Cooper James Fenimore

# The Chainbearer: or, The Littlepage Manuscripts

# James Cooper

# The Chainbearer: or, The Littlepage Manuscripts

# Содержание

# Cooper James Fenimore
# The Chainbearer; Or, The Littlepage Manuscripts

## THE CHAINBEARER

## PREFACE

The plot has thickened in the few short months that have intervened since the appearance of the first portion of our Manuscripts, and bloodshed has come to deepen the stain left on the country by the wide-spread and bold assertion of false principles. This must long since have been foreseen; and it is perhaps a subject of just felicitation, that the violence which has occurred was limited to the loss of a single life, when the chances were, and still are, that it will extend to civil war. That portions of the community have behaved nobly under this sudden outbreak of a lawless and unprincipled combination to rob, is undeniable, and ought to be dwelt on with gratitude and an honest pride; that the sense of right of much the larger portion of the country has been deeply wounded, is equally true; that justice has been aroused, and is at this moment speaking in tones of authority

to the offenders, is beyond contradiction; but, while all this is admitted, and admitted not altogether without hope, yet are there grounds for fear, so reasonable and strong, that no writer who is faithful to the real interests of his country ought, for a single moment, to lose sight of them.

High authority, in one sense, or that of political power, has pronounced the tenure of a durable lease to be opposed to the spirit of the institutions! Yet these tenures existed when the institutions were formed, and one of the provisions of the institutions themselves guarantees the observance of the covenants under which the tenures exist. It would have been far wiser, and much nearer to the truth, had those who coveted their neighbors' goods been told that, in their attempts to subvert and destroy the tenures in question, they were opposing a solemn and fundamental provision of law, and in so much opposing the institutions. The capital error is becoming prevalent, which holds the pernicious doctrine that this is a government of men, instead of one of principles. Whenever this error shall so far come to a head as to get to be paramount in action, the well-disposed may sit down and mourn over, not only the liberties of their country, but over its justice and its morals, even should men be nominally so free as to do just what they please.

As the Littlepage Manuscripts advance, we find them becoming more and more suited to the times in which we live. There is an omission of one generation, however, owing to the early death of Mr. Malbone Littlepage, who left an only son to

succeed him. This son has felt it to be a duty to complete the series by an addition from his own pen. Without this addition, we should never obtain views of Satanstoe, Lilacsbush, Ravensnest, and Mooseridge, in their present aspect; while with it we may possibly obtain glimpses that will prove not only amusing but instructive.

There is one point on which, as editor of these Manuscripts, we desire to say a word. It is thought by a portion of our readers, that the first Mr. Littlepage who has written, Cornelius of that name, has manifested an undue asperity on the subject of the New England character. Our reply to this charge is as follows: In the first place, we do not pretend to be answerable for all the opinions of those whose writings are submitted to our supervision, any more than we should be answerable for all the contradictory characters, impulses, and opinions that might be exhibited in a representation of fictitious characters, purely of our own creation. That the Littlepages entertained New York notions, and, if the reader will, New York prejudices, may be true enough; but in pictures of this sort, even prejudices become facts that ought not to be altogether kept down. Then, New England has long since anticipated her revenge, glorifying herself and underrating her neighbors in a way that, in our opinion, fully justifies those who possess a little Dutch blood in expressing their sentiments on the subject. Those who give so freely should know how to take a little in return; and that more especially, when there is nothing very direct or personal in the hits they receive. For

ourselves, we have not a drop of Dutch or New England blood in our veins, and only appear as a bottle-holder to one of the parties in this set-to. If we have recorded what the Dutchman says of the Yankee, we have also recorded what the Yankee says, and that with no particular hesitation, of the Dutchman. We know that these feelings are by-gones; but our Manuscripts, thus far, have referred exclusively to the times in which they certainly existed, and that, too, in a force quite as great as they are here represented to be.

We go a little farther. In our judgment the false principles that are to be found in a large portion of the educated classes, on the subject of the relation between landlord and tenant, are to be traced to the provincial notions of those who have received their impressions from a state of society in which no such relations exist. The danger from the anti-rent doctrines is most to be apprehended from these false principles; the misguided and impotent beings who have taken the field in the literal sense, not being a fourth part as formidable to the right as those who have taken it in the moral. There is not a particle more of reason in the argument which says that there should be no farmers, in the strict meaning of the term, than there would be in that which said there should be no journeymen connected with the crafts; though it would not be easy to find a man to assert the latter doctrine. We dare say, if there did happen to exist a portion of the country in which the mechanics were all "bosses," it would strike those who dwelt in such a state of society, that it

would be singularly improper and anti-republican for any man to undertake journeywork.

On this subject we shall only add one word. The column of society must have its capital as well as its base. It is only perfect while each part is entire, and discharges its proper duty. In New York the great landholders long have, and do still, in a social sense, occupy the place of the capital. On the supposition that this capital is broken and hurled to the ground, of what material will be the capital that must be pushed into its place! We know of none half so likely to succeed, as the country extortioner and the country usurer! We would caution those who now raise the cry of feudality and aristocracy, to have a care of what they are about. In lieu of King Log, they may be devoured by King Stork.

# CHAPTER I

"The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim:
The iron frame, inured to bear
Each dire inclemency of air;
Nor less confirmed to undergo
Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe."

– *Rockeby.*

My father was Cornelius Littlepage, of Satanstoe, in the County of Westchester, and State of New York; and my mother was Anneke Mordaunt, of Lilacsbush, a place long known by that name, which still stands near Kingsbridge, but on the Island of Manhattan, and consequently in one of the wards of New York, though quite eleven miles from town. I shall suppose that *my* readers know the difference between the Island of Manhattan and Manhattan Island; though I *have* found *soi-disant* Manhattanese, of mature years, but of alien birth, who had to be taught it. Lilacsbush, I repeat therefore, was on the Island of Manhattan, eleven miles from town, though in the City of New York, and *not* on Manhattan Island.

Of my progenitors further back, I do not conceive it necessary to say much. They were partly of English, and partly of Low Dutch extraction, as is apt to be the case with those who come

of New York families of any standing in the colony. I retain tolerably distinct impressions of both of my grandfathers, and of one of my grandmothers; my mother's mother having died long before my own parents were married.

Of my maternal grandfather, I know very little, however, he having died while I was quite young, and before I had seen much of him. He paid the great debt of nature in England, whither he had gone on a visit to a relative, a Sir Something Bulstrode, who had been in the colonies himself, and who was a great favorite with Herman Mordaunt, as my mother's parent was universally called in New York. My father often said it was perhaps fortunate in one respect that his father-in-law died as he did, since he had no doubt he would have certainly taken sides with the crown in the quarrel that soon after occurred, in which case it is probable his estates, or those which were my mother's, and are now mine, would have shared the fate of those of the De Lanceys, of the Philipses, of some of the Van Cortlandts, of the Floyds, of the Joneses, and of various others of the heavy families, who remained loyal, as it was called; meaning loyalty to a prince, and not loyalty to the land of their nativity. It is hard to say which were right, in such a quarrel, if we look at the opinions and prejudices of the times, though the Littlepages to a man, which means only my father and grandfather, and self, took sides with the country. In the way of self-interest, it ought to be remarked, however, that the wealthy American who opposed the crown showed much the most disinterestedness, inasmuch as

the chances of being subdued were for a long time very serious, while the certainty of confiscation, not to say of being hanged, was sufficiently well established, in the event of failure. But my paternal grandfather was what was called a whig, of the high caste. He was made a brigadier in the militia, in 1776, and was actively employed in the great campaign of the succeeding year – that in which Burgoyne was captured, as indeed was my father, who held the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the New York line. There was also a Major Dirck Van Volkenburgh, or Follock, as he was usually called, in the same regiment with my father, who was a sworn friend. This Major Follock was an old bachelor, and he lived quite as much in my father's house as he did in his own; his proper residence being across the river, in Rockland. My mother had a friend, as well as my father, in the person of Miss Mary Wallace; a single lady, well turned of thirty at the commencement of the revolution. Miss Wallace was quite at ease in her circumstances, but she lived altogether at Lilacsbush, never having any other home, unless it might be at our house in town.

We were very proud of the brigadier, both on account of his rank and on account of his services. He actually commanded in one expedition against the Indians during the revolution, a service in which he had some experience, having been out on it, on various occasions, previously to the great struggle for independence. It was in one of these early expeditions of the latter war that he first distinguished himself, being then under the orders of a Colonel Brom Follock, who was the father of

Major Dirck of the same name, and who was almost as great a friend of my grandfather as the son was of my own parent. This Colonel Brom loved a carouse, and I have heard it said that, getting among the High Dutch on the Mohawk, he kept it up for a week, with little or no intermission, under circumstances that involved much military negligence. The result was, that a party of Canada Indians made an inroad on his command, and the old colonel, who was as bold as a lion, and as drunk as a lord, though why lords are supposed to be particularly inclined to drink I never could tell, was both shot down and scalped early one morning as he was returning from an adjacent tavern to his quarters in the "garrison," where he was stationed. My grandfather nobly revenged his death, scattered to the four winds the invading party, and recovered the mutilated body of his friend, though the scalp was irretrievably lost.

General Littlepage did not survive the war, though it was not his good fortune to die on the field, thus identifying his name with the history of his country. It happens in all wars, and most especially did it often occur in our own great national struggle, that more soldiers lay down their lives in the hospitals than on the field of battle, though the shedding of blood seems an indispensable requisite to glory of this nature; an ungrateful posterity taking little heed of the thousands who pass into another state of being, the victims of exposure and camp diseases, to sound the praises of the hundreds who are slain amid the din of battle. Yet, it may be questioned if it do not require

more true courage to face death, when he approaches in the invisible form of disease, than to meet him when openly arrayed under the armed hand. My grandfather's conduct in remaining in camp, among hundreds of those who had the small-pox, the loathsome malady of which he died, was occasionally alluded to, it is true, but never in the manner the death of an officer of his rank would have been mentioned, had he fallen in battle. I could see that Major Follock had an honorable pride in the fate of *his* father, who was slain and scalped by the enemy in returning from a drunken carouse, while my worthy parent ever referred to the death of the brigadier as an event to be deplored, rather than exulted in. For my own part, I think my grandfather's end was much the most creditable of the two; but, as such, it will never be viewed by the historian or the country. As for historians, it requires a man to be singularly honest to write against a prejudice; and it is so much easier to celebrate a deed as it is imagined than as it actually occurred, that I question if we know the truth of a tenth part of the exploits about which we vapor, and in which we fancy we glory. Well! we are taught to believe that the time will come when all things are to be seen in their true colors, and when men and deeds will be known as they actually were, rather than as they have been recorded in the pages of history.

I was too young myself to take much part in the war of the revolution, though accident made me an eye-witness of some of its most important events, and that at the tender age of fifteen.

At twelve – the American intellect ever was and continues to be singularly precocious – I was sent to Nassau Hall, Princeton, to be educated, and I remained there until I finally got a degree, though it was not without several long and rude interruptions of my studies. Although so early sent to college, I did not actually graduate until I was nineteen, the troubled times requiring nearly twice as long a servitude to make a Bachelor of Arts of me as would have been necessary in the more halcyon days of peace. Thus I made a fragment of a campaign when only a sophomore, and another the first year I was junior. I say the *first* year, because I was obliged to pass two years in each of the two higher classes of the institution, in order to make up for lost time. A youth cannot very well be campaigning and studying Euclid in the academic bowers, at the same moment. Then I was so young, that a year, more or less, was of no great moment.

My principal service in the war of the revolution was in 1777, or in the campaign in which Burgoyne was met and captured. That important service was performed by a force that was composed partly of regular troops, and partly of militia. My grandfather commanded a brigade of the last, or what was called a brigade, some six hundred men at most; while my father led a regular battalion of one hundred and sixty troops of the New York line into the German intrenchments, the memorable and bloody day the last were stormed. How many he brought out I never heard him say. The way in which I happened to be present in these important scenes is soon told.

Lilacsbush being on the Island of Manhattan (not Manhattan Island, be it always remembered), and our family being whig, we were driven from both our town and country houses the moment Sir William Howe took possession of New York. At first my mother was content with merely going to Satanstoe, which was only a short distance from the enemy's lines; but the political character of the Littlepages being too well established to render this a safe residence, my grandmother and mother, always accompanied by Miss Wallace, went up above the Highlands, where they established themselves in the village of Fishkill for the remainder of the war, on a farm that belonged to Miss Wallace in fee. Here it was thought they were safe, being seventy miles from the capital, and quite within the American lines. As this removal took place at the close of the year 1776, and after independence had been declared, it was understood that our return to our proper homes at all, depended on the result of the war. At that time I was a sophomore, and at home in the long vacation. It was in this visit that I made my fragment of a campaign, accompanying my father through all the closing movements of his regiment, while Washington and Howe were manœuvring in Westchester. My father's battalion happening to be posted in such a manner as to be in the centre of the battle at White Plains, I had an opportunity of seeing some pretty serious service on that occasion. Nor did I quit the army and return to my studies, until after the brilliant affairs at Trenton and Princeton, in both of which our regiment participated.

This was a pretty early commencement with the things of active life for a boy of fourteen. But in that war, lads of my age often carried muskets, for the colonies covered a great extent of country, and had but few people. They who read of the war of the American revolution, and view its campaigns and battles as they would regard the conflicts of older and more advanced nations, can form no just notion of the disadvantages with which our people had to contend, or the great superiority of the enemy in all the usual elements of military force. Without experienced officers, with but few and indifferent arms, often in want of ammunition, the rural and otherwise peaceful population of a thinly peopled country were brought in conflict with the chosen warriors of Europe; and this, too, with little or none of that great sinew of war, money, to sustain them. Nevertheless the Americans, unaided by any foreign skill or succor, were about as often successful as the reverse. Bunker Hill, Bennington, Saratoga, Bhemis's Heights, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, were all purely American battles; to say nothing of divers others that occurred farther south: and though insignificant as to numbers, compared with the conflicts of these later times, each is worthy of a place in history, and one or two are almost without parallels; as is seen when Bunker Hill be named. It sounds very well in a dispatch, to swell out the list of an enemy's ranks; but admitting the number itself not to be overrated, as so often occurred, of what avail are men without arms and ammunition, and frequently without any other military organization than a

muster-roll!

I have said I made nearly the whole of the campaign in which Burgoyne was taken. It happened in this wise. The service of the previous year had a good deal indisposed me to study, and when again at home in the autumn vacation, my dear mother sent me with clothing and supplies to my father, who was with the army at the north. I reached the head-quarters of General Gates a week before the affair of Bhemis's Heights, and was with my father until the capitulation was completed. Owing to these circumstances, though still a boy in years, I was an eye-witness, and in some measure an actor in two or three of the most important events in the whole war. Being well grown for my years, and of a somewhat manly appearance, considering how young I really was, I passed very well as a volunteer, being, I have reason to think, somewhat of a favorite in the regiment. In the last battle, I had the honor to act as a sort of *aide-de-camp* to my grandfather, who sent me with orders and messages two or three times into the midst of the fire. In this manner I made myself a little known, and all so much the more from the circumstance of my being in fact nothing but a college lad, away from his *alma mater* during vacation.

