on her own account and his. She had lived long enough in civilized society to understand the signification of his bridal dress, but she was utterly at a loss to divine why he should appear in such a garb covered with mud, as if he had ridden in haste, in the midst of a warlike nation, and on the very night appointed for the celebration of his nuptials, unless indeed she might solve the mystery in the agreeable way before suggested. Catching one of the originally white bridal flowers of his attire between her slender fingers, she said with a searching glance; "Faded so soon?" He covered his face with his hands, and threw himself prostrate upon the mat, writhing like one in the throes of expiring agony.

His benevolent hostess immediately called a little Indian attendant, in order to despatch him for the doctor; but her guest shook his head and motioned with his uplifted hand for her to desist. She reseated herself, more at a loss than ever to account for his present appearance and conduct. She had supposed that he was suffering from the pain of his wounds, but she now saw that of these he was entirely regardless. She became aware that a more deeply seated pain afflicted him. Again he turned his face toward the roof of the hut, his hands crossed upon his breast, and his bosom racked with unutterable misery.

"Is the pretty Virginia dead?"

The blackness of hell and horror was in his face as he turned a scowl upon his interrogator, and replied, "Is this a new method of savage torture? If so, call in the first set, they are kind and benignant compared to you." But seeming suddenly to recollect that she was ignorant of the pain she inflicted, he took her hand kindly and respectfully, and continued, "Yes, Wyanokee, she is indeed dead to me. If you regard the peace of my soul, or the preservation of my senses, never whisper her name to the winds where it will be wafted to my ears. Never breathe what she has taught you. Be an Indian princess, but for God's sake look, speak, or act not in such a way as to remind me of passed days. Tear open these wounds, inflict fresh tortures – yea, torture others if you will, so I but horrify my mind with any other picture than hers. O God, did ever sister rise before man's imagination in such a damning form of loveliness? With most men, that little word would suffice to dispel the horrid illusion! but with me, cursed as I have been from my birth, and as I still am deeper cursed, the further I pursue this wretched shadow called happiness, I would wed her to-morrow, yea were the curse of the unpardonable sin denounced upon me from the altar instead of the benediction. For her I would go forth to the world, branded with a deeper damnation than ever encircled the brows of the first great murderer. I would be the scorn, the jest, the by-word of present generations, and a never dying beacon to warn those who come after me."

As he proceeded, Wyanokee fixed her dark penetrating

eyes upon his face, until her own countenance settled into the expression of reverential awe, with which the Indian invariably listens to the ravings of the maniac. At every period she moved herself backward on the mat, until at the conclusion, she had arrived at a respectful distance, and crossed her hands in superstitious dread. A single glance conveyed her impressions to his mind, and he resumed, "No, no, my gentle preserver, reason is not dethroned, she still presides here, (striking his forehead,) a stern spectator of the unholy strife which is kept up between her sister faculties." Leaning toward her upon his elbow, he continued in a thrilling whisper, "You have heard me read from the sacred volume of the tortures prepared for the damned! of a future existence, in which the torments of ten thousand deaths shall be inflicted, and yet the immortal sufferer find no death! His soul will be prepared for the endurance! I have already a foretaste of that horrible eternity! And yet you see I preserve the power to know and to endure! Is it not a dread mystery in this frail compound of ours – and portentous of evil to come, that this faculty of supporting misery so long outlives the good? The wise men of our race teach us that every pain endured is a preparation of the opposite faculty to enjoy pleasure! that our torpid fluids would stagnate without these contrasted stimulants; 'tis all a delusion, a miserable invention of the enemy. Man can suffer in this life a compound of horrors, for which its pleasures and allurements have no equivalent; yea, and he suffers them after all chance for happiness has vanished for ever. The pleasures of

the world are like the morning glories of a sea of ice. The sun rises and sparkles in glittering rainbows for an hour, and then sinks behind the dark blue horizon, and leaves the late enraptured beholder, to feel the chill of death creeping along his veins, until his heart is as cold and dead as the icebergs around 'an atom of pleasure, and a universe of pain.'"

His hearer sat in the most profound bewilderment; much of his discourse was to her unintelligible, and notwithstanding his protestations to the contrary, she still retained her first impressions as to the state of his mind. She knew something of the various relations existing between the most important personages of our story, and in her own mind, had already begun to account for his present state. She supposed him to have been rudely torn from his bride. Her object therefore in the following words, was to learn something more of these particulars, and at the same time to soothe the excited feelings of her guest.

"The great Father of the white man at Jamestown will restore your bride. Does not your good book say, 'whom the' Great Spirit 'has joined together let no man put asunder?'"

"Ay!" replied Bacon, "but what does it say when they are first joined together by the ties of blood? Besides, he never did join us together in the holy covenant. He stamped it with his curse? He denounced his veto against it at the very foot of the altar. The same voice which thundered upon mount Sinai spoke there. His servant stood up before him and asked, 'If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together let him

now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.' And lo, both heaven and earth interposed at the same moment. The thunders of heaven rent the air, and that most fearful man appeared as if by miracle." Again lowering his voice to a whisper, he continued, "As I rode upon the storm last night, and communed with the spirits of the air, some one whispered in my ear, that the heavens were rent asunder and he came upon a thunderbolt. And then again as I walked upon the waves, and the black curtains gathered around, a bright light darted into my brain and I saw the old Roundheads who were executed the other day, sitting upon a glorious cloud, mocking at my misery! yea, they mouthed at me. Ha, ha, ha!" The sound of his own unnatural laughter startled him like an electric shock – and instantly he seemed to recollect himself.