It was but natural that a boy thus situated should attract some little attention, and I *was* noticed by officers, who, under other circumstances, would hardly have felt it necessary to go out of their way to speak to me. The Littlepages had stood well, I have reason to think, in the colony, and their position in the

new state was not likely to be at all lowered by the part they were now playing in the revolution. I am far from certain that General Littlepage was considered a corner-post in the Temple of Freedom that the army was endeavoring to rear, but he was quite respectable as a militia officer, while my father was very generally admitted to be one of the best lieutenants-colonel in the whole army.

I well remember to have been much struck with a captain in my father's regiment, who certainly was a character, in his way. His origin was Dutch, as was the case with a fair proportion of the officers, and he bore the name of Andries Coejemans, though he was universally known by the *sobriquet* of the "Chainbearer." It was fortunate for him it was so, else would the Yankees in the camp, who seem to have a mania to pronounce every word as it is spelled, and having succeeded in this, to change the spelling of the whole language to accommodate it to certain sounds of their own inventing, would have given him a most unpronounceable appellation. Heaven only knows what *they* would have called Captain Coejemans, but for this lucky nickname; but it may be as well to let the uninitiated understand at once, that in New York parlance, Coejemans is called Queemans. The Chainbearer was of a respectable Dutch family, one that has even given its queer-looking name to a place of some little note on the Hudson; but, as was very apt to be the case with the *cadets* of such houses, in the good old time of the colony, his education was no great matter. His means had once been respectable, but, as

he always maintained, he was cheated out of his substance by a Yankee before he was three-and-twenty, and he had recourse to surveying for a living from that time. But Andries had no head for mathematics, and after making one or two notable blunders in the way of his new profession, he quietly sunk to the station of a chainbearer, in which capacity he was known to all the leading men of his craft in the colony. It is said that every man is suited to some pursuit or other, in which he might acquire credit, would he only enter on it and persevere. Thus it proved to be with Andries Coejemans. As a chainbearer he had an unrivalled reputation. Humble as was the occupation, it admitted of excellence in various particulars, as well as another. In the first place, it required honesty, a quality in which this class of men can fail, as well as all the rest of mankind. Neither colony nor patentee, landlord nor tenant, buyer nor seller, need be uneasy about being fairly dealt by so long as Andries Coejemans held the forward end of the chain; a duty on which he was invariably placed by one party or the other. Then, a practical eye was a great aid to positive measurement; and while Andries never swerved to the right or to the left of his course, having acquired a sort of instinct in his calling, much time and labor were saved. In addition to these advantages, the "Chainbearer" had acquired great skill in all the subordinate matters of his calling. He was a capital woodman, generally; had become a good hunter, and had acquired most of the habits that pursuits like those in which he was engaged for so many years previously to entering the army,

would be likely to give a man. In the course of time he took patents to survey, employing men with heads better than his own to act as principals, while he still carried the chain.

At the commencement of the revolution, Andries, like most of those who sympathized with the colonies, took up arms. When the regiment of which my father was lieutenant-colonel was raised, they who could bring to its colors so many men received commissions of a rank proportioned to their services in this respect. Andries had presented himself early with a considerable squad of chainbearers, hunters, trappers, runners, guides, etc., numbering in the whole something like five-and-twenty hardy, resolute sharpshooters. Their leader was made a lieutenant in consequence, and being the oldest of his rank in the corps, he was shortly after promoted to a captaincy, the station he was in when I made his acquaintance, and above which he never rose.

Revolutions, more especially such as are of a popular character, are not remarkable for bringing forward those who are highly educated, or otherwise fitted for their new stations, unless it may be on the score of zeal. It is true, service generally classes men, bringing out their qualities, and necessity soon compels the preferment of those who are the best qualified. Our own great national struggle, however, probably did less of this than any similar event of modern times, a respectable mediocrity having accordingly obtained an elevation that, as a rule, it was enabled to keep to the close of the war. It is a singular fact that not a solitary instance is to be found in our military annals of a young

soldier's rising to high command, by the force of his talents, in all that struggle. This may have been, and in a measure probably *was* owing to the opinions of the people, and to the circumstance that the service itself was one that demanded greater prudence and circumspection than qualities of a more dazzling nature; or the qualifications of age and experience, rather than those of youth and enterprise. It is probable Andries Coejemans, on the score of original station, was rather above than below the level of the social positions of a majority of the subalterns of the different lines of the more northern colonies, when he first joined the army. It is true, his education was not equal to his birth; for, in that day, except in isolated instances and particular families, the Dutch of New York, even in cases in which money was not wanting, were any thing but scholars. In this particular, our neighbors the Yankees had greatly the advantage of us. They sent everybody to school, and, though their educations were principally those of smatterers, it is an advantage to be even a smatterer among the very ignorant. Andries had been no student either, and one may easily imagine what indifferent cultivation will effect on a naturally thin soil. He *could* read and write, it is true, but it was the ciphering under which he broke down, as a surveyor. I have often heard him say, that "if land could be measured without figures, he would turn his back on no man in the calling in all America, unless it might be 'His Excellency,' who, he made no doubt, was not only the best, but the honestest surveyor mankind had ever enjoyed."

The circumstance that Washington had practised the art of a surveyor for a short time in his early youth, was a source of great exultation with Andries Coejemans. He felt that it was an honor to be even a subordinate in a pursuit, in which such a man was a principal. I remember, that long after we were at Saratoga together, Captain Coejemans, while we were before Yorktown, pointed to the commander-in-chief one day, as the latter rode past our encampment, and cried out with emphasis – "T'ere, Mortaunt, my poy – t'ere goes His Excellency! – It would be t'e happiest tay of my life, coult I only carry chain while he survey't a pit of a farm, in this neighborhoot."

Andries was more or less Dutch in his dialect, as he was more or less interested. In general, he spoke English pretty well – colony English I mean, not that of the schools; though he had not a single Yankeeism in his vocabulary. On this last point he prided himself greatly, feeling an honest pride, if he did occasionally use vulgarisms, a vicious pronounciation, or make a mistake in the meaning of a word, a sin he was a little apt to commit; and that his faults were all honest New York mistakes and no "New England gipperish." In the course of the various visits I paid to the camp, Andries and myself became quite intimate, his peculiarities seizing my fancy; and doubtless, my obvious admiration awakening his gratitude. In the course of our many conversations, he gave me his whole history, commencing with the emigration of the Coejemans from Holland, and ending with our actual situation, in the camp at Saratoga. Andries had been

often engaged, and, before the war terminated, I could boast of having been at his side in no less than six affairs myself, viz.. White Plains, Trenton, Princeton, Bhemis's Heights, Monmouth, and Brandywine; for I had stolen away from college to be present at the last affair. The circumstance that *our* regiment was both with Washington and Gates, was owing to the noble qualities of the former, who sent off some of his best troops to reinforce his rival, as things gathered to a head at the North. Then I was present throughout, at the siege of Yorktown. But it is not my intention to enlarge on my own military services.

While at Saratoga, I was much struck with the air, position and deportment of a gentleman who appeared to command the respect, and to obtain the ears of all the leaders in the American camp, while he held no apparent official station. He wore no uniform, though he was addressed by the title of general, and had much more of the character of a real soldier than Gates who commanded. He must have been between forty and fifty at that time, and in the full enjoyment of the vigor of his mind and body. This was Philip Schuyler, so justly celebrated in our annals for his wisdom, patriotism, integrity, and public services. His connection with the great northern campaign is too well known to require any explanations here. Its success, perhaps, was more owing to *his* advice and preparations than to the influence of any one other mind, and he is beginning already to take a place in history, in connection with these great events, that has a singular resemblance to that he occupied

during their actual occurrence: in other words, he is to be seen in the background of the great national picture, unobtrusive and modest, but directing and controlling all, by the power of his intellect, and the influence of his experience and character. Gates[1] was but a secondary personage, in the real events of that memorable period. Schuyler was the presiding spirit, though forced by popular prejudice to retire from the apparent command of the army. Our written accounts ascribe the difficulty that worked this injustice to Schuyler, to a prejudice which existed among the eastern militia, and which is supposed to have had its origin in the disasters of St. Clair, or the reverses which attended the earlier movements of the campaign. My father, who had known General Schuyler in the war of '56, when he acted as Bradstreet's right-hand man, attributed the feeling to a different cause. According to his notion of the alienation, it was owing to the difference in habits and opinions which existed between Schuyler, as a New York gentleman, and the yeomen of New England, who came out in 1777, imbued with all the distinctive notions of their very peculiar state of society. There may have been prejudices on both sides, but it is easy to see which party exhibited most magnanimity and self-sacrifice. Possibly, the last was inseparable from the preponderance of numbers, it not being an easy thing to persuade masses of men that they *can*

---

[1] It may not be amiss to remark, in passing, that Horace Walpole, in one of his recently published letters, speaks of a Horatio Gates as his godson. Walpole was born in 1718, and Gates in 1728.

be wrong, and a single individual right. This is the great error of democracy, which fancies truth is to be proved by counting noses; while aristocracy commits the antagonist blunder of believing that excellence is inherited from male to male, and that too in the order of primogeniture! It is not easy to say where one is to look for truth in this life.

As for General Schuyler, I have thought my father was right in ascribing his unpopularity solely to the prejudices of provinces. The Muse of History is the most ambitious of the whole sisterhood, and never thinks she has done her duty unless all she says and records is said and recorded with an air of profound philosophy; whereas, more than half of the greatest events which affect human interest, are to be referred to causes that have little connection with our boasted intelligence, in any shape. Men feel far more than they reason, and a little feeling is very apt to upset a great deal of philosophy.

It has been said that I passed six years at Princeton; nominally, if not in fact; and that I graduated at nineteen. This happened the year Cornwallis surrendered, and I actually served at the siege as the youngest ensign in my father's battalion. I had also the happiness, for such it was to me, to be attached to the company of Captain Coejeman's, a circumstance which clinched the friendship I had formed for that singular old man. I say old, for by this time Andries was every hour of sixty-seven, though as hale, and hearty, and active, as any officer in the corps. As for hardships, forty years of training, most of which had been

passed in the woods, placed him quite at our head, in the way of endurance.

I loved my predecessors, grandfather and grandmother included, not only as a matter of course, but with sincere filial attachment; and I loved Miss Mary Wallace, or aunt Mary, as I had been taught to call her, quite as much on account of her quiet, gentle, affectionate manner, as from habit; and I loved Major Dirck Follock as a sort of hereditary friend, as a distant relative, and a good and careful guardian of my own youth and inexperience on a thousand occasions; and I loved my father's negro man, Jaap, as we all love faithful slaves, however unnurtured they may be; but Andries was the man whom I loved without knowing why. He was illiterate almost to greatness, having the drollest notions imaginable of this earth and all it contained; was anything but refined in deportment, though hearty and frank; had prejudices so crammed into his moral system that there did not seem to be room for anything else; and was ever so little addicted, moreover, to that species of Dutch jollification, which had cost old Colonel Van Valkenburgh his life, and a love for which was a good deal spread throughout the colony. Nevertheless, I really loved this man, and when we were all disbanded at the peace, or in 1783, by which time I had myself risen to the rank of captain, I actually parted from old Andries with tears in my eyes. My grandfather, General Littlepage, was then dead, but government giving to most of us a step, by means of brevet rank, at the final breaking up of the army, my father,

who had been the full colonel of the regiment for the last year, bore the title of brigadier for the remainder of his days. It was pretty much all he got for seven years of dangers and arduous services. But the country was poor, and we had fought more for principles than for the hope of rewards. It must be admitted that America ought to be full of philosophy, inasmuch as so much of her system of rewards and even of punishments, is purely theoretical, and addressed to the imagination, or to the qualities of the mind. Thus it is that we contend with all our enemies on very unequal grounds. The Englishman has his knighthood, his baronetcies, his peerages, his orders, his higher ranks in the professions, his *batons*, and all the other venial inducements of our corrupt nature to make him fight, while the American is goaded on to glory by the abstract considerations of virtue and patriotism. After all, we flog quite as often as we are flogged, which is the main interest affected. While on this subject I will remark that Andries Coejemans never assumed the empty title of major, which was so graciously bestowed on him by the Congress of 1783, but left the army a captain in name, without half-pay or anything but his military lot, to find a niece whom he was bringing up, and to pursue his old business of a "chainbearer."

# CHAPTER II

"A trusty villain, sir; that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humors with his many jests."

*– Dromio of Syracuse.*

It will be seen that, while I got a degree, and what is called an education, the latter was obtained by studies of a very desultory character. There is no question that learning of all sorts fell off sadly among us during the revolution and the twenty years that succeeded it. While colonies, we possessed many excellent instructors who came from Europe; but the supply ceased, in a great measure, as soon as the troubles commenced; nor was it immediately renewed at the peace. I think it will be admitted that the gentlemen of the country began to be less well educated about the time I was sent to college, than had been the case for the previous half-century, and that the defect has not yet been repaired. What the country may do in the first half of the nineteenth century remains to be seen.[2]

---

[2] The reader will recollect that Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage must have written his account of himself and his times about the close of the last, or the beginning of this century. Since that time, education has certainly advanced among us; sophomores, pursuing branches of learning to-day that were sealed from seniors a few years since. Learning, however, advances in this country on the great American principle of

My connection with the army aided materially in weaning me from home, though few youths had as many temptations to return to the paternal roof as myself. There were my beloved mother and my grandmother, in the first place, both of whom doted on me as on an only son. Then aunt Mary almost equally shared in my affections. But I had two sisters, one of whom was older, and the other younger than myself. The eldest, who was called Anneke, after our dear mother, was even six years my senior, and was married early in the war to a gentleman of the name of Kettletas. Mr. Kettletas was a person of very good estate, and made my sister perfectly happy. They had several children, and resided in Dutchess, which was an additional reason for my mother's choosing that county for her temporary residence. I regarded Anneke, or Mrs. Kettletas, much as all youths regard an elder sister, who is affectionate, feminine and respectable; but little Katrinke, or Kate, was my pet. She again, was four years younger than myself; and as I was just two-and-twenty when the army was disbanded, she of course was only eighteen. This dear sister was a little, jumping, laughing, never-quiet, merry thing, when I had taken my leave of her, in 1781, to join the regiment as an ensign, as handsome and sweet as a rose-bud, and quite as full of promise. I remember that old Andries and I used to pass much of our time in camp in conversing about our several pets; he of his niece, and I of my younger sister. Of course, I never intended to marry, but Kate and I were to live together; she as

---

imparting a little to a great many, instead of teaching a good deal to a few. – Editor.

my housekeeper and companion, and I as her elder brother and protector. The one great good of life with us all was peace, with independence; which obtained, no one, in our regiment at least, was so little of a patriot as to doubt of the future. It was laughable to see with how much gusto and simplicity the old Chainbearer entered into all these boyish schemes. His niece was an orphan, it would seem, the only child of an only but a half-sister, and was absolutely dependent on him for the bread she put into her mouth. It is true that this niece fared somewhat better than such a support would seem to promise, having been much cared for by a female friend of her mother's, who, being reduced herself, kept a school, and had thus bestowed on her ward a far better education than she could ever have got under her uncle's supervision, had the last possessed the riches of the Van Rensselaers, or of the Van Cortlandts. As has been substantially stated, old Andries's forte did not lie in education, and they who do not enjoy the blessings of such a character, seldom duly appreciate their advantages. It is with the acquisitions of the mind, as with those of mere deportment and tastes; we are apt to undervalue them all, until made familiarly acquainted with their power to elevate and to enlarge. But the niece of Andries had been particularly fortunate in falling into the hands she had; Mrs. Stratton having the means and the inclination to do all for her, in the way of instruction, that was then done for any young woman in New York, as long as she lived. The death of this kind friend occurring, however, in 1783, Andries was obliged to resume the care of his niece, who

was now thrown entirely on himself for support. It is true, the girl wished to do something for herself, but this neither the pride nor the affection of the old chainbearer would listen to.

"What *can* the gal do?" Andries said to me significantly, one day that he was recounting all these particulars. "She can't carry chain, though I do believe, Morty, the chilt has head enough, and figures enough to survey! It would do your heart good to read the account of her l'arnin' t'at t'e olt woman used to send me; though she wrote so excellent a hant herself, t'at it commonly took me a week to read one of her letters; that is, from 'Respected Friend' to 'Humble Sarvent,' as you know them 'ere t'ings go."

"Excellent hand! Why, I should think, Andries, the better the hand, the easier one could read a letter."

"All a mistake. When a man writes a scrawl himself, it's nat'ral he shoult read scrawls easiest, in his own case. Now, Mrs. Stratton was home-taught, and would be likely to get into ways t'at a plain man might find difficult to get along wit'."

"Do you think, then, of making a surveyor of your niece?" I asked, a little pointedly.

"Why, she is hartly strong enough to travel t'rough the woots, and, the callin' is not suitaple to her sex, t'ough I woult risk her against t'e oldest calculator in t'e province."

"We call New York a State, now, Captain Andries, you will recollect."

"Ay, t'at's true, and I peg the State's pardon. Well, t'ere'll be scrambling enough for t'e land, as soon as the war is fairly over,

and chainbearing will be a sarviceable callin' once more. Do you know, Morty, they talk of gifin' all of our line a quantity of land, privates and officers, which will make me a landholter again, the very character in which I started in life. You will inherit acres enough, and may not care so much apout owning a few huntret, more or less, but I own the idee is agreeaple enough to me."

"Do you propose to commence anew as a husbandman?"

"Not I; the pusiness never agreet wit' me, nor I wit' it. Put a man may survey his own lot, I suppose, and no offence to greater scholars. If I get t'e grant t'ey speak of, I shall set to work and run it out on my own account, and t'en we shall see who understants figures, and who don't! If other people won't trust me, it is no reason I shoult not trust myself."

I knew that his having broken down in the more intellectual part of his calling was a sore point with old Andries, and I avoided dwelling on this part of the subject. In order to divert his mind to other objects, indeed, I began to question him a little more closely than I had ever done before, on the subject of his niece, in consequence of which expedient I now learned many things that were new to me.

The name of the chainbearer's niece was Duss Malbone, or so he always pronounced it. In the end I discovered that Duss was a sort of Dutch diminutive for Ursula. Ursula Malbone had none of the Coejemans blood in her, notwithstanding she was Andries's sister's daughter. It seemed that old Mrs. Coejemans was twice married, her second husband being the father of Duss's

mother. Bob Malbone, as the chainbearer always called the girl's father, was an eastern man of very good family, but was a reckless spendthrift, who married Duss the senior, as well as I could learn, for her property; all of which, as well as that he had inherited himself, was cleverly gotten rid of within the first ten years of their union, and a year or two after the girl was born. Both father and mother died within a few months of each other, and in a very happy moment as regards worldly means, leaving poor little Duss with no one to care for her but her half-uncle, who was then living in the forest in his regular pursuits, and the Mrs. Stratton I have mentioned. There was a half-brother, Bob Malbone having married twice, but he was in the army, and had some near female relation to support out of his pay. Between the chainbearer and Mrs. Stratton, with an occasional offering from the brother, the means of clothing, nourishing and educating the young woman had been found until she reached her eighteenth year, when the death of her female protector threw her nearly altogether on the care of her uncle. The brother now did his share, Andries admitted; but it was not much that he could do. A captain himself, his scanty pay barely sufficed to meet his own wants.

I could easily see that old Andries loved Duss better than anything else or any other person. When he was a little mellow, and that was usually the extent of his debaucheries, he would prate about her to me until the tears came into his eyes, and once he actually proposed that I should marry her.

"You woult just suit each other," the old man added, in a very

quaint, but earnest manner, on that memorable occasion; "and as for property, I know you care little for money, and will have enough for half-a-tozen. I swear to you, Captain Littlepage" – for this dialogue took place only a few months before we were disbanded, and after I had obtained a company – "I swear to you, Captain Littlepage, t'e girl is laughing from morning till night, and would make one of the merriest companions for an olt soldier that ever promiset to 'honor and obey.' Try her once, lad, and see if I teceive you."

"That may do well enough, friend Andries, for an *old* soldier, whereas you will remember I am but a boy in years – "

"Ay, in years; but olt as a soldier, Morty – olt as White Plains, or '76; as I know from hafin seen you unter fire."

"Well, be it so; but it is the man, and not the soldier, who is to do the marrying, and I am still a very young man."

"You might do worse, take my word for it, Mortaunt, my dear poy; for Duss is fun itself, and I have often spoken of you to her in a way t'at will make the courtship as easy as carrying a chain on t'e Jarmen Flats."

I assured my friend Andries that I did not think of a wife yet, and that my taste ran for a sentimental and melancholy young woman, rather than for a laughing girl. The old chainbearer took this repulse good-humoredly, though he renewed the attack at least a dozen times before the regiment was disbanded, and we finally separated. I say finally separated, though it was in reference to our companionship as soldiers, rather than as to our

future lives; for I had determined to give Andries employment myself, should nothing better offer in his behalf.

Nor was I altogether without the means of thus serving a friend, when the inclination existed. My grandfather, Herman Mordaunt, had left me, to come into possession at the age of twenty-one, a considerable estate in what is now Washington County, a portion of our territory that lies northeast from Albany, and at no great distance from the Hampshire Grants. This property, of many thousands of acres in extent, had been partially settled under leases by himself, previously to my birth, and those leases having mostly expired, the tenants were remaining at will, waiting for more quiet times to renew their engagements. As yet Ravensnest, for so the estate was called, had given the family little besides expense and trouble; but the land being good, and the improvements considerable, it was time to look for some return for all our outlays. This estate was now mine in fee, my father having formally relinquished its possession in my favor the day I attained my majority. Adjacent to this estate lay that of Mooseridge, which was the joint property of my father and of his friend Major – or as he was styled in virtue of the brevet rank granted at the peace —*Colonel* Follock. Mooseridge had been originally patented by my grandfather, the first General Littlepage, and *old* Colonel Follock, he who had been slain and scalped early in the war; but on the descent of his moiety of the tenantry in common to Dirck Follock, my grandfather conveyed his interest to his own son, who ere long must become

its owner, agreeably to the laws of nature. This property had once been surveyed into large lots, but owing to some adverse circumstances, and the approach of the troubles, it had never been settled or surveyed into farms. All that its owners ever got for it, therefore, was the privilege of paying the crown its quit-rents; taxes, or reserved payments, of no great amount, it is true, though far more than the estate had ever yet returned.

While on the subject of lands and tenements, I may as well finish my opening explanations. My paternal grandfather was by no means as rich as my father, though the senior, and of so much higher military rank. His property, or neck, of Satanstoe, nevertheless, was quite valuable; more for the quality of the land and its position than for its extent. In addition to this, he had a few thousand pounds at interest; stocks, banks, and moneyed corporations of all kinds being then nearly unknown among us. His means were sufficient for his wants, however, and it was a joyful day when he found himself enabled to take possession of his own house again, in consequence of Sir Guy Carleton's calling in all of his detachments from Westchester. The Morrises, distinguished whigs as they were, did not get back to Morrisania until after the evacuation, which took place November 25, 1783; nor did my father return to Lilacsbush until after that important event. The very year my grandfather saw Satanstoe, he took the small-pox in camp and died.

To own the truth, the peace found us all very poor, as was the case with almost everybody in the country but a few

contractors. It was not the contractors for the American army that were rich; they fared worse than most people; but the few who furnished supplies to the French *did* get silver in return for their advances. As for the army, it was disbanded without any reward but promises, and payment in a currency that depreciated so rapidly that men were glad to spend recklessly their hard-earned stock, lest it should become perfectly valueless in their hands. I have heard much in later years of the celebrated Newburgh letters, and of the want of patriotism that could lead to their having been written. It may not have been wise, considering the absolute want of the country, to have contemplated the alternative toward which those letters certainly cast an oblique glance, but there was nothing in either their execution or their drift which was not perfectly natural for the circumstances. It was quite right for Washington to act as he did in that crisis, though it is highly probable that even Washington would have felt and acted differently had he nothing but the keen sense of his neglected services, poverty, and forgetfulness before him in the perspective. As for the young officer who actually wrote the letters, it is probable that justice will never be done to any part of his conduct, but that which is connected with the elegance of his diction. It is very well for those who do not suffer to prate about patriotism; but a country is bound to be just, before it can lay a high moral claim to this exclusive devotedness to the interests of the majority. Fine words cost but little, and I acknowledge no great respect for those who manifest their integrity principally in

phrases. This is said not in the way of personal apology, for our regiment did not happen to be at Newburgh at the disbandment; if it had, I think my father's influence would have kept us from joining the malcontents; but at the same time, I fancy his and my own patriotism would have been much strengthened by the knowledge that there were such places as Satanstoe, Lilacsbush, Mooseridge, and Ravensnest. To return to the account of our property.

My grandfather Mordaunt, notwithstanding his handsome bequests to me, left the bulk of his estate to my mother. This would have made the rest of the family rich, had it not been for the dilapidations produced by the war. But the houses and stores in town were without tenants who paid, having been mainly occupied by the enemy; and interest on bonds was hard to collect from those who lived within the British lines.

In a word, it is not easy to impress on the mind of one who witnesses the present state of the country, its actual condition in that day. As an incident that occurred to myself, after I had regularly joined the army for duty, will afford a lively picture of the state of things, I will relate it, and this the more willingly, as it will be the means of introducing to the reader an old friend of the family, and one who was intimately associated with divers events of my own life. I have spoken of Jaaf, a slave of my father's, and one of about his own time of life. At the time to which I allude, Jaaf was a middle-aged, gray-headed negro, with most of the faults, and with all the peculiar virtues

of the beings of his condition and race. So much reliance had my mother, in particular, on his fidelity, that she insisted on his accompanying her husband to the wars, an order that the black most willingly obeyed; not only because he loved adventure, but because he especially hated an Indian, and my father's earliest service was against that portion of our foes. Although Jaaf acted as a body-servant, he carried a musket, and even drilled with the men. Luckily, the Littlepage livery was blue turned up with red, and of a very modest character; a circumstance that almost put Jaaf in uniform, the fellow obstinately refusing to wear the colors of any power but that of the family to which he regularly belonged. In this manner, Jaaf had got to be a queer mixture of the servant and the soldier, sometimes acting in the one capacity, and sometimes in the other, having at the same time not a little of the husbandman about him; for our slaves did all sorts of work.

My mother had made it a point that Jaaf should accompany me on all occasions when I was sent to any distance from my father. She naturally enough supposed I had the most need of the care of a faithful attendant, and the black had consequently got to be about half transferred to me. He evidently liked this change, both because it was always accompanied by change of scene and the chances for new adventures, and because it gave him an opportunity of relating many of the events of his youth; events that had got to be worn threadbare, as narratives, with his "ole masser," but which were still fresh with his "young."

On the occasion to which there is allusion, Jaaf and I were

returning to camp, from an excursion of some length, on which I had been sent by the general of division. This was about the time the continental money made its final fall to nothing, or next to nothing, it having long stood at about a hundred dollars for one. I had provided myself with a little silver, and very precious it was, and some thirty or forty thousand dollars of "continental," to defray my travelling expenses; but my silver was expended, and the paper reduced to two or three thousand dollars, when it would require the whole stock of the latter to pay for Jaaf's and my own dinner; nor were the inn-keepers very willing to give their time and food for it at any price. This vacuum in my purse took place when I had still two long days' ride before me, and in a part of the country where I had no acquaintances whatever. Supper and rest were needed for ourselves, and provender and stabling for our horses. Everything of the sort was cheap enough, to be sure, but absolute want of means rendered the smallest charge impracticable to persons in our situation. As for appealing to the patriotism of those who lived by the wayside, it was too late in the war; patriotism being a very evanescent quality of the human heart, and particularly addicted to sneaking, like compassion, behind some convenient cover, when it is to be maintained at any pecuniary cost. It will do for a capital, in a revolution, or a war for the first six months, perhaps; but gets to be as worthless as continental money itself, by the end of that period. One militia draft has exhausted the patriotism of thousands of as disinterested heroes as ever shouldered muskets.

"Jaap," I asked of my companion, as we drew near to the hamlet where I intended to pass the night, and the comforts of a warm supper on a sharp frosty evening, began to haunt my imagination – "Jaap, how much money may you have about you?"[3]

"I, Masser Mordaunt! – Golly! but dat a berry droll question, sah!"

"I ask, because my own stock is reduced to just one York shilling, which goes by the name of only a ninepence in this part of the world."

"Dat berry little, to tell 'e truit', sah, for two gentleum, and two large, hungry hosses. Berry little, indeed, sah! I wish he war' more."

"Yet, I have not a copper more. I gave one thousand two hundred dollars for the dinner and baiting and oats, at noon."

"Yes, sah – but dat conternental, sah, I supposes – no great t'ing, a'ter all."

"It's a great thing in sound, Jaap, but not much when it comes to the teeth, as you perceive. Nevertheless, we must eat and drink, and our nags must eat, too – I suppose *they* may *drink*, without paying."

"Yes, sah – dat true 'nough, yah – yah – yah" – how easily that negro laughed! – "But 'e cider wonnerful good in dis part of 'e country, young masser; just needer sweet nor sour – den he strong as 'e jackass."

---

[3] This man is indiscriminately called Yaf, or Yop – York Dutch being far from severe.

"Well, Jaap, how are we to get any of this good cider, of which you speak?"

"You t'ink, sah, dis part of 'e country been talk too much lately 'bout Patty Rism and 'e country, sah?"

"I am afraid Patty has been overdone here, as well as in most other counties."

I may observe here, that Jaap always imagined the beautiful creature he had heard so much extolled and commended for her comeliness and virtue, was a certain young woman of this name, with whom all Congress was unaccountably in love at the same time.