He covered his face with his hands, and rested them upon his knees in silence. Some one entered and spoke to the queen in a low voice, and she immediately informed her guest that his horse was dead. "Dead!" said he, as he sprang upon his feet. "His last – best – most highly prized gift dead! All on the same night – am I indeed cursed – in going out and in coming in? Are even the poor brutes that cling to me with affection, thus cut down? but I would see him ere he is cold."

A torch-bearer soon appeared at the summons of his mistress, and the royal hostess and her guest proceeded to the spot. There lay the noble animal, his once proud neck straightened in the gaunt deformity of death. His master threw himself upon his

body and wept like an infant. The tears, the first he had shed, humanized and soothed his harrowed feelings. Slowly he arose, and gazing upon the lifeless beast, exclaimed with a piteous voice, "Alas poor Bardolph, thy lot is happier than thy master's!"

The day was now dawning, and the morning air came fresh and invigorating to the senses, redolent of the wild perfumes blown upon the moor and forest, from the influence of a humid night. These reviving influences however fell dead upon the benumbed faculties of our hero. In accordance with the urgent solicitations of his hostess, he agreed to swallow an Indian soporific, and try to lose his sorrows and his memory in that nearest semblance of death. He did not fail, as he re-entered the wigwam, to observe that the whole village (called Orapacs) was busily preparing for some imposing ceremony, and that great accessions had been made to the numbers of the previous night.

Long and soundly he slept; when he awoke the sun was coursing high in the heavens. The air was balmy and serene, and his own monomaniacal hallucinations were dissipated, partly worn out by their own violence and partly dispelled by many hours of uninterrupted repose. Dreadful is that affliction which sleep will not alleviate. It is true that one suffering under a weight of misery which no hope lightens, no reasoning assuages, wakes to a present sense of his condition with a startling and miserable consciousness, yet upon the whole, the violence of grief has been soothed and moderated. So it was with our hero, and he walked forth a new and revived creature.

But as he stepped from the wigwam, a spectacle greeted his eye more akin to the fantasies of the previous night than to stern reality. The village was situated on a plain near the banks of the river. The forest remained much as it first grew, save that the undergrowth had been burned away and the ground afterwards overgrown with a luxuriant coat of grass. This summary method of trimming the primitive forest gives it much the resemblance of a noble park, cleared of its shrubs, undergrowth, and limbs, by the careful hands of the woodman. The scene, as Bacon looked along the woodland vista, had a wild novelty, and its aspect would doubtless have been sedative in its effect had it not been for the spectacle already alluded to, which we shall now endeavour to describe. An immense concourse of Indians was collected just without the external range of wigwams. They were seated in groups, in each of which he recognised the distinguishing marks of separate tribes, the representatives of each distinct nation of the peninsula having a distinct and separate place. At the head of this warlike assemblage, on a rude throne sat the youthful Queen of the Chickahominies. Immediately around the foot of this elevation were seated the few grim warriors yet remaining of that once powerful nation, and on her right hand the Powhatans. A fantastically dressed prophet of the latter tribe, with a curiously coloured heron's feather run through the cartilage of his nose stood in the centre of the assembled nations, and harangued the deputies with the most violent gesticulations, every now and then pointing in the direction first of Jamestown, and then of

Middle Plantations, (now Williamsburg,) and in succession after these, to the other most thickly peopled settlements of the whites. His rude eloquence seemed to have a powerful effect upon his warlike audience, from the repeated yells of savage cheering by which each appeal was followed. He concluded his harangue by brandishing a bloody tomahawk over his head, and then striking it with great dexterity into a pole erected in the centre of the area. Numerous warriors and prophets from other tribes followed with similar effect and like purpose, to all of whom the stern savages listened with an eager yet respectful attention. When they had concluded, the youthful queen of the Chickahominies descended one step from her throne, and addressed the assembled nations; but her discourse was received in a far different spirit from that which had attended the eloquence of her predecessors. She was evidently maintaining the opposite side of the question which occupied the grave assembly, and it was apparent that the feelings of her auditors were hostile to her wishes and opinions. No evidences of delight greeted her benevolent counsels, and she resumed her seat almost overpowered by the loud and general murmurs of discontent which arose at the conclusion of her "talk." She felt herself a solitary advocate of the plainest dictates of justice and humanity – she felt the difficulty and embarrassment of addressing enlightened arguments to savage ears and uncultivated understandings, and a painful sense of her own responsibility, and of regret for having assumed her present station, pressed heavily upon heart.

Bacon saw only the eloquent language of their signs and gestures; but some knowledge of the outrages already perpetrated easily enabled him to interpret their intentions. He knew that bloodshed and murder were the objects of their meeting, and he resolved to seize the earliest opportunity to escape, in order to take part in the defence of his country. His mind turned eagerly to this wholesome excitement, as the best outlet which was now left for the warring impulses within his breast.