"Well, den, sah, dere no hope but our wits. Let me be masser to-night, and you mind ole Jaap, if he want good supper. Jest ride ahead, Masser Mordaunt, and give he order like General Littlepage son, and leave it all to old Jaap."

As there was not much to choose, I did ride on, and soon ceased to hear the hoofs of the negro's horse at my heels. I reached the inn an hour ere Jaap appeared, and was actually seated at a capital supper before he rode up, as one belonging only to himself. Jaap had taken off the Littlepage emblems, and had altogether a most independent air. His horse was stabled alongside of mine, and I soon found that he himself was at work on the remnants of my supper, as they retreated toward the kitchen.

A traveller of my appearance was accommodated with the best parlor, as a matter of course; and having appeased my

appetite, I sat down to read some documents that were connected with the duty I was on. No one could have imagined that I had only a York shilling, which is a Pennsylvania "levy," or a Connecticut "ninepence," in my purse; for my air was that of one who could pay for all he wanted, the certainty that, in the long run, my host could not be a loser, giving me a proper degree of confidence. I had just got through with the documents, and was thinking how I should employ the hour or two that remained until it would be time to go to bed, when I heard Jaap tuning his fiddle in the bar-room. Like most negroes, the fellow had an ear for music, and had been indulged in his taste, until he played as well as half the country fiddlers that were to be met.

The sound of a fiddle in a small hamlet, of a cool October evening, was certain of its result. In half an hour the smiling landlady came to invite me to join the company, with the grateful information I should not want for a partner, the prettiest girl in the place having come in late, and being still unprovided for. On entering the bar-room, I was received with plenty of awkward bows and courtesies, but with much simple and well-meaning hospitality. Jaap's own salutations were very elaborate, and altogether of a character to prevent the suspicion of our ever having met before.

The dancing continued for more than two hours, with spirit, when the time admonished the village maidens of the necessity of retiring. Seeing an indication of the approaching separation, Jaap held out his hat to me, in a respectful manner, when I

magnificently dropped my shilling into it, in a way to attract attention, and passed it around among the males of the party. One other gave a shilling, two clubbed and actually produced a quarter, several threw in sixpences, or fourpence-half-pennies, and coppers made up the balance. By way of climax, the landlady, who was good-looking and loved dancing, publicly announced that the fiddler and his horse should go scot-free, until he left the place. By these ingenious means of Jaap's, I found in my purse next morning seven-and-sixpence in silver, in addition to my own shilling, besides coppers enough to keep a negro in cider for a week.

I have often laughed over Jaap's management, though I would not permit him to repeat it. Passing the house of a man of better condition than common, I presented myself to its owner, though an entire stranger to him, and told him my story. Without asking any other confirmation than my word, this gentleman lent me five silver dollars, which answered all my present purposes, and which, I trust, it is scarcely necessary to say, were duly repaid.

It was a happy hour to me when I found myself a titular major, but virtually a freeman, and at liberty to go where I pleased. The war had offered so little of variety or adventure, since the capture of Cornwallis and the pendency of the negotiations for peace, that I began to tire of the army; and now that the country had triumphed, was ready enough to quit it. The family, that is to say, my grandmother, mother, aunt Mary and my youngest sister, took possession of Satanstoe in time to enjoy

some of its delicious fruits in the autumn of 1782; and early in the following season, after the treaty was signed, but while the British still remained in town, my mother was enabled to return to Lilacsbush. As consequences of these early movements, my father and myself, when we joined the two families, found things in a better state than might otherwise have been the case. The Neck was planted, and had enjoyed the advantage of a spring's husbandry, while the grounds of Lilacsbush had been renovated and brought in good condition by the matured and practised taste of my admirable mother. And she *was* admirable, in all the relations of life! A lady in feeling and habits, whatever she touched or controlled imbibed a portion of her delicacy and sentiment. Even the inanimate things around her betrayed this feature of their connection with one of her sex's best qualities. I remember that Colonel Dirk Follock remarked to me one day that we had been examining the offices together, something that was very applicable to this trait in my mother's character, while it was perfectly just.

"No one can see Mrs. Littlepage's kitchen, even," he said, "alt'ough she never seems to enter it, without perceiving" – or "perceifing," as he pronounced the word – "that it is governed by a lady. There are plenty of kitchens that are as clean, and as large, and as well furnished, but it is not common to see a kitchen that gives the same ideas of good taste in the table and about the household."

If this was true as to the more homely parts of the habitation,

how much truer was it when the distinction was carried into the superior apartments! There, one saw my mother in person, and surrounded by those appliances which denote refinement, without, however, any of that elaborate luxury of which we read in older countries. In America we had much fine china, and a good deal of massive plate, regular dinner-services excepted, previously to the revolution, and my mother had inherited more than was usual of both; but the country knew little of that degree of domestic indulgence which is fast creeping in among us, by means of its enormously increased commerce.

Although the fortunes of the country had undergone so much waste during seven years of internal warfare, the elasticity of a young and vigorous nation soon began to repair the evil. It is true that trade did not fully revive, nor its connecting interests receive their great impulse, until after the adoption of the Constitution, which brought the States under a set of common custom-house regulations; nevertheless, one year brought about a manifest and most beneficent change. There was now some security in making shipments, and the country immediately felt the consequences. The year 1784 was a sort of breathing-time for the nation, though long ere it was past, the bone and sinew of the republic began to make themselves apparent and felt. Then it was that, as a people, this community first learned the immense advantage it had obtained by controlling its own interests, and by treating them as secondary to those of no other part of the world. This was the great gain of all our labors.

# CHAPTER III

"He tells her something,
That makes her blood look out; good sooth, she is
The queen of curds and cream."

*– Winter's Tale.*

Happy, happy Lilacsbush! Never can I forget the delight with which I roamed over its heights and glens, and how I rioted in the pleasure of feeling I was again a sort of master in those scenes which had been the haunts of my boyhood! It was in the spring of 1784 before I was folded to the arms of my mother; and this, too, after a separation of near two years. Kate laughed, and wept, and hugged me, just as she would have done five years earlier, though she was now a lovely young woman, turned of nineteen. As for aunt Mary, she shook hands, gave me a kind kiss or two, and smiled on me affectionately, in her own quiet, gentle manner. The house was in a tumult, for Jaap returned with me, his wool well sprinkled with gray, and there were lots of little Satanstoes (for such was his family name, notwithstanding Mrs. Jaap called herself Miss Lilacsbush), children and grandchildren, to welcome him. To say the truth, the house was not decently tranquil for the first twenty-four hours.

At the end of that time I ordered my horse, to ride across the country to Satanstoe, in order to visit my widowed grandmother,

who had resisted all attempts to persuade her to give up the cares of housekeeping, and to come and live at Lilacsbush. The general, for so everybody now called my father, did not accompany me, having been at Satanstoe a day or two before; but my sister did. As the roads had been much neglected in the war, we went in the saddle, Kate being one of the most spirited horsewomen of my acquaintance. By this time, Jaap had got to be privileged, doing just such work as suited his fancy; or, it might be better to say, was not of much use except in the desultory employments that had so long been his principal pursuits; and he was sent off an hour or two before we started ourselves, to let Mrs. Littlepage, or his "ole – ole missus," as the fellow always called my grandmother, know whom she was to expect to dinner.

I have heard it said that there are portions of the world in which people get to be so sophisticated, that the nearest of kin cannot take such a liberty as this. The son will not presume to take a plate at the table of the father without observing the ceremony of asking, or of being asked! Heaven be praised! we have not yet reached this pass in America. What parent, or grandparent, to the remotest living generation, would receive a descendant with anything but a smile, or a welcome, let him come when and how he will? If there be not room, or preparation, the deficiencies must be made up in welcomes; or, when absolute impossibilities interpose, if they are not overcome by means of a quick invention, as most such "impossibilities" are, the truth is frankly told, and the pleasure is deferred to a more fortunate

moment. It is not my intention to throw a vulgar and ignorant gibe into the face of an advanced civilization, as is too apt to be the propensity of ignorance and provincial habits; for I well know that most of the usages of those highly improved conditions of society are founded in reason, and have their justification in a cultivated common sense; but, after all, mother nature has her rights, and they are not to be invaded too boldly, without bringing with the acts themselves their merited punishments.

It was just nine, on a fine May morning, when Kate

Littlepage and myself rode through the outer gate of Lilacsbush, and issued upon the old, well-known Kingsbridge road. *Kings*bridge! That name still remains, as do those of the counties of Kings, and Queens, and Duchess, to say nothing of quantities of Princes this and that in other States; and I hope they always may remain, as so many landmarks in our history. These names are all that now remain among us of the monarchy; and yet have I heard my father say a hundred times, that when a young man, his reverence for the British throne was second only to his reverence for the Church. In how short a time has this feeling been changed throughout an entire nation; or, if not absolutely changed, for some still continue to reverence monarchy, how widely and irremediably has it been impaired! Such are the things of the world, perishable and temporary in their very natures; and they would do well to remember the truth, who have much at stake in such changes.

We stopped at the door of the inn at Kingsbridge to say good

morning to old Mrs. Light, the landlady who had now kept the house half a century, and who had known us, and our parents before us, from childhood. This loquacious housewife had her good and bad points, but habit had given her a sort of claim on our attentions, and I could not pass her door without drawing the rein, if it were only for a moment. This was no sooner done, than the landlady in person was on her threshold to greet us.

"Ay, I dreamt this, Mr. Mordaunt," the old woman exclaimed, the instant she saw me – "I dreamt this no later than last week! It is nonsense to deny it; dreams *do* often come true!"

"And what has been your dream this time, Mrs. Light?" I asked, well knowing it was to come, and the sooner we got it the better.

"I dreamt the general had come home last fall, and he *had* come home! Now the only idee I had to help out that dream was a report that he *was* to be home that day; but you know, Mr. Mordaunt, or Major Littlepage, they tell me I ought now to call you – but you know, Mr. Mordaunt, how often reports turn out to be nothing. I count a report as no great help to a dream. So, last week, I dreamed you would certainly be home this week; and here you are, sure enough!"

"And all without any lying report to help you, my good landlady?"

"Why, no great matter; a few flying rumors, perhaps; but as I never believe *them* when awake, it's onreasonable to suppose a body would believe 'em when asleep. Yes, Jaaf stopped a minute

to water his horse this morning, and I foresaw from that moment my dream would come to be true, though I never exchanged a word with the nigger."

"That is a little remarkable, Mrs. Light, as I supposed you always exchanged a few words with your guests."

"Not with the blacks, major; it's apt to make 'em sassy. Sassiness in a nigger is a thing I can't abide, and therefore I keep 'em all at a distance. Well, the times that I have seen, major, since you went off to the wars! and the changes we have had! Our clergyman don't pray any longer for the king and queen – no more than if there wasn't sich people living."

"Not directly, perhaps, but as a part of the Church of God, I trust. We all pray for Congress now."

"Well, I hope good will come out of it! I must say, major, that His Majesty's officers spent more freely, and paid in better money, than the continental gentlemen. I've had 'em both here by rijjiments, and that's the character I *must* give 'em, in honesty."

"You will remember they were richer, and had more money than our people. It is easy for the rich to appear liberal."

"Yes, I know that, sir, and you ought, and *do* know it, too. The Littlepages are rich, and always have been, and they are liberal too. Lord bless your smiling, pretty faces! I knowed your family long afore you knowed it yourselves. I know'd old Captain Hugh Roger, your great-grand'ther, and the *old* general, your grand'ther, and now I know the *young* general, and you! Well, this will not be the last of you, I dares to say, and there'll be light

hearts and happy ones among the Bayards, I'll answer for it, now the wars are over, and young Major Littlepage has got back!"

This terminated the discourse; for by this time I had enough of it; and making my bow, Kate and I rode on. Still, I could not but be struck with the last speech of the old woman, and most of all with the manner in which it was uttered. The name of Bayard was well known among us, belonging to a family of which there were several branches spread through the Middle States, as far south as Delaware; but I did not happen to know a single individual of them all. What, then, could my return have to do with the smiles or frowns of any of the name of Bayard? It was natural enough, after ruminating a minute or two on the subject, that I should utter some of my ideas, on such a subject, to my companion.

"What could the old woman mean, Kate," I abruptly commenced, "by saying there would now be light hearts and happy ones among the Bayards?"

"Poor Mrs. Light is a great gossip, Mordaunt, and it may be questioned if she know her own meaning half the time. All the Bayards we know are the family at the Hickories; and with them, you have doubtless heard, my mother has long been intimate."

"I have heard nothing about it, child. All I know is, that there is a place called the Hickories, up the river a few miles, and that it belongs to some of the Bayards; but I never heard of any intimacy. On the contrary, I remember to have heard that there was a lawsuit once, between my grandfather Mordaunt and some old Bayard or other; and I thought we were a sort of hereditary

strangers."

"That is quite forgotten, and my mother says it all arose from a mistake. We are decided friends now."

"I'm sure I am very glad to hear it; for, since it is peace, let us have peace; though old enemies are not apt to make very decided friends."

"But we never were – that is, my grandfather never was an enemy of anybody; and the whole matter was amicably settled just before he went to Europe, on his unfortunate visit to Sir Harry Bulstrode. No – no – my mother will tell you, Mordaunt, that the Littlepages and the Bayards now regard each other as very decided friends."

Kate spoke with so much earnestness that I was disposed to take a look at her. The face of the girl was flushed, and I fancy she had a secret consciousness of the fact; for she turned it from me as if gazing at some object in the opposite direction, thereby preventing me from seeing much of it.

"I am very glad to learn all this," I answered, a little dryly. "As I am a Littlepage, it would have been awkward not to have known it, had I accidentally met with one of these Bayards. Does the peace include all of the name, or only those of the Hickories?"

Kate laughed; then she was pleased to tell me that I was to consider myself the friend of all of the name.

"And most especially of those of the name who dwell at the Hickories?"

"How many may there be of this especially peaceful breed?

six, a dozen, or twenty?"

"Only four; so your task will make no very heavy demand on your affections. Your heart has room, I trust, for four more friends?"

"For a thousand, if I can find them, my dear. I can accept as many friends as you please, but have places for none else. All the other niches are occupied."

"Occupied! – I hope that is not true, Mordaunt. *One* place, at least, is vacant."

"True; I had forgotten a place must be reserved for the brother *you* will one day give me. Well, name him, as soon as you please; I shall be ready to love *him*, child."

"I may never make so heavy a draft on your affections. Anneke has given you a brother already, and a very excellent one he is, and that ought to satisfy a reasonable man."

"Ay, so all you young women say between fifteen and twenty, but you usually change your mind in the end. The sooner you tell me who the youth is, therefore, the sooner I shall begin to like him – is *he* one of the Bayards? —*un chevalier sans peur et sans reproche?*"

Kate had a brilliant complexion, in common; but, as I now turned my eyes toward her inquiringly, more in mischief, however, than with the expectation of learning anything new, I saw the roses of her cheeks expand until they covered her temples. The little beaver she wore, and which became her amazingly, did not suffice to conceal these blushes, and I now

really began to suspect I had hit on a vein that was sensitive. But my sister was a girl of spirit, and though it was no difficult thing to make her change color, it was by no means easy to look her down.