CHAPTER III

The retirement of Wyanokee from her temporary presidency in the grand council of the confederated nations, was the signal for beginning the general carouse, by which such meetings were usually terminated. Two huge bucks, with their throats cut, had been some time suspended from a pole laid across a pair of stout forked saplings, driven into the ground at the distance of a few feet from each other; these were now brought into the centre of the area, and quickly deprived of their skins. The neighbourhood of civilized man had already introduced that bane of savage morals, whiskey; and plentiful supplies of this, together with pipes and tobacco, were now served to the representatives. A general scene of rude and savage debauch immediately followed. Meat was broiled or roasted upon the coals – whiskey was handed round in calabashes, while the more gay and volatile members of the assemblage found an outlet for their animated feelings in the violent and energetic movements of the Indian dance. The sounds which issued from the forest were a mingled din of tinkling metals – rattling bones, and the monotonous humming of the singers, occasionally enlivened by a sharp shrill whoop from some young savage, as his animal spirits became excited by the exercise. The squaws performed the part of menials, and bore wood, water, and corn, to supply the feast for their lords and masters.

The new queen of the nation, upon whose ground these carousals were held, retired to her own wigwam, as much disgusted with the moral blindness and depravity of the deputies, as with the commencing revels. Besides her disgust of what was left behind, there was an attraction for her in her own sylvan palace, which, till a few hours back, it had sadly wanted in her eyes; not that she approached it with any hope that her passion would now or ever meet with a return from its object – but still there was a melancholy pleasure in holding communion with one so far superior to the rude, untutored beings she had just left. She felt also a longing desire, not only to learn more of the mysterious transactions of which she had gathered some vague indications from Bacon's discourse, but to take advantage of present circumstances in returning some of the many favours heaped upon herself by her white friends. There was a nobler motive for this than mere gratitude; she wished to show to Bacon and Virginia, that she could sacrifice her own happiness to promote theirs. She felt now satisfied that both of them had discovered the existence of her passion, long before she was aware of the impropriety of its exhibition according to civilized usages, and she was anxious to evince to them how nobly an Indian maiden could cover this false step with honour. Full of these ennobling, and as it proved, delusive ideas, she entered the wigwam with a mien and step which would not have disgraced a far more regal palace.

Bacon was found upon a mat, reclining in melancholy mood

against the side of the apartment, intently eyeing the movements of the savages upon the green. She followed his eye for a moment in shame and confusion for the spectacle exhibited by the men of her own race.

"Do you mark the difference," said Bacon, "between the dances in yonder forest and those at Jamestown? Why do not the women join in the merry-making? We consider them worthy to partake of all our happiness."

"Ay, 'tis true, there is no Virginia there!"

His brow settled into a look of stern displeasure and offence, as he replied, "Would you renew the scenes of the last night?"

"No, Wyanokee desires not to give pain, but to remove it – as she came here now to show. You heard me claim you last night as a husband." – A crimson tint struggled with the darker hue of her cheek, as she forced herself to proceed. – "But it was only to save you from the cruel hands of my countrymen. You may, therefore, give up all uneasiness on that subject – I know well that the Great Spirit has decreed it otherwise than I desired, and I submit without a murmur. It is useless for me to conceal that I had learned too quickly to feel the difference between a youth of your race, and one of yon rude beings; but it was more owing to my ignorance of your customs than any want of proper maidenly reserve. That is now passed, you are a married man, and as such I can converse with you in confidence."

"Yes," said Bacon, a bitter smile playing over his countenance, "I am married to stern adversity! 'Tis a solemn contract, and

binds me to a bride from whom I may not easily be divorced. Death may cut the knot, but no other minister of justice can. I must say too, that the ceremonies of last night were fitting and proper. I wooed my bride through earth, air, and water; in thunder, lightning, and in rain. Nor was she coy or prudish. She came to my arms with a right willing grace, and clings to me through evil and through good report. I am hers, wholly hers for ever. It is meet that I should learn to love her at once. Ay, and I do hug her to my heart. Is she not my own? do we not learn to love our own deformities? then why not learn to love our own sorrows? Doubtless we shall be very happy – a few little matrimonial bickerings at first, perhaps, but these will soon be merged in growing congeniality. Man cannot long live with any companion, without bestowing upon it his affection; the snake, the spider, the toad, the scorpion, all have been loved and cherished: shall I not then love my bride? Is there not a hallowed memory around her birth? was she not nurtured and trained by these very hands? Is there not wild romance too, in her adventures and our loves? Is she not faithful and true? yea, and young too! not coy perhaps, but constant and devoted."

Although this language was prompted by very different states, both of heart and head, from that of the preceding night, yet its literal construction by the Indian maiden betrayed her into very little more understanding of its import. She better comprehended the language of his countenance. That, she saw, indicated the bitterness of death, but the cause was still a mystery. She

therefore continued her kind endeavours with something more of doubt and embarrassment. "My intention was to offer you and Virginia a home as soon as these warlike men are pacified and gone – that you might come here and live with me until her grand uncle will receive her and you. Oh, it will make Wyanokee very happy."