"I trust your new brother, Mordaunt, should there ever be such a person, will be a respectable man, if not absolutely without reproach," she answered. "But, if there be a Tom Bayard, there is also a Pris Bayard, his sister."

"So – so – this is all news to me, indeed! As to Mr. Thomas Bayard, I shall ask no questions, my interest in *him*, if there is to be any, being altogether *ex officio*, as one may say, and coming as a matter of course; but you will excuse me if I am a little curious on the subject of Miss Priscilla Bayard, a lady, you will remember, I never saw."

My eye was on Kate the whole time, and I fancied she looked gratified, though she still looked confused.

"Ask what you will, brother – Priscilla Bayard can bear a very close examination."

"In the first place, then, did that old gossip allude to Miss Priscilla, by saying there would be light hearts and happy ones among the Bayards?"

"Nay, I cannot answer for poor Mrs. Light's conceits. Put your questions in some other form."

"Is there much intimacy between the people of the 'Bush and those of the Hickories?"

"Great —*we* like them exceedingly; and I think they like *us*."

"Does this intimacy extend to the young folk, or is it confined to the old?"

"That is somewhat personal," said Kate, laughing, "as I happen to be the only 'young folk' at the 'Bush, to maintain the said intimacy. As there is nothing to be ashamed of, however, but, on the contrary, much of which one may be proud, I shall answer that it includes 'all ages and both sexes;' everybody but yourself, in a word."

"And *you* like old Mr. Bayard?"

"Amazingly."

"And old Mrs. Bayard?"

"She is a very agreeable person, and an excellent wife and mother."

"And you love Pris Bayard?"

"As the apple of mine eye," the girl answered with emphasis.

"And you like Tom Bayard, her brother?"

"As much as is decent and proper for one young woman to like the brother of another young woman, whom she admits that she loves as the apple of her eye."

Although it was not easy, at least not easy for *me*, to cause Kate Littlepage to hold her tongue, it was not easy for her to cause the tell-tale blood always to remain stationary. She was surprisingly beautiful in her blushes, and as much like what I had often fancied my dear mother might have been in her best days as possible, at the very moment she was making these replies as steadily as if they gave her no trouble.

"How is all this then, connected with rejoicings among the people of the Hickories, at *my* return? Are you the betrothed of Tom Bayard, and have you been waiting for my return to give him your hand?"

"I am *not* the betrothed of Tom Bayard, and have not been waiting for your return to give him my hand," answered Kate, steadily. "As for Mrs. Light's gossipings, you cannot expect *me* to explain *them*. She gets her reports from servants, and others of that class, and you know what such reports are usually worth. But, as for my waiting for your *return*, brother, in order to announce such an event, you little know how much I love you, if you suppose I would do any such thing."

Kate said this with feeling, and I thanked her with my eyes, but could not have spoken, and did not speak, until we had ridden some distance. After this pause, I renewed the discourse with some of its original spirit.

"On that subject, Katrinke, dear," I said, "I trust we understand each other. Single or married, you will ever be very dear to me; and I own I should be hurt to be one of the last to learn your engagement, whenever that may happen. And now for this Priscilla Bayard – do you expect me to like her?"

"Do I! It would be one of the happiest moments of my life, Mordaunt, when I could hear you acknowledge that you *love* her!"

This was uttered with great animation, and in a way to show that my sister was very much in earnest. I felt some surprise when

I put this feeling in connection with the landlady's remarks, and began to suspect there might be something behind the curtain worthy of my knowledge. In order to make discoveries, however, it was necessary to pursue the discourse.

"Of what age is Miss Bayard?" I demanded.

"She is two months my senior – very suitable, is it not?"

"I do not object to the difference, which will do very well. Is she accomplished?"

"Not very. You know few of us girls who have been educated during the revolution, can boast of much in that way; though Priscilla is better than common."

"Than of her class, you mean, of course?"

"Certainly – better than most young ladies of our best families."

"Is she amiable?"

"As Anneke, herself!"

This was saying a great deal, our eldest sister, as often happens in families, being its paragon in the way of all the virtues, and Anneke's temper being really serenity itself.

"You give her a high character, and one few girls could sustain. Is she sensible and well-informed?"

"Enough so as often to make me feel ashamed of myself. She has an excellent mother, Mordaunt; and I have heard you say, often, that the mother would have great influence with you in choosing a wife."

"That must have been when I was very young, child, before

I went to the army, where we look more at the young than at the old women. But, why a wife? Is it all settled between the old people, that I am to propose to this Priscilla Bayard, and are you a party to the scheme?"

Kate laughed with all her heart, but I fancied she looked conscious.

"You make no answer, young lady, and you must permit me to remind you that there is an express compact between you and me to treat each other frankly on all occasions. This is one on which I especially desire to see the conditions of the treaty rigidly enforced. Does any such project exist?"

"Not as a project, discussed and planned – no – certainly not. No, a thousand times, no. But I shall run the risk of frustrating one of my most cherished hopes, by saying, honestly, that you could not gratify my dear mother, aunt Mary, and myself, more than by falling in love with Pris Bayard. We all love her ourselves, and we wish you to be of the party, knowing that *your* love would probably lead to a connection we should all like, more than I can express. There; you cannot complain of a want of frankness, for I have heard it said, again and again, that the wishes of friends, indiscreetly expressed, are very apt to set young men against the very person it is desired to make them admire."

"Quite likely to be true as a rule, though in my case no effect, good or bad, will be produced. But how do the Bayards feel in this matter?"

"How should I know! Of course, no allusion has ever been

made to any of the family on the subject; and, as none of them know you, it is im – that is, no allusion – I mean – certainly not to more than *one* of them. I believe some vague remarks may have been ventured to one – but – "

"By yourself, and to your friend Pris?"

"*Never*" – said Kate, with emphasis. "Such a subject could never be mentioned between us."

"Then it must have been between the old ladies – the two mothers, probably?"

"I should think not. Mrs. Bayard is a woman of reserve, and mamma has an extreme sense of propriety, as you know yourself, that would not be likely to permit such a thing."

"Would the general think of contracting me, when my back was turned?"

"Not he – papa troubles himself very little about such things. Ever since his return home, he has been courting mamma over again, he tells us."

"Surely, aunt Mary has not found words for such an allusion!"

"She, indeed! Poor, dear aunt Mary; it is little she meddles with any one's concerns but her own. Do you know, Mordaunt, that mamma has told me the whole of her story lately, and the reason why she has refused so many excellent offers. I dare say, if you ask her, she will tell *you*."

"I know the whole story already, from the general, child. But, if this matter has been alluded to, to one of the Bayards, and neither my father, mother, nor aunt Mary, has made the allusion

on our side, and neither Mr. Bayard, his wife, nor daughter, has been the party to whom the allusion has been made on the other, there remain only yourself and Tom to hold the discourse. I beg you to explain this point with your customary frankness."

Kate Littlepage's face was scarlet. She was fairly caught, though I distrusted the truth from the moment she so stammered and hesitated in correcting her first statement. I will own I enjoyed the girl's confusion, it made her appear so supremely lovely; and I was almost as proud of her, as I tenderly loved her. Dear, dear Kate; from my childhood I had my own amusement with her, though I do not remember anything like a harsh expression, or an unkind feeling, that has ever passed, or indeed existed, between us. A finer study than the face of my sister offered for the next minute, was never presented to the eye of man; and I enjoyed it so much the more, from a strong conviction that, while so deeply confused, she was not unhappy. Native ingenuousness, maiden modesty, her habit of frank dealing with me, and a wish to continue so to deal, were all struggling together in her fine countenance, forming altogether one of the most winning pictures of womanly feelings I had ever witnessed. At length, the love of fair-dealing, and love of me, prevailed over a factitious shame; the color settled back to those cheeks whence it had appeared to flash, as it might be, remaining just enough heightened to be remarked, and Kate looked toward me in a way that denoted all the sisterly confidence and regard that she actually felt.

"I did not intend to be the one to communicate to you a fact, Mordaunt, in which I know you will feel a deep interest, for I had supposed my mother would save me the confusion of telling it to you; but, now, there is no choice between resorting to equivocations that I do not like, and using our old long-established frankness."

"The long and short of which, my dear sister, is to say that you are engaged to Mr. Bayard?"

"No; not as strong as that, brother. Mr. Bayard has offered, and my answer is deferred until you have met him. I would not engage myself, Mordaunt, until you approved of my choice."

"I feel the compliment, Katrinke, and will be certain to repay it, in kind. Depend on it, *you* shall know, in proper season, when it is my wish to marry, and shall be heard."

"There is a difference between the claims of an elder and an only brother, and of a mere girl, who ought to place much dependence on the advice of friends, in making her own selection."

"You will not be a 'mere girl' when that time comes, but a married woman yourself, and competent to give good counsel from your own experience. To return to Tom, however; he is the member of his family to whom the allusion was made?"

"He was, Mordaunt," answered Kate, in a low voice.

"And you were the person who made it?"

"Very true – we were talking of you, one day; and I expressed a strong hope that you would see Priscilla with the eyes with which,

I can assure you, all the rest of your family see her. That was all."

"And that was quite enough, child, to cause Tom Bayard to hang himself, if he were a lover of the true temper."

"Hang himself, brother! I am sure I do not understand why?"

"Oh! merely at the palpable discouragement such a wish would naturally convey to the brother of the young lady, since he must have seen you were willing to connect the two families by means other than giving him your own hand."

Kate laughed; but as she did not look much confused, or at all alarmed, I was induced to believe that more important encouragement than could be afforded by means of her wish of marrying *me* to her suitor's sister had been given Master Tom, and that my disapproval of the gentleman would cause her more concern than she chose to avow. We rode on, however, some little distance, without either's offering to renew the discourse. At length, as became my sex, I spoke.

"When am I to see this paragon young man and paragon young woman, Kate, since see both I must?"

"Not paragon young man, brother; I am certain I have called him by no such name; Tom Bayard is a *good fellow*; but I do not know that he is by any means a paragon."

"He is a good-*looking* fellow in the bargain, I take it for granted?"

"Not so much so as you are yourself, if that will gratify your vanity."

"It ought to, coming from such a quarter; my question is still

unanswered, notwithstanding."

"To own the truth to you, Mordaunt, I expect we shall find Tom Bayard and Pris at Satanstoe, to dine with my grandmother. She wrote me word, a day or two since, that both are asked, and that she hoped both would accept."

"The old lady is then in the plot, and intends to marry me, will ye, nill ye? I had thought this visit altogether a scheme of my own."

Kate again laughed, and told me I might make my own observations on that point, and judge for myself. As for the visit, I had only accidentally favored a project of others. The conversation now changed, and for several miles we rode along, conversing of the scenes of the war, without adverting to the Bayards or to marriages.

We were within half a mile of the gate of the Neck, and within a mile of the house, when we met Jaap returning to Lilacsbush, and carrying some fruit to my mother, after having discharged his commission of an *avant-courier*. From Kate's remark I had discovered we had been invited by letter to take this excursion, though the ceremony of sending the negro across with his message had been observed for reasons that were not very natural under the circumstances. I made no remark, however, determining to see and judge for myself.

As a matter of course, we drew our reins, and stopped to exchange a few words with the black.

"Well, Jaap, how did the Neck look, after so long an absence?"

I inquired.

"It look, sah, no means as well as ole Missus, who do look capital, for such a lady! Dey do won'ers with 'e Neck, sah, if you just believe all young nigger say. But what you t'ink, Masser Mordy, I hear at 'e tavern, where I jist stop, sah, to water ole Dick?"

"And to get a sup of cider for old Jaap" – hereupon the negro laughed heartily, though he had the impudence neither to own nor to deny the imputation, his weakness in favor of "wring-jaw" being a well-established failing – "Well, what did you hear, while taking down the usual mug?"

"I on'y get *half* a mug, dis time, sah; ole, ole Missus nebber forgettin' to give me jist as much as I want. Well, sah, while old Dick drink, 'e new landlady, who come from Connetick, you know, sah, she say to me, 'Where you go, ole color' gentleum?' Dat war' civil, anyhow."

"To which you answered – "

"I answer her, sah, and say I go to Satanstoe, whar' I come from, long time 'go."

"Whereupon she made some observation or other – well, what was it? – You keep Miss Littlepage waiting."

"Lor' bless her, sah – it my business to wait on Miss Katrinke, not her business to wait on *me*– why you speak so droll, now, Masser Mordy?"

"Never mind all that, Jaap, what did the new Connecticut lady say, when you told her you were going to Satanstoe, the place

where you had come from, a long time ago?"

"What she say, Masser Mordy, sah! – she say great foolishness, and make me mad. 'What you call by dat awful name?' she say, making face like as if she see a spook. 'You must mean Dibbleton,' she say – 'dat 'e way all 'e people as is genteel call 'e Neck?' Did you ebber hear 'e like, sah?"

"Oh! yes; I heard the like of it, as soon as I was born; the attempt to change the name of our old place having existed now, these thirty years. Why, some people call Hellgate, Hurlgate; after that, one may expect anything. Do you not know, Jaap, a Yankee is never satisfied, unless he is effecting changes? One half his time he is altering the pronunciation of his own names, and the other half he is altering ours. Let him call the place what he will, you and I will stick to Satanstoe."

"Dat we *will*, sah – gib 'e debbil his due, sah; dat an ole sayin'. I'm sure anybody as has eyes, can see where his toe hab turn up 'e sile, and shape it he own way – no dibble dere, sah."

Thus saying, Jaap rode on, my sister and myself doing the same, pursuing the discourse that had thus accidentally arisen among us.

"Is it not odd, brother, that strangers should have this itching to alter the name of my grandmother's place?" said Kate, after we had parted from the black. "It is a homely name, certainly; but it has been used, now, a good deal more than a century, and time, at least, should entitle it to be let alone."

"Ay, my dear; but you are not yet aware of the desires, and

longings, and efforts, and ambition of a 'little learning.' I have seen enough, in my short career, to know there is a spirit up among us, that calls itself by the pretending title of the 'spirit of improvement,' which is likely to overturn more important things than the name of our poor Neck. It is a spirit that assumes the respectable character of a love of liberty; and under that mask, it gives play to malice, envy, covetousness, rapacity, and all the lowest passions of our nature. Among other things, it takes the provincial pretence of a mock-refinement, and flatters an elegance of thought that is easiest attained by those who have no perceptions of anything truly elevated, by substituting sqeamishness and affectations for the simplicity of nature, and a good tone of manners."

# CHAPTER IV

*Beat.* "Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner."
*Bene.* "Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains."
*Beat.* "I took no more pains for these thanks, than
You take pains to thank me; if it had been painful,
I would not have come."

– *Much Ado About Nothing.*

In the porch of the house at Satanstoe stood my dear grandmother and the notable Tom Bayard, to receive us. The first glance at the latter told me that he was a "proper man;" and by the second, I got the pleasing assurance that he had no eye, just then, but for Kate. This was pleasant to know, as I never could have been happy in consenting to yield that dear girl to any but a man who appreciated her worth, and fully admired her beauty. As to my dear "ole, ole" grandmother, who was not so very old neither, being still under seventy, her reception of us was just what I had ever found it; warm, affectionate, and gentle. She called my father, the general, Corny, even when she spoke to him in a room full of company; though, for that matter, I have heard my mother, who was much more of a woman of the world, having lived a great deal in society, do the same thing, when she thought herself alone. I have read some priggish book or other, written no doubt

by one who knew men only through pages like his own, decry such familiarities; but I have generally found those the happiest families, and at the bottom, the best toned, where it was Jack, and Tom, and Bob, and Dick, and Bess, and Di. As for your Louisa Adelinas, and Robert Augustuses, and all such elaborate respect, I frankly declare I have a contempt for it. Those are the sort of people who would call Satanstoe, Dibbleton; Hellgate, Hurlgate; and themselves accomplished. Thank heaven, we had no such nonsense at Lilacsbush, or at the Neck. My father was Corny; my mother, Anneke; Katrinke, Kate; and I was Mordy, or Mord; or, when there was no hurry, Mordaunt.

Tom Bayard met my salutations frankly, and with a gentleman-like ease, though there was a slight color on his cheek which said to me, "I mean to get your sister." Yet I liked the fellow's manner. There was no grasping of the hand, and coming forward to rush into an intimacy at the first moment we met; but he returned my bow graciously and gracefully, and his smile as he did so seemed to invite farther and better acquaintance.

Now I have seen a man cross a whole room to shake hands at an introduction to an utter stranger, and maintain a countenance the whole time as sombre as if he were condoling with him on the loss of his wife. This habit of shaking hands dolefully is growing among us, and is imported from some of our sister States; for it is certainly not a New York custom, except among intimates; and it is a bad usage in my opinion, as it destroys one of the best means of graduating feelings, and is especially ungraceful

at an introduction. But alas! there are so many such innovations, that one cannot pretend to predict where they are to stop. I never shook hands at an introduction, unless it were under my own roof, and when I wished to denote a decidedly hospitable feeling, until after I was forty. It was thought vulgar in my younger days, and I am not quite certain it is not thought so now.

In the little old-fashioned drawing-room, as of late years my good grandmother had been persuaded to call what was once only the best parlor, we found Miss Priscilla Bayard, who for some reason that was unexplained, did not come to the porch to meet her friend. She was in truth a charming girl, with fine dark eyes, glossy hair, a delicate and lady-like form, and a grace of manner that denoted perfect familiarity with the best company of the land. Kate and Pris embraced each other with a warmth and sincerity that spoke in favor of each, and with perfect nature. An affected American girl, by the way, is very uncommon; and nothing strikes me sooner, when I see my own countrywomen placed at the side of Europeans, than the difference in this respect; the one seems so natural, while the other is so artificial!

My own reception by Miss Bayard was gracious, though I fancied it was not entirely free from the consciousness of having, on some idle occasion, heard her own name intimately connected with mine. Perhaps Kate, in their confidential moments, may have said something to this effect; or I may have been mistaken.

My grandmother soon announced that the whole party was to pass the night at Satanstoe. As we were accustomed to such

plans, neither Kate nor myself raised the least objection, while the Bayards submitted to orders, which I soon discovered even they were not unused to, with perfect good will and submission. Thus brought together, in the familiarity of a quiet and small party in a country house, we made great progress in intimacy; and by the time dinner was over, or by four o'clock, I felt like an old acquaintance with those who had so lately been strangers to me, even by name. As for Bayard and my sister, they were in the best of humors from the start, and I felt satisfied *their* affair was a settled thing in their own minds; but Miss Priscilla was a little under constraint for an hour or two, like a person who felt a slight embarrassment. This wore off, however, and long before we left the table she had become entirely herself; and a very charming self it was, I was forced to admit. I say forced; for spite of all I had said, and a certain amount of good sense, I hope, it was impossible to get rid of the distrust which accompanied the notion that I was expected to fall in love with the young lady. My poor grandmother contributed her share, too, to keeping this feeling alive. The manner in which she looked from one to the other, and the satisfied smile that passed over her countenance whenever she observed Pris and myself conversing freely, betrayed to me completely that she was in the secret, and had a hand in what I chose to regard as a sort of plot.

I had heard that my grandmother had set her heart on the marriage of my parents a year or two before matters came round, and that she always fancied she had been very instrumental

in forming a connection that had been as happy as her own. The recollection, or the fancy of this success most probably encouraged her to take a share in the present scheme; and I have always supposed that she got us all together on that occasion in order to help the great project along.

A walk on the Neck was proposed in the cool of the evening; for Satanstoe had many a pleasant path, pretty vista, and broad view. Away we went, then, the four of us, Kate leading the way, as the person most familiar with the "capabilities." We were soon on the shore of the Sound, and at a point where a firm, wide beach of sand had been left by the receding waters, rocks fringing the inner boundary toward the main. Here one could walk without confinement of any sort, there being room to go in pairs, or all abreast, as we might choose. Miss Bayard seeming a little coy, and manifesting a desire to keep near her friend, I abandoned the intention of walking at her side, but fell behind a little, and got into discourse with her brother. Nor was I sorry to have this early opportunity of sounding the party who was likely soon to become so nearly connected with me. After a few minutes, the conversation turned on the late revolution, and the manner in which it was likely to influence the future fortunes of the country. I knew that a portion of the family of my companion had adhered to the crown, losing their estates by the act of confiscation; but I also knew that a portion did not, and I was left to infer that Tom's branch belonged to the latter division of his name, inasmuch as his father was known to be very easy in his circumstances, if not

absolutely rich. It was not long, however, before I ascertained that my new friend was a mild tory, and that he would have been better pleased had the rights we had sought, and which he was willing enough to admit had been violated, been secured without a separation of the two countries. As the Littlepages had actually been in arms against the crown, three generations of them, too, at the same time, and the fact could be no secret, I was pleased with the candor with which Tom Bayard expressed his opinions on these points; for it spoke well of the truth and general sincerity of his character.

"Does it not strike you as a necessary consequence of the distance between the two countries," I remarked in the course of the conversation, "that a separation must, sooner or later, have occurred? It is impossible that two countries should long have common rulers when they are divided by an ocean. Admitting that *our* separation has been a little premature, a circumstance I should deny in a particular discussion, it is an evil that every hour has a tendency to lessen."

"Separations in families are always painful, Major Littlepage; when accompanied by discussions, doubly so."

"Quite true; yet they always happen. If not in this generation, in the next."

"I *do* think," said Tom Bayard, looking at me a little imploringly, "that we might have got along with our difficulties without casting aside our allegiance to the king."

"Ay, that has been the stumbling-block with thousands; and

yet it is, in truth, the very weakest part of the transatlantic side of the question. Of what avail is allegiance to the king, if parliament uses its power in a way to make American interests subservient to those of England? A great deal may be said, that is reasonable, in favor of kingly power; that I am ready enough to allow; but very little that renders one *people* subject to *another*. This thing called loyalty blinds men to facts, and substitutes a fancied for a real power. The question has been, whether England, by means of a parliament in which we have no representative, is to make laws for us or not; and not whether George III. is to be our sovereign, or whether we are to establish the sovereignty of the people."[4]

---

[4] [This short dialogue is given in the text, because it is found in Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage's manuscript, and not because the state of feeling in this country to-day has any connection with the opinions expressed. The American nation, as a whole, is now as completely emancipated from English political influence, as if the latter never had an existence. The emancipation is too complete, indeed, the effect having brought with it a reaction that is, on many points, running into error in a contrary direction; the third of our manuscripts having something to do with these excesses of opinion. But Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage appears to have some near glimmerings of the principles which lay at the root of the American revolution, though the principle itself does not appear to have been openly recognized anywhere at the time. The king of England was originally king of America, as he was king of Ireland, and king of Scotland. It is true, there was no American flag, the system excluding the colonies from any power on the ocean; then each colony existed as independent of the others, except through their common allegiance. The revolution of 1688 slowly brought parliament into the ascendant; and by the time George III. ascended the throne, that ascendancy had got to be almost undisputed. Now, America had no proper connection with parliament, which, in that day, represented England and Wales only; and this was a state of things which made one *country* dependent on the *other*, a subserviency of interests that clearly could last only so long as the party governed was too weak to take care of itself.]

Bayard bowed, civilly enough, to my remark, and he changed the subject. Sufficient had been said, however, to satisfy me that there would be little political sympathy between us, let the family tie be drawn as close as it might. The girls joined us before we had got altogether into another vein of discourse, and I was a little chagrined at finding that Kate entered rather more into her admirer's views of such subjects than comported with the true feelings, as I fancied, of a Littlepage, after all that had passed. Still, as I should have liked the woman I loved to agree with me in opinion as much as possible in everything, I was not disposed to judge harshly of my sister on that account. On the other hand, to my surprise, I found Miss Priscilla a zealous, and, to say the truth, a somewhat blind patriot; condemning England, the king, and the efforts of parliament with a warmth that was only equal to that with which she defended everything, act, measure, principle, or policy, that was purely American.

I cannot say I had as much tolerance for the patriotism of Miss Bayard as I had for the petit treason of my sister. It seemed natural enough that Kate should begin to look at things of this nature with the eyes of the man she had made up her mind to marry; but it looked far more like management in her friend, who belonged to a tory family, to volunteer so freely the sentiments of one she could not yet love, inasmuch as until that day she had never even seen him.

"Is it not so, Major Littlepage?" cried this lovely creature, for very lovely she was, beyond all dispute; and feminine and

delicate, and lady-like, and all I could have wished her, had she only been a little less of a whig, and a good deal more of a tory; her eyes sparkling and flashing, at the same time, as if she felt all she was saying from the very bottom of her heart – "Is it not so, Major Littlepage? – America has come out of this war with imperishable glory; and her history, a thousand years hence, will be the wonder and admiration of all who read it!"

"That will somewhat depend on what her history may prove to be, between that day and this. The early history of all *great* nations fills us with admiration and interest, while mightier deeds effected by an insignificant people are usually forgotten."

"Still, this revolution has been one of which any nation might have been proud!"

As it would not have been proper to deny this I bowed, and strayed a little from the rest of the party, under the pretence of looking for shells. My sister soon joined me, when the following short conversation passed between us.

"You find Pris Bayard a stanch whig, Major Littlepage," commenced my warm-hearted sister.

"Very much so; but I had supposed the Bayards excessively neutral, if not absolutely the other way."

"Oh! that is true enough of most of them, but not with Pris, who has long been a decided whig. There is Tom, now, rather moderate in his opinions, while the father and mother are what you call excessively neutral; but Pris has been a whig almost as long as I have known her."

"Almost as long! She was, then, a tory once?"

"Hardly; though certainly her opinions have undergone a very gradual change. We are both young, you will remember; and girls at their first coming out do very little of their own thinking. For the last three years, certainly, or since she was seventeen, Pris has been getting to be more and more of a whig, and less and less of a tory. Do you not find her decidedly handsome, Mordaunt?"

"Very decidedly so, and very winning in all that belongs to her sex – gentle, feminine, lady-like, lovely, and withal a whig."

"I knew you would admire her!" cried Kate, in triumph, "I shall live to see my dearest wish accomplished!"

"I make no doubt you will, child; though it will not be by the marriage of a *Mr.* Littlepage to a *Miss* Bayard."

I got a laugh and a blush for this sally, but no sign of submission. On the contrary, the positive girl shook her head, until her rich curls were all in motion, and she laughed none the less. We immediately joined our companions, and by one of those crossings over and figurings in, that are so familiar to the young of the two sexes, we were soon walking along the sands again, Tom at Kate's side, and I at that of Priscilla Bayard's. What the other two talked about I never knew, though I fancy one might guess; but the young lady with me pursued the subject of the revolution.

"You have probably been a little surprised, Major Littlepage," she commenced, "to hear me express myself so warmly in favor of this country, as some of the branches of my family have been

treated harshly by the new government."

"You allude to the confiscations? I never justified them, and wish they had not been made; for they fall heaviest on those who were quite inoffensive, while most of our active enemies have escaped. Still it is no more than is usual in civil wars, and what would surely have befallen us, had it been our fortune to be the losing party."

"So I have been told; but, as no loss has fallen on any who are very near to me, my public virtue has been able to resist private feeling. My brother, as you may have seen, is less of an American than I am myself."

"I have supposed he is one of the 'extremely neutral;' and they, I have thought, always incline a little in favor of the losing party."

"I hope, however, his political bias, which is very honest, though very much in error, will not materially affect him in your good opinion. Too much depends on that, for me not to be anxious on the subject; and being the only decided whig in the family, I have thought I would venture to speak in behalf of a very dearly beloved brother."

"Well," I said to myself, "this is being sufficiently managing; but I am not quite so unpractised as to be the dupe of an artifice so little concealed! The deuce is in the girl; yet she seems in earnest, looks at me with the good faith and simplicity of a sister who feels even more than she expresses, and is certainly one of the loveliest creatures I ever laid eyes on! I must not let her see how much I am on my guard, but must meet management

with management. It will be singular, indeed, if I, who have commanded a company of continentals with some credit, cannot get along with a girl of twenty, though she were even handsomer, and looked still more innocent than this Pris Bayard, which would be no easy matter, by the way."

The reader will understand this was what I said to myself, and it was soon uttered, for one talks surprisingly fast to himself; but that which I said to my fair companion, after a moment's hesitation, was very different in language and import.

"I do not understand in what way Mr. Bayard can be affected by my opinion, let it be for or against him," I answered, with just as much innocency of expression, according to my notion of the matter, as the young lady herself had thrown into her own pretty countenance, thereby doing myself infinite credit, in my own conceit; "though I am far from judging any man severely, because he happens to differ from me in his judgment of public things. The question was one of great delicacy, and the most honest men have differed the widest on its merits."

"You do not know how glad I am to hear you say this, Mr. Littlepage," returned my companion, with one of the sweetest smiles woman ever bestowed on man. "It will make Tom completely happy, for I know he has been sadly afraid of you, on this very point."

I did not answer instantly; for I believe I was watching the traces of that bewitching smile, and speculating against its influence with the pertinacity of a man who was determined not

to be taken in. That smile haunted me for a week, and it was a long time before I fully comprehended it. I decided, however, to come to the point at once, as respects Bayard and my sister, and not be beating the bush with indirect allusions.

"In what manner can my opinion influence your brother, Miss Bayard?" I asked, as soon as I was ready to say anything. "To prevent misconceptions, let me beg of you to be a little more explicit."

"You can hardly be ignorant of my meaning, I should think!" answered Priscilla, with a little surprise. "One has only to look at the couple before us, to comprehend how your opinion of the gentleman might have an influence on himself, at least."

"The same might be said of us, Miss Bayard, so far as my inexperienced eye can tell. They are a young couple, walking together; the gentleman appearing to admire the lady, I will confess; and we are a young couple walking together, the gentleman appearing to admire the lady, or he does no credit to his taste or sensibility."