She would, no doubt, have continued in this strain for some time, but his impatience could be contained no longer. "Is it possible that you do not yet understand the depth and hopelessness of my misery? Know it then in all its horrors. I was half married last night to my own half sister! Did fate, fortune or hell ever more ingeniously contrive to blight the happiness of mortal man at one fell blow? View it for a moment. There was the game beautifully contrived – the stake was apparently trifling, but the prize glittered with India's richest rubies – the very thoughts of them conjured up scenes of fairy land. The richest fantasies of romance sparkled before the eye of the player. The wildest dream of earthly happiness allured him to each renewed attempt. First a little was staked – then another portion – then another to insure the two former, and so on until houses and lands and goods and chattels – yea and life itself, or all that made it valuable, were hazarded upon the throw. Lo, he wins! Joy unutterable fills his breast – he is about to place the jewels next his heart, but behold they turn into scorpions. Rich and beautiful in all their former ruby colour – but there is a fearful talismanic power in their beauty. There is a deadly poison in the sight!

They charm to kill. Lay them not near the heart or else the great magician, the king of evil – the prince of darkness himself, has bought you body and soul! That was my case. I won the glorious stake, I had it here (striking his breast), yea, and have it now, and the devil is tempting me to lay it next my heart. I have wrestled with him all the night, but again he is at work. See that you do not help him!"

Again she was lost in reverential awe. As his paroxysm by slow degrees returned, she exhibited in the mirror of her own countenance the passion, the wild enthusiasm, reflected from his, until the final charge to herself, when she was overcome with wonder and fear. His own preternaturally quick perceptions caught the effect produced, and he again folded his arms and leaned back in grim and sullen silence, but with the keen eye of the serpent watching the changing countenance of his auditor. She was sunk in abstraction for some moments, and then, as if rather thinking aloud than communing with another, she said, "Is it possible?"

"Yea, as true as that the serpent infused his poison into the ear of the mother of mankind. As true as that man was the first creature that died on the face of the earth by the hands of his fellow. As true as death and hell! As true as that there is a hereafter. Happiness is negative! Misery positive. There is always a subtle doubt lingering upon our most substantial scenes of happiness; but with misery it is slow, certain and enduring; the proof conclusive and damning. It is more real than our existence,

and exists when it is no more. Our nerves are strung to vibrate to the touches of harmony and happiness only when played upon by inspirations from above, but they vibrate in discord to the earth, the air, the winds, the waves, the thunder – the lightning. They are rudely handled by men, beasts, reptiles, devils, by famine, disease and death. Am I not a wretched monument of its truth? Are not these miserable and faded trappings, the funeral emblems of my moral decease? Am I not a living tomb of my own soul? A memento of him that was, with an inscription on my forehead, 'Here walks the body of Nathaniel Bacon, whose soul was burned out on the ever memorable night of his own wedding, by an incendiary in the mortal habiliments of his own Father, with a torch lit up in pandemonium itself? His body still walks the earth as a beacon and a warning to those who would commit incest!'"

The door was darkened for a moment, and in the next the Recluse stood before him. His giant limbs lost none of their extent or proportions as viewed through the dim light which fell in scanty and checkered masses from the interstices of the sylvan walls. He stood in the light of the only door, – his features wan and cadaverous, and his countenance wretchedly haggard. "Why lingerest thou here in the lap of the tawny maiden, when thy countrymen will so soon need the assistance of thy arm? This night the torch of savage warfare and cruelty will in all probability be lighted up in the houses of thy friends and kindred. Is it becoming, is it manly in thee to seek these effeminate pastimes, in order to drown the images of thy own idle fancy? If

thou hast unconsciously erred, and thereby cruelly afflicted thy nearest kindred, is this the way to repair the evil? Set thou them the example! Be a man – the son of a soldier. Thy father before thee has suffered tortures of the mind, and privations of the body, to which thine are but the feeble finger-aches of childhood as compared to the agonies of a painful and protracted death. Rouse thyself from thy unmanly stupor, and hie thee hence to the protection of those who should look up to thee. Be not anxious for me, maiden; I see thy furtive glances at the besotted men of thy race, and thence to me. I have long watched their movements. They see me not; they will attempt no injury – and if they should their blows would fall upon one reckless of danger – who has nought to gain or lose, – who has long had his lights trimmed, and lamp burning, ready for the welcome summons."

When he first entered the wigwam, Bacon sprang upon his feet, and gazed upon the unwelcome apparition as if he doubted his humanity; but as his hollow and sepulchral voice fell upon his ear in the well known, deep excited intonations of the chapel, he moved backward, his hands clasped, until his shoulders rested against the wall. There, shuddering with emotion, he gazed earnestly and in silence upon his visiter, whose words fell upon an indiscriminating ear. The Recluse perceived something of his condition as he continued, "Hearest thou not? – seest thou not? Rouse thee from this unmanly weakness. I saw thy dead horse upon the moor. I will leave thee mine at the head of the Chickahominy Swamp. When night closes upon yonder brutal

scene, mount and ride as if for thy life, even then thou mayst be too late! Remember! This night be thou in Jamestown!"

Having thus spoken, he stooped through the door, and vanished among the trees behind the wigwam, as he had come. Bacon still gazed upon the place where he had been, as if he still occupied the spot, his eyelids never closing upon the distended iris, until he fell upon the floor in a swoon. Such restoratives as an Indian wigwam afforded, were speedily administered, and very soon the desired effect was produced. While he lay thus worn down by the sufferings produced by the tortures of the previous night, and the cruel excitement of his feelings, Wyanokee discovered, as she was bathing his temples, the small gold locket, which he had worn suspended from his neck, since the death of Mr. Fairfax. Apparently it contained nothing but the plaited hair and the inscription already mentioned. She caught it with childlike eagerness, and turned it from side to side, with admiring glances, when her finger touched a spring and it flew open; the interior exhibited to view the features of a young and lovely female.

At this juncture Bacon revived. His countenance was pale and haggard from the exhaustion of mental and bodily sufferings. His perceptions seemed clearer, but his heart was burdened and oppressed – he longed for speedy death to terminate the wretched strife. The prospect was dark and lowering in whatever direction he cast his thoughts; no light of hope broke in upon his soul – all before him seemed a dreary joyless waste. In this mood

he accidentally felt the open trinket within the facings of his doublet, and inserting his hand he drew it forth. His head was elevated instantly, his eyes distended and his whole countenance exhibited the utmost astonishment. His first emotion was any thing but pleasant – as if he had drawn from his bosom one of his own figurative scorpions, but this was speedily succeeded by one of a different nature. The first sensation of pleasure which he had felt since he left Jamestown beamed upon his mind; it was mingled with the most unbounded surprise; but quick as thought the light of hope broke in upon his dark and cheerless prospects. Again and again the picture was closely scrutinized, but with the same conviction, never before had he beheld that face. It was resplendent with smiles and beauty. The dark hazel eyes seemed to beam upon him with affectionate regard. The auburn tresses almost fluttering in the breeze, so warm and mellow were the lights and shadows. But what rivetted his attention was the want of resemblance in the picture to the lady whom he had been so recently and so painfully taught to believe his mother. The latter had light flaxen ringlets and blue eyes, and the *tout ensemble* of the features were totally dissimilar. He imagined he saw a far greater resemblance between the picture and himself, and hence the ray of hope. But in the place of despair came feverish suspense – he now longed again to meet the Recluse, whose presence had so lately filled him with horror. His mind sought in vain within its own resources for means to bring the question to an immediate issue. Was he the first-born son of Mrs.

Fairfax or not? Perhaps Brian O'Reily could tell something of the picture, or had seen the original. No sooner had this faint, glimmering prospect of unravelling the mystery dawned upon his mind, than he was seized with the most feverish desire to set out for Jamestown.

The savages still kept up the carouse, but it would be hazardous in the extreme, as he was assured by his hostess, to attempt to leave Orapacs until the conclusion of the feast, which perhaps would last till night. At that time they were all to proceed to the Powhatan domain. He was compelled therefore to content himself with reading the lineaments of the interesting countenance just opened to his view.

Upon what a frail foundation will a despairing man build up his fallen castles in the air. Such was the occupation of our hero until the light of the sun had vanished over the western hills. He lay upon his mat in the twilight gloom, indulging in vague uncertain reveries. He had examined the picture so long, so intently, and under such a morbid excitement of the imagination, that he supposed himself capable of recollecting the features. He had called up dim and misty shadows of memory (or those of the imagination nearly resembling them) from a period wrapped in obscurity and darkness. He endeavoured to go back step by step to his years of childhood, until his excited mind became completely bewildered among the fading recollections of long passed days. As the rippling waters of the purling stream mingled with the monotonous whistling of

the evening breeze, his versatile imagination fell into a kindred train. The music of the nursery, by which his childish struggles had been lulled to repose, floated over his memory in the tenderest and purest melancholy. Who that has music in his soul has not, at a like season and hour, refreshed his heart with these early impressions? Nor are they entirely confined to an inviting melancholy mood and the hour of twilight. In the full vigour of physical and mental power, and when the spirits are bounding and elastic – in the midst of dramatic representations or the wildest creations of Italian musical genius, these stores of memory's richest treasures will suddenly flood the soul, touched perhaps by the vibration of some kindred chord. Bacon's harassed mind was refreshed by the tender and softened mood into which he had fallen. Besides, he was now stimulated by the glimmering dawn of hope. When therefore darkness had completely covered the face of the land, he arose to go upon his mission, a different being. Although his own emotions on parting were faint compared to those of Wyanokee, they were yet sorrowful and tender. He lamented the lot of the Indian maiden, and respected the virtues and accomplishments which elevated her so far above those by whom she was surrounded. He bade her adieu with the most heartfelt gratitude for her services, and aspirations for her welfare.

When he stepped from the wigwam he was astonished to see the huge fires, upon which they had cooked the feast, still burning with undiminished brilliancy, and still more startled to

observe twenty or more savages lying drunk around them, and half as many sober ones holding vigils over their slumbers. He immediately changed his intended direction, and skirted round the forest in which they lay, so as to arrive at the place pointed out by the Recluse by a circuitous route.