"There," said I to myself again, "that is giving her quite as good as I received; let me see how you take *that*."

Pris took it very well; laughing, and blushing just enough to make her appear the loveliest creature I had ever laid eyes on. She shook her head very much as my sister had done not long before, and disclaimed the analogy, first in her manner, and next with her tongue.

"The cases are very different, sir," she answered. "We are

strangers to each other, while Tom Bayard and Kate Littlepage are acquaintances of years' standing. *We* do not love each other in the least; not a bit, though we are inclined to think very well of each other, on account of the interest we take in the couple before us, and because I am the intimate friend of your only sister, and because you are the only brother of my intimate friend. *There*, however," and she now spoke with emphasis, "our interest ceases, never to be increased beyond a friendly regard, that I trust will grow up out of our respective merits and respective discernment. It is very, *very* different with the couple before us;" here, again, the flexible girl spoke with extreme feeling; every tone and cadence of her voice denoting lively sensibility. "They have been long attached, not *admirers* of each other, as you call it, Major Littlepage, but *attached*; and your opinion of my brother just at this moment, is of the last importance to him. I hope I have at last made myself understood?"

"Perfectly; and I intend to be just as explicit. In the first place I enter a solemn protest against all that you have said about the 'other couple,' with the exception of the interest we each feel in the brother or sister. Next, I proclaim Kate Littlepage to be her own mistress, so far as her brother Mordaunt is concerned, and lastly, I announce that I see or know nothing in the character, connections, fortune, person, or position of her suitor, Thomas Bayard, of the Hickories, Esquire, that is in the least below her pretensions or merits. I hope that is sufficiently satisfactory?"

"Entirely so; and from the bottom of my heart I thank you for

it. I will own I have had some little apprehensions on the subject of Tom's political opinions; but those removed, nothing else *can* remain to create the smallest uneasiness."

"How is it possible that any of you could consider my notions of so much importance, when Kate has a father, a mother, and a grandmother living, all of whom, as I understand things, approve of her choice?"

"Ah, Mr. Littlepage, you are not conscious of your importance in your own family, I see. I know it better than you appear to know it yourself. Father, mother, grandmother, and sister, all think and speak of Mordaunt alike. To hear the general converse of the war, you would suppose that *he* had commanded a company, and Captain Littlepage the regiment. Mr. Littlepage defers to Mordaunt's taste, and Mordaunt's opinions, and Mordaunt's judgment, even in housekeeping and hemstitching. Kate is forever saying, 'my brother says this,' 'my brother writes that,' 'my brother does t'other;' and as for the old lady here at the 'Toe,' she would hardly think her peaches and cherries could ripen, unless Mordaunt Littlepage, the son of *her* son Corny Littlepage – by no accident does she ever call him 'general,' – were on the face of the earth to create an eternal sunshine!"

Was there ever a girl like this! That speech was made too, in the quietest, most gentle, lady-like manner possible. That the young lady had spirit and humor enough, was very apparent; and for a moment I doubted whether both were not accompanied by the most perfect simplicity of character, and the most perfect

good faith. Subsequent remarks and occurrences, however, soon revived all my original distrusts.

"This is a vivid picture of family weaknesses, that you have so graphically drawn, Miss Bayard," I answered; "and I shall not easily forget it. What renders it the more lively and pointed, and the more likely to be relished by the world, is the fact that Mordaunt so little deserves the extreme partiality of the friends you have mentioned."

"The last feature forms no part of my picture, Major Littlepage, and I disown it. As for the world, it will never know anything about it. You and I are not the world, nor are we at all likely ever to be the world to each other; I wish you particularly to understand *that*, which is the reason I am so frank with you on so short an acquaintance. I tell you your opinion is of the last importance to Tom; as your sister would not marry him, did she believe you thought in the least ill of him."

"And she would, did I think well of him?"

"That is a question a lady must answer for herself. And now we will say no more on the subject; for my mind is easy since I find you entertain no political hostility to Tom."

"Men are much less apt to entertain such feelings, I fancy, after they have fairly fought out a quarrel, than when they only talk over its heads. Besides, the winning party is commonly the least rancorous, and success will make us whigs forgiving. I give you my honor, no objection will be raised against your brother, by me, on account of his opinions of the revolution. My dear

mother herself has been half a tory the whole war; and Kate, I find, has imbibed all her charity."

A singular, and, as I found, a painful smile, crossed the sweet face of Priscilla Bayard, as I made this remark; but she did not answer it. It seemed to me she was now desirous of quitting the subject entirely, and I immediately led the discourse to other things.

Kate and I remained at Satanstoe several days, and Tom Bayard was a daily visitor; the distance between the Neck and the Hickories being no great matter. I saw the young lady twice during the interval; once, by riding over to her father's residence with that express object; and once when she came across on horseback to see her friend. I confess I was never more at a loss to understand a character than I was that of this young woman. She was either profoundly managing, or as innocent and simple as a child. It was easy to see that her brother, my sister, my grandmother, and, as I fancied, the parents of the young lady herself, were anxious that I should be on as good terms as possible with Pris, as they all called her; though I could not fathom her own feelings on the subject. It would have been unnatural not to have loved to gaze on her exceeding beauty, or not to have admired her extremely graceful and feminine manner, which was precisely all that one could wish it to be in the way of ease and self-possession, without being in the least free or forward; and I did gaze on the one, and admire the other, at the very moment I was most disposed to distrust her

sincerity, and to believe her nature the very perfection of art. There were times when I was disposed to fancy this Pris Bayard as profound and skilful an actor as one of her sex, years, and condition in life could well become, without falling altogether; and there were moments, too, when she seemed to be instinct with all the sensitive and best qualities of her sex.

It is scarcely necessary to say I remained heart-whole, under such circumstances, notwithstanding the obvious wishes of my friends, and the young lady's great advantages! A man no more falls blindly in love when he distrusts anything amiss, than he sees anything amiss when he is blindly in love. It has often been a matter of surprise to me, how often and how completely the wisest of the earthly races conspire to deceive themselves. When suspicions are once excited, testimony is not needed; condemnation following much as a logical induction, though founded on nothing better than plausible distrusts; while, on the other hand, where confidence exists, testimony is only too apt to be disregarded. Women, in particular, are peculiarly apt to follow the bias of their affections, rather than of their reasons, in all cases connected with guilt. They are hard to be convinced of the unworthiness of those who belong to them through the affections, because the affections are usually stronger with them than their reasoning powers. How they cling to their priests, for instance, when the cooler heads and greater experience of men condemn, and that merely because their imaginations choose to adorn the offenders with the graces of that religion which they

venerate, and on which they rely? He is a shrewd man who can draw the line between the real and the false in these matters; but he is truly a weak one who disregards evidence, when evidence is complete and clear. That we all have our sins and our failings is true, but there are certain marks of unworthiness which are infallible, and which ought never to be disregarded, since they denote the existence of the want of principle that taints a whole character.

# CHAPTER V

> "He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick; the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other, too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling." —*Beatrice.*

The very day my sister and I left Satanstoe, there was an interesting interview between my grandmother and myself, that it may be well to relate. It took place in the cool of the morning, before breakfast, indeed, and previously to the appearance of any of the rest of the party; for Tom Bayard and his sister had again ridden across the country to pass the night and see us off. My grandmother had requested me to meet her thus early, in a sort of little piazza, that modern improvements had annexed to one end of the old buildings, and in which we both appeared accordingly with the utmost punctuality. I saw by a certain sort of importance that my good grandmother wore in her countenance, that she had weighty matters on her mind, and took the chair she had set for me with some little curiosity to learn what was to follow. The chairs were placed side by side, or nearly so, but looking different ways, and so close together that, when seated, we were quite face to face. My grandmother had on her spectacles, and she gazed wistfully through them at me, parting the curls on my forehead, as had been her wont when I was a boy. I saw tears rolling out from behind the glasses, and felt apprehensive I might have said

or done something to have wounded the spirit of that excellent and indulgent parent.

"For heaven's sake, grandmother, what can this mean?" I cried. "Have I done anything amiss?"

"No, my child, no; but much to the contrary. You are, and ever have been, a good and dutiful son, not only to your real parents, but to me. But your name ought to have been Hugh – that I will maintain long as I live. I told your father as much when you were born; but he was Mordaunt mad then, as, indeed, he has remained pretty much ever since. Not that Mordaunt is not a good name and a respectable name, and they say it is a noble name in England, but it is a family name, and family names are not for Christian names, at the best. Hugh should have been your name, if I could have had my way; and, if not Hugh, Corny. Well, it is too late for that now, as Mordaunt you are, and Mordaunt you must live and die. Did any one ever tell you, my child, how very, *very* like you are to your honored grandfather?"

"My mother, frequently – I have seen the tears start into her eyes as she gazed at me, and she has often told me my family name ought to have been Mordaunt, so much do I resemble her father."

"*Her* father! – Well, Anneke *does* get some of the strangest conceits into her head! A better woman, or a dearer, does not breathe – I love your mother, my child, quite as much as if she had been born my own daughter; but I must say she does get some of the strangest notions into her head that mortal ever imagined.

You like Herman Mordaunt! You are the very image of your grandfather Littlepage, and no more like Herman Mordaunt than you are like the king!"

The revolution was then, and is now, still too recent to prevent these constant allusions to royalty, notwithstanding my grandfather had been as warm a whig as there was in the colonies, from the commencement of the struggle. As for the resemblance spoken of, I have always understood I was a mingled repetition of the two families, as so often happens, a circumstance that enables my different relatives to trace such resemblances as best suit their respective fancies. This was quite convenient, and may have been a reason, in addition to the fact of my being an only son, that I was so great a favorite with the females of my family. My dear old grandmother, who was then in her sixty-ninth year, was so persuaded of my likeness to her late husband, the "old general," as he was now called, that she would not proceed in her communications until she had wiped her eyes, and gratified her affections with another long and wistful gaze.

"Oh, *those* eyes!" she murmured – "and *that* forehead! – The mouth, too, and the nose, to say nothing of the smile, which is as much alike as one pea is like another!"

This left very little for the Mordaunts, it must be owned; the chin and ears being pretty much all that were not claimed for the direct line. It is true my eyes were blue, and the "old general's" had been as black as coals; my nose was Grecian, and his a most obtrusive Roman; and as for the mouth, I can only say mine

was as like that of my mother's as a man's could well be like a woman's. The last I had heard my father say a thousand times. But no matter; age, and affection, and the longings of the parent, caused my grandmother to see things differently.

"Well, Mordaunt," the good old lady at length continued, "how do you like this choice of your sister Kate's? Mr. Bayard is a charming young man, is he not?"

"Is it then a choice, grandmother? Has Kate actually made up her mind?"

"Pshaw!" answered my grandmother, smiling as archly as if she were sixteen herself – "that was done long ago – and papa approved, and mamma was anxious, and I consented, and sister Anneke was delighted, and everything was as smooth as the beach at the end of the Neck, but waiting for your approbation. 'It would not be right, grandmother, for me to engage myself while Mordaunt is away, and without his even knowing the gentleman; so I will not answer until I get his approbation too,' said Kate. That was very pretty in her, was it not, my child? All your father's children *have* a sense of propriety!"

"Indeed it was, and I shall not forget it soon. But suppose I had disapproved, what would have followed, grandmother?"

"You should never ask unpleasant questions, saucy fellow; though I dare to say Kate would at least have asked Mr. Bayard to wait until you had changed your mind. Giving him up altogether would be out of the question, and unreasonable; but she might have waited a few months or so, until you changed your mind;

and I would have advised her so to do. But all that is unnecessary as matters are; for you have expressed your approbation, and Kate is perfectly happy. The last letter from Lilacsbush, which Jaap brought, gives the formal consent of your dear parents – and what parents you have, my child! – so Kate wrote an acceptance yesterday, and it was as prettily expressed a note as I have seen in many a day. Your own mother could not have done better in her young days; and Anneke Mordaunt worded a note as genteelly as any young woman I ever knew."

"I am glad everything has gone right, and am sure no one can wish the young couple more happiness than I do myself. Kate is a dear, good girl, and I love her as much as a brother can love a sister."

"Is she not? and as thorough a Littlepage as ever was born! I *do* hope she will be happy. All the marriages in our family have proved so hitherto, and it would be strange if this should turn out differently. Well, now, Mordaunt, when Kate is married, you will be the only one left."

"That is true, grandmother; and you must be glad to find there will be one of us left to come and see you, without bringing nurses and children at his heels."

"I! – I glad of anything of the sort! No, indeed, my child; I should be sorry enough did I think for a moment, you would not marry as soon as is prudent, now that the war is over. As for the children, I dote on them; and I have ever thought it a misfortune that the Littlepages have had so few, especially sons.

Your grandfather, *my* general, was an only son; your father was an only son; and you are an only son; that is, so far as coming to men's estates are, or were concerned. No, Mordaunt, my child, it is the warmest wish of my heart to see you properly married, and to hold the Littlepages of the next generation in my arms. Two of you I have had there already, and I shall have lived the life of the blessed to be able to hold the third."

"My dear, good grandmother! – what am I to understand by all this?"

"That I wish you to marry, my child, now that the war is ended; that your father wishes you to marry; that your mother wishes you to marry; and that your sister wishes you to marry."

"And all of you wish me to marry the same person? Is it not so?"

My grandmother smiled, but she fidgeted; fancying, as I suspected, that she had been pushing matters a little too fast. It was not easy, however, for one of her truth and simplicity of character to recede after having gone so far; and she wisely determined to have no reserves with me on the subject.

"I believe you are right, Mordaunt," she answered, after a short pause. "We *do* all wish you to fall in love as soon as you can; to propose as soon as you are in love; and to marry Priscilla Bayard, the instant she will consent to have you."

"This is honest, and like yourself, my dear grandmother; and now we both know what is intended, and can speak plainly. In the first place, do you not think one connection of this sort, between

families, quite sufficient? If Kate marry the brother, may I not be excused for overlooking the attractions of the sister?"

"Priscilla Bayard is one of the loveliest girls in York Colony, Mordaunt Littlepage!"

"We call this part of the world York *State*, now, dearest grandmother. I am far from denying the truth of what you say; – Priscilla Bayard *is* very lovely."

"I do not know what more you can wish, than to get such a girl."

"I shall not say that the time will not come when I may be glad to obtain the consent of the young lady to become my wife; but that time has not yet arrived. Then, I question the expediency, when friends greatly desire any particular match, of saying too much about it."

My poor grandmother looked quite astounded, like one who felt she had innocently done mischief; and she sat gazing fondly at me, with the expression of a penitent child painted in her venerated countenance.

"Nevertheless, Mordaunt, I had a great share in bringing about the union between your own dear parents," she at length answered; "and that has been one of the happiest marriages I have ever known!"