When he came opposite to the fires, and half way upon his circuit, he was not a little alarmed to hear the astounding war-whoop yelled by one of the sentinels. Casting his eyes in that direction he saw that all the guard were on the *qui vive*, and some of the slumberers slowly shaking off their stupidity. He supposed that one of the sentinels had heard his footsteps, and thus alarmed the rest. Taking advantage of the trees, and the distance he had already gained, he was enabled to elude their vigilant senses. But when he came to the spot pointed out by the Recluse, a greater difficulty presented itself. The horse was already gone, but not taken by the one who brought him there, as he saw evidently from the impressions of his feet in the earth, where he had stood most of the afternoon. He soon came to the conclusion that the Indians had found and carried him off. This was the more probable as they adjourned their council about the time he must have been taken. His call to Jamestown was too urgent to be postponed, and however feeble in body he determined to exert his utmost strength to arrive there during the night.

CHAPTER IV

Our hero reached Jamestown late on the very morning when the couriers arrived in such rapid succession, with the startling intelligence of the Indian massacres. All night he had wandered over the peninsula, vainly endeavouring to discover his way; light after light shot up amidst the surrounding gloom, and more than once he had been misled by these, almost into the very clutches of the swarming savages. His heart sank within him as he saw plantation after plantation, in their complete possession; the illumination of their incendiary trophies lighting up the whole surrounding country. It seemed indeed to his startled senses as if the Indians had simultaneously risen upon and butchered the whole white population of the colony. With the exception of a small remnant, they had already once perpetrated the like horrible deed, and he again saw in his imagination the dreadful scenes of that well remembered night. Feeble old men, women and children indiscriminately butchered – perhaps Virginia, whom he once again dared to think of, among the number. True, Wyanokee had assured him otherwise, but might not the grand council have determined upon the deed at the more appropriate time of their nightly meeting?

As the dawning day unfolded to his view the relative bearings of the country, these gloomy anticipations were partly realized. Every avenue to the city, both by land and water, was crowded

with people of all sexes, colours and conditions, flying to the protection of the Fort. Wagons, carts, negroes, and white bondsmen, were laden with furniture, provisions, and valuables. Ever and anon a foaming charger flew swiftly by, bearing some Cavalier to the city, doubly armed for retributive vengeance. By these he was greeted and cheered upon his way, as well as informed of the depredations committed in the neighbourhood whence they had come. From one of these also he procured a horse, and joined a cavalcade of his associates and friends, proceeding to the same centre of attraction. To them also he unfolded so much of his recent adventures as related to the general interests of the colony. Long, loud, and vindictive were their denunciations, as well of the treacherous savages as the stubborn old man at the head of affairs in the colony.

Although evident traces of his late bodily sufferings were perceptible in Bacon's countenance, no vestige of his mental hallucinations on one particular theme was perceived; his mind was intently occupied upon the all absorbing topic of common safety. As they proceeded together to the city, it was proposed to him to assume the command of a volunteer regiment, which they undertook to raise as soon as they arrived in Jamestown. His military talents and daring bravery were already well known by most of his associates, but he doubted whether he was the most proper person in the colony to assume so responsible a command. As to his own personal feelings, never did fortune throw the chance of honourable warfare more opportunely in the way of a

desperate man. True, it would have come still more seasonably twenty-four hours sooner, but then he would only have been better qualified for some desperate deed of personal daring, not for a command upon which hung the immediate fate of all the colonists, and the ultimate supremacy of the whites in Virginia. He promised, however, to accede to their proposal, provided, after the regiment was raised, in which he must be considered a volunteer, the majority cheerfully tendered him their suffrages. He stated the hostility of the Governor to him personally, without enlightening them as to its most recent cause; but they were now as resolute upon disregarding the feelings and wishes of Sir William, as he had already shown himself in disregarding their own. In short, they resolved at once to assume that authority to protect their lives and property, which they now felt, if they had never before known, was an inalienable right. Here was sown the first germ of the American revolution. Men have read the able arguments – the thrilling declamations, the logical defence of natural and primitive rights, which the men of '76 put forth to the world, with wonder at the seeming intuitive wisdom that burst so suddenly upon the world at the very exigency which called it into action. But in our humble opinion, the inception of these noble sentiments was of much earlier date – their development not so miraculous as we would like to flatter ourselves. Exactly one hundred years before the American revolution, there was a Virginian revolution based upon precisely similar principles. The struggle commenced between the representatives of the

people and the representatives of the king. The former had petitioned for redress, "time after time," – remonstrance after remonstrance had been sent in to Sir William Berkley, but he was deaf to all their reasonable petitions. The Cavaliers and citizens of the colony now arrived at the infant capital, resolved to take upon themselves as much power as was necessary for the defence of life, freedom, and property. While the gathering multitude flocked to the State House and public square in immense numbers, Bacon alighted at the Berkley Arms, in order to change his dress, and before he joined them, perform one act of duty which it would have been difficult for him to say whether it was anticipated with most pain or pleasure. It was a visit to Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter. He walked immediately from the hotel to the quarters usually occupied by the servants of the Fairfax family, in hopes of finding O'Reily – to despatch for his effects, which he supposed he could not obtain in person, without suddenly and unpreparedly exposing himself to the notice of the family. But the house was silent as the tomb! No gently curling smoke issued from the chimney; no cheering light broke in at the windows; all was dark, noiseless, and desolate. The domestic animals still lingered around their accustomed haunts, apparently as sad in spirit as he who stood with his arms folded gazing upon the deserted mansion. The streets were indeed crowded with the eager and tumultuous throng, but after the first unsuccessful essay at the door of the servant's hall, he had passed round into the garden of the establishment, and stood as we have described

him, a melancholy spectator of the painful scene. There hung Virginia's bird cage against the casings of the window, perhaps placed by her own hands on the morning of the unfortunate catastrophe, but the little songster was lying dead upon the floor. The blooming flowers around her windows hung in the rich maturity of summer, but seemed to mock the desolation around with their gay liveries. The dogs indeed lazily wagged their tails at his presence, and fawned upon him, but they too, slunk away in succession, as if conscious of the rupture which had taken place in his relations with the family.

What a flood of tender recollections rushed upon his memory as he stood thus solitary in the flower garden of her who was the sole object of his youthful and romantic dreams, and gazed upon the well known objects, – each one the memento of some childish sport or pleasure. There too stood the shaded seats and bowers of more mature adventures, redolent of the richest fruits and flowers, and teeming with the hallowed recollection of love's young dream. Nor were tears wanting to the memory of that early friend and patron who had given him shelter in his helpless days, from the cold neglect and inhospitality of the world, and thus, perhaps, saved him the degradation of a support at the public expense. These softened and subdued emotions humanized the savage mood which sprung up from similar reminiscences on a previous occasion. The current of his feelings had been changed by a single ray of hope. The fountain was not now wholly poisoned, and the sweet water turned to

gall and bitterness. The scene therefore, painful and melancholy as it was, produced beneficial results. But he marvelled that the house should be so totally deserted. He supposed that the lady and her daughter might be sojourning for a time with the Governor, but what had become of their numerous domestics? They too could not be quartered at the gubernatorial mansion. And above all, what had become of his own Hibernian follower? Certainly, he was not thus provided for. He knew his privileged servant's warm partialities and hatreds too well to believe that he had accepted any hospitality from his master's bitterest enemy. At that moment a servant of the Berkley Arms was passing, and having called him into the garden, Bacon raised a window leading to his own apartments, procured such of his garments as he most needed, and despatched them to the hotel. When he had encased himself in these, somewhat to his own satisfaction (and most young Cavaliers in those days wore their garments after a rakish fashion) he sallied out to perform the duty which he felt to be most incumbent on him. He knocked at the door of Sir William Berkley's mansion, with very different feelings from any he had before experienced on a similar occasion. The relations so lately discovered to exist between himself and those for whom his visit was intended, as well as his feelings toward those who had the right of controlling in some measure the persons admitted to visit at the mansion, awakened anxious thoughts not little heightened by the anticipation of meeting Beverly, with whom an unexpected interview promised few

agreeable emotions. The family seemed determined too that he should have the benefit of all these reflections, from the length of time they kept him standing in the street. At length the porter opened the door with many profound inclinations of the head, still standing however full within the entrance, and continuing his over wrought politeness. "Is Mrs. Fairfax within?" was the inquiry.

"She is dead! may it please your honour!"

"Dead!" uttered Bacon with a hoarse and trembling voice. "When and how?"

"His Excellency has just received the news – she was murdered last night at his country seat by the Indians."

"Was Miss – was his niece there also?" he asked with a bewildered doubt whether he had better inquire any further.

"No, Sir, she lies ill of a fever up stairs. Dr. Roland scarcely ever leaves her room, except to tell Master Frank the state of his patient."

"I will enter for a moment and speak a few words with the good doctor."

"Pardon me, your honour, it gives me great pain to refuse any gentleman admittance, but my orders are positive from Sir William himself to admit no one to the sick room, and above all not to admit your honour within these doors. I have over and over again turned away Miss Harriet, who seems as if she would weep her eyes out, poor lady, at my young mistress' illness and the Governor's cruelty, as she calls it."

"I see you have a more tender heart than your master; here is gold for you, not to bribe you against your duty or inclinations; but you will fully earn it by informing Dr. Roland that Mr. Bacon wishes to speak with him for five minutes at the Arms, upon business of the last importance."

"I will tell him, sir; but I do not think he will go, because he has himself given the strictest injunctions that your name shall not be whispered in the room, or even in the house. No longer than this morning, sir, she heard them announce the death of her mother down stairs. Her hearing is indeed extraordinary, sir, considering her so poorly. Since that she has been much worse."

Bacon did not choose to expose himself to the chance of insult any longer by meeting some of the male members of the family, he therefore took his departure from the inhospitable mansion, and skirted round the unfrequented streets, in order to avoid the immense multitude collected in the square and more frequented passages. He could hear the shouts and cheering which echoed against the houses as he proceeded, but little did he imagine that they welcomed his own nomination to the responsible station of commander to the colonial forces. His intention was to proceed to the Arms, and there await the arrival of the doctor; but he no sooner entered the porch than he was seized by the hand in the well known and sympathizing grasp of Dudley.

While the friends were yet uttering their words of greeting, and before they had propounded one of the many questions which they desired to ask, Bacon was seized under each arm with

a rude, but not disrespectful familiarity – saluted by the title of General, and borne off toward the state house in spite alike of remonstrances and entreaties.