I had often heard allusions of this nature, and I had several times observed the quiet smile of my mother, as she listened to them; smiles that seemed to contradict the opinion to which my grandmother's mistaken notions of her own influence had given

birth. On one occasion (I was still quite a boy), I remember to have asked my mother how the fact was, when the answer was, "I married your father through the influence of a butcher's boy;" a reply that had some reference to a very early passage in the lives of my parents. But I well know that Cornelius Littlepage, nor Anneke Mordaunt, was a person to be *coaxed* into matrimony; and I resolved on the spot, their only son should manifest an equal independence. I might have answered my grandmother to this effect, and in language stronger than was my practice when addressing that reverend parent, had not the two girls appeared on the piazza at that moment, and broke up our private conference.

Sooth to say, Priscilla Bayard came forth upon me, that morning, with something like the radiance of the rising sun. Both the girls had that fresh, attractive look, that is apt to belong to the toilets of early risers of their sex, and which probably renders them handsomer at that hour, than at any other part of the day. My own sister was a very charming girl, as any one would allow; but her friend was decidedly beautiful. I confess I found it a little difficult not to give in on the spot, and to whisper my anxious grandmother that I would pay proper attention to the young lady, and make an offer at the suitable time, as she advanced toward us, exchanging the morning salutations, with just enough of ease to render her perfectly graceful, and yet with a modesty and *retenue* that were infinitely winning.

"Mordaunt is about to quit me, for the whole summer, Miss Bayard," said my grandmother, who would be doing while there

was a chance; "and I have had him out here, to converse a little together, before we part. Kate I shall see often during the pleasant season, I trust; but this is to be the last of Mordaunt until the cold weather return."

"Is Mr. Littlepage going to travel?" inquired the young lady, with just as much interest as good breeding demanded, and not a particle more; "for Lilacsbush is not so distant, but he might ride over once a week, at least, to inquire how you do."

"Oh, he is going a great, great distance, and to a part of the world I dread to think of!"

Miss Bayard now looked really startled, and a good deal astonished, questioning me with her very fine eyes, though she said nothing with her tongue of Coejemans, who bears this appellation, and who has contracted to get the necessary surveys made, though he fills the humble post of a 'chainbearer' himself, not being competent to make the calculations.

"How can a mere chainbearer contract for a full survey?" asked Tom Bayard, who had joined the party, and had been listening to the discourse. "The chainbearers, in general, are but common laborers, and are perfectly irresponsible."

"That is true, as a rule; but my old friend forms an exception. He set out for a surveyor, but having no head for sines, and co-sines, and tangents, he was obliged to lower his pretensions to the humbler duty he now discharges. Still, he has long contracted for jobs of this nature, and gets as much as he can do, hiring surveyors himself, the owners of property having the utmost

confidence in his measurements. Let me tell you, the man who carries chain is not the least important member of a surveying party in the woods. Old Andries is as honest as noon-day, and everybody has faith in him."

"His true name is Coejemans, I think you said, Major Littlepage?" asked Priscilla, as it struck me *assuming* an air of indifference.

"It is, Andries Coejemans; and his family is reputable, if not absolutely of a high caste. But the old man is so inveterate a woodsman, that nothing but patriotism, and his whig propensities, could have drawn him out into the open country. After serving most gallantly through the whole war, he has gone back to his chains; and many is the joke he has about remaining still in chains, after fighting so long and so often in the cause of liberty."

Priscilla appeared to hesitate – I thought her color increased a little – then she asked the question that was apparently uppermost in her thoughts, with surprising steadiness.

"Did you ever see the 'Chainbearer's niece, Dus Malbone?"

This question not a little surprised me; for, though I had never seen Ursula, the uncle had talked so much to me of his ward, that I almost fancied she was an intimate acquaintance. It often happens that we hear so much of certain persons, that we think and speak of them as of those we know; and had Miss Bayard questioned me of one of my late comrades in the service, I should not have been a whit more startled than I was at hearing her

pronounce the familiar name of Dus Malbone.

"Where, in the name of all that is curious, did you ever hear of such a person!" I exclaimed, a little inconsiderately, since the world was certainly wide enough to admit of two young women's being acquainted, without my consent; more especially as one of them I had never seen, and the other I had met, for the first time, only a fortnight before. "Old Andries was always speaking to me of his niece; but I could not suppose she was an acquaintance of one of your position in life!"

"Notwithstanding, we were something more than school-fellows; – for we were, and I trust *are* still very, very good friends. I like Dus exceedingly, though she is quite as singular, in *her* way, as I have heard her uncle described to be, in his."

"This is odd! Will you allow me to ask one question? You will think it singular, perhaps, after what you have just told me – but curiosity will get the better of my manners – is Dus Malbone a *lady*– the equal and companion of such a person as Miss Priscilla Bayard?"

"That is a question not so easily answered, perhaps; since, in some respects, she is greatly the superior of any young woman I know. Her family, I have always heard, was very good on both sides; she is poor, poor even to poverty, I fear now." Here Pris. paused; there was a tremor in her voice, even, and I detected tears starting to her eyes. "Poor Dus!" she continued – "she had much to support, in the way of poverty, even while at school; where she was, indeed, as a dependent, rather than as a boarder; but no

one among us all, could presume to offer her favors. I was afraid even to ask her to accept a ribbon, as I should not hesitate to do to Kate here, or any other young lady with whom I was intimate. I never knew a nobler-minded girl than Ursula Malbone, though few persons understand her, I think."

"This is old Andries over again! He was poor enough, heaven knows; and I have known him actually suffer, in order to do his duty by this girl, and to make a proper appearance at the same time, as a captain in the New York line; yet none of us, not even my father, could ever induce him to borrow a single dollar. He would give, but he would not receive."

"I can believe this readily, it is so like Dus! If she has her peculiarities, she has noble qualities enough to redeem of Coejemans, who bears this appellation, and who has contracted to get the necessary surveys made, though he fills the humble post of a 'chainbearer' himself, not being competent to make the calculations."

"How can a mere chainbearer contract for a full survey?" asked Tom Bayard, who had joined the party, and had been listening to the discourse. "The chainbearers, in general, are but common laborers, and are perfectly irresponsible."

"That is true, as a rule; but my old friend forms an exception. He set out for a surveyor, but having no head for sines, and co-sines, and tangents, he was obliged to lower his pretensions to the humbler duty he now discharges. Still, he has long contracted for jobs of this nature, and gets as much as he can do, hiring

surveyors himself, the owners of property having the utmost confidence in his measurements. Let me tell you, the man who carries chain is not the least important member of a surveying party in the woods. Old Andries is as honest as noon-day, and everybody has faith in him."

"His true name is Coejemans, I think you said, Major Littlepage?" asked Priscilla, as it struck me *assuming* an air of indifference.

"It is, Andries Coejemans; and his family is reputable, if not absolutely of a high caste. But the old man is so inveterate a woodsman, that nothing but patriotism, and his whig propensities, could have drawn him out into the open country. After serving most gallantly through the whole war, he has gone back to his chains; and many is the joke he has about remaining still in chains, after fighting so long and so often in the cause of liberty."

Priscilla appeared to hesitate – I thought her color increased a little – then she asked the question that was apparently uppermost in her thoughts, with surprising steadiness.

"Did you ever see the 'Chainbearer's' niece, Dus Malbone?"

This question not a little surprised me; for, though I had never seen Ursula, the uncle had talked so much to me of his ward, that I almost fancied she was an intimate acquaintance. It often happens that we hear so much of certain persons, that we think and speak of them as of those we know; and had Miss Bayard questioned me of one of my late comrades in the service, I should

not have been a whit more startled than I was at hearing her pronounce the familiar name of Dus Malbone.

"Where, in the name of all that is curious, did you ever hear of such a person!" I exclaimed, a little inconsiderately, since the world was certainly wide enough to admit of two young women's being acquainted, without my consent; more especially as one of them I had never seen, and the other I had met, for the first time, only a fortnight before. "Old Andries was always speaking to me of his niece; but I could not suppose she was an acquaintance of one of your position in life!"

"Notwithstanding, we were something more than school-fellows; – for we were, and I trust *are* still very, very good friends. I like Dus exceedingly, though she is quite as singular, in *her* way, as I have heard her uncle described to be, in his."

"This is odd! Will you allow me to ask one question? You will think it singular, perhaps, after what you have just told me – but curiosity will get the better of my manners – is Dus Malbone a *lady*– the equal and companion of such a person as Miss Priscilla Bayard?"

"That is a question not so easily answered, perhaps; since, in some respects, she is greatly the superior of any young woman I know. Her family, I have always heard, was very good on both sides; she is poor, poor even to poverty, I fear now." Here Pris. paused; there was a tremor in her voice, even, and I detected tears starting to her eyes. "Poor Dus!" she continued – "she had much to support, in the way of poverty, even while at school; where

she was, indeed, as a dependent, rather than as a boarder; but no one among us all, could presume to offer her favors. I was afraid even to ask her to accept a ribbon, as I should not hesitate to do to Kate here, or any other young lady with whom I was intimate. I never knew a nobler-minded girl than Ursula Malbone, though few persons understand her, I think."

"This is old Andries over again! He was poor enough, heaven knows; and I have known him actually suffer, in order to do his duty by this girl, and to make a proper appearance at the same time, as a captain in the New York line; yet none of us, not even my father, could ever induce him to borrow a single dollar. He would give, but he would not receive."

"I can believe this readily, it is so like Dus! If she has her peculiarities, she has noble qualities enough to redeem a thousand foibles. Still, I would not have you to think Ursula Malbone is not an excellent creature in all respects, though she certainly has her peculiarities."

"Which, doubtless, she has inherited from the Coejemans, as her uncle, the Chainbearer, has *his* peculiarities, too."

"The Malbones have none of the blood of the Coejemans," answered the lady, quickly; "though it is respectable, and not to be ashamed of. Dus Malbone's mother was only half-sister to Captain Coejemans, and they had different fathers."

I thought Pris. looked a little confused, and as if she were sorry she had said so much on the subject at all, the instant she had betrayed so much intimacy with the Malbone genealogy;

for she shrunk back, plucked a rose, and walked away smelling the flower, like one who was indisposed to say any more on the subject. A summons to breakfast, however, would otherwise have interrupted us, and no more *was* said about the Chainbearer, and his marvellous niece, Dus Malbone. As soon as the meal was ended, our horses were brought round, and Kate and I took our leave, Jaap having preceded us as usual, an hour or more, with our luggage. The reader is not to suppose that we always moved in the saddle, in that day; on the contrary, my mother had a very neat chaise, in which she used to drive about the country, with a mounted postilion; my father had a phaeton, and in town we actually kept a chariot; for the union of the Mordaunt and Littlepage properties had made us very comfortable, and comfortably we lived. But young ladies liked the saddle twenty-five years ago, more than they do to-day; and Kate, being a capital horse-woman, like her mother, before her, we were often out together. It was choice, then, and not necessity, a little aided by bad roads, perhaps, that induced us to ride across to Satanstoe so often, when we wished to visit our grandmother.

I kissed my dear old parent very affectionately at parting, for I was to see her no more that summer; and I got her blessing in return. As for Tom Bayard, a warm, brotherly shake of the hand sufficed, inasmuch as it was pretty certain I should see *him* at Lilacsbush before I left home. Approaching his sister, who held out her hand to me, in a friendly manner, I said as I took it —

"I hope this is not the last time I am to see you before I start

for the new countries, Miss Bayard. You owe my sister a visit, I believe, and I shall trust to that debt for another opportunity of saying the unpleasant word 'farewell.'"

"This is not the way to win a lady's heart, Mordaunt," cried Kate, gayly. "It is only fifteen miles from your father's door to the Hickories, you ought to know, sir; and you have a standing invitation to darken its door with your military form."

"From both my father and brother" – put in Priscilla, a little hastily. "They will always be happy to see Major Littlepage, most certainly."

"And why not from yourself, Miss Prude," added Kate, who seemed bent on causing her friend some confusion. "We are not now such total strangers to each other as to render that little grace improper."

"When I am mistress of a house of my own, should that day ever arrive, I shall take care not to lose my reputation for hospitality," answered Pris., determined not to be caught, "by neglecting to include all the Littlepage family in my invitations. Until then, Tom's and papa's welcomes must suffice."

The girl looked amazingly lovely all the time, and stood the smiles of those around her with a self-possession that showed me she knew perfectly well what she was about. I was never more at a loss how to understand a young woman, and it is very possible, had I remained near her for a month longer, the interest such uncertainty is apt to awaken might have sent me away desperately in love. But Providence had determined otherwise.

During our ride toward the 'Bush, my sister, with proper blushes and a becoming hesitation, let me into the secret of her having accepted Tom Bayard. They were not to be married until after my return from the north, an event that was expected to take place in the ensuing autumn.

"Then I am to lose you, Kate, almost as soon as I find you," I said, a little despondingly.

"Not lose me, brother; no, no, not *lose* me, but *find* me, more than ever. I am to be transplanted into a family whither you will soon be coming to seek a wife yourself."

"Were I to come, what reason have I for supposing it would be successful?"

"That is a question you have no right to ask. Did I even know of any particular reason for believing your reception would be favorable, you cannot believe me sufficiently treacherous to betray my friend. Young ladies are not of the facility of character you seem to suppose, sir; and no method but the direct one will succeed. I have no other reason for believing you would succeed than the facts that you are an agreeable, good-looking youth, however, of unexceptionable family and fortune, living quite near the Hickories, and of a suitable age, temper, habits, character, etc., etc., etc. Are not these reasons sufficient to encourage you to persevere, my brave major?"

"Perseverance implies commencement, and I have not yet commenced. I scarcely know what to make of your friend, child; she is either the perfection of nature and simplicity, or the

perfection of art."

"Art! Pris. Bayard artful! Mordaunt, you never did a human being greater injustice; a child cannot have greater truth and sincerity than Tom's sister."

"Ay, that's just it; Tom's sister is *ex officio* perfection; but, you will please to remember that some children are very artful. All I can say on the subject at present is, that I like Tom, and I like his parents; but I do not know what to think of your friend."

Kate was a little offended, so she made me no answer. Her good humor returned, however, before we had gone far, and the rest of our ride passed pleasantly enough, no allusions being made to any of the name of Bayard; though, I dare say, my companion thought a great deal of a certain Tom, of that name, as I certainly did of his handsome and inexplicable sister.

At the Kingsbridge Inn we had another short brush with that untiring gossip, its landlady.

"A pleasant time it has been over at the 'Toe, I dares to say," exclaimed Mrs. Light, the instant she thrust her head out of the door; "a most agreeable and amusing time both for the young gentleman and for the young lady. Mr. Thomas Bayard and Miss Pris. Bayard have been with you, days and days, and old Madam Littlepage is delighted. Oh! the 'Toe has always been a happy house, and happy faces have I long been used to see come out of it, and happy faces do I see to-day! Yes, yes; the 'Toe has always sent happy, contented faces down the road; and a happy roof it has been, by all accounts, these hundred years."

I dare say this was all true enough. I have always heard that the old place contained contented hearts; and contented hearts make happy faces. Kate's face was happiness itself, as she sat in the saddle listening to the crone; and my countenance is not one of ill-nature. The "'Toe was ever