It was with great difficulty they could gain the square, so dense was the barricade of ox carts loaded with furniture, and wagons thronged with negro children; while families in carriages and on horseback, and thousands of the multitude promiscuously huddled together, increased the difficulty of making way. Since he had heard the startling news of the death of Mrs. Fairfax, his mind was more than ever bent upon joining the proposed expedition; and had it not been for the interruption to the anticipated meeting with the Doctor, no one could have appeared upon the rostrum with greater alacrity.

The contumacious conduct of the Governor toward the respectful remonstrances and petitions of the citizens, and more especially his unwarranted and disrespectful treatment of himself, recurred to his mind in good time. He mounted the rude platform hastily erected in front of the state house, burning with indignation, and glowing with patriotism.² "He thanked the people for the unexpected and unmerited honour they had just conferred upon him. He accepted the office tendered to him with alacrity, and none the less so that yonder stubborn old man will not endorse it with his authority, and sanction our proceeding under the ordinary forms of law. What has produced this simultaneous explosion in the colony?"

² This is an abstract of the speech really delivered by Bacon.

What are the circumstances which can thus array all the wealth, intelligence and respectability of the people against the constituted authorities. Let your crippled commerce, your taxed, overburdened and deeply wronged citizens answer? The first has been embarrassed by acts of parliament, which originated here, the most severe, arbitrary and unconstitutional, while your citizens both gentle and hardy, have been enormously and indiscriminately taxed in order to redeem your soil from the immense and illegal grants to unworthy and sometimes non-resident favourites.

"There was a time when both Cavalier and yeoman dared to be free; when your assembly, boldly just to their constituents, scrupled not to contend with majesty itself in defence of our national and chartered rights. But melancholy is the contrast which Virginia at this time presents. The right of suffrage which was coeval with the existence of the colony, which had lived through the arbitrary reign of James, and with a short interruption through that of the first Charles, which was again revived during the commonwealth, and was considered too sacred to be touched even by the impure hands of the Protector, is now sacrilegiously stolen from you during a season of profound peace and security.

"The mercenary soldiers, sent from the mother country at an immense expense to each of you, fellow-citizens, where are they? Revelling upon the fat of the land at distant and unthreatened posts, while our fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters, are butchered in cold blood by the ruthless savage. Where is

now the noble and generous Fairfax, the favourite of the rich and the poor? Where his estimable and benevolent lady? Murdered under the silent mouths of the rusty cannon which surmount yonder palisade. Look at his sad and melancholy mansion, once the scene of generous hospitality to you all – behold its deserted halls and darkened windows. But this is only the nearest evidence before our eyes – within the last twenty-four hours hundreds of worthy citizens have shared the same fate.

"Shall these things be longer borne, fellow-citizens?"

"No! no! no!" burst from the multitude – "down with the Governor, and extermination to the Indians."

He continued. "Already I see a noble band of mounted youths, the sons of your pride and your hopes – flanked by a proud little army of hardier citizens; from these I would ask a pledge, that they never lay down their arms, till their grievances are redressed." —

"We swear – we swear," responded from all, and then, three cheers for General Bacon, made the welkin ring. At this juncture the trumpet, drum, and fife, were heard immediately behind the crowd, and a party of the royal guard, some fifty in number, halted upon the outskirts of the assemblage, while their officer undertook to read a proclamation from the Governor, ordering the mob, as he was pleased to style the meeting, to disperse under penalty of their lives and property. The *army of the people*, already getting under arms, immediately commenced an evolution by which the temporary commander of the mounted

force would have been thrown directly fronting the guard, and between them and the multitude. Bacon saw the intended movement, and instantly countermanded the orders, "Let the people," said he, "deal with this handful of soldiers; we will not weaken our force, and waste our energies by engaging in intestine broils, when our strength is so much called for by the enemies of our race upon the frontiers." The suggestion was immediately adopted; before the hireling band could bring their weapons to the charge, the multitude had closed in upon them, and disarmed them to a man. This accomplished, they were taken to the beach, in spite of the remonstrances of many of the more staid and sober of the Cavaliers and citizens, and there soundly ducked. Very unmilitary indeed was their appearance, as they were marshalled into battle array, all drooping and wet, and thus marched to the music of an ignominious tune to the front of the Governor's house.

The frantic passion of Sir William Berkley can be more easily imagined than described. He saw that he was left almost alone – that those citizens most remarkable for their loyalty had deserted him. However wilful and perverse, he saw the necessity of making temporary concessions, although at the same time more than ever bent upon summary vengeance against the most conspicuous leaders of the opposing party whenever chance or fortune should again place the real power of the colony in his hands. At present he felt that he was powerless – the very means which he had taken to thwart and provoke

the people now became the source of the bitterest regret to himself, namely – sending the mercenary soldiers of the crown to distant posts on fictitious emergencies. He resolved therefore to disguise his real feelings until the departure of the popular army, when he could recall his own regular troops, and thus take signal vengeance upon such of the agitators as should be left behind, and thence march immediately to the subjugation of the force commanded by Bacon. Scarcely had the presence of the dripping guard, as seen through his window, suggested these ideas, before an opportunity offered of putting in practice his temporary forbearance.

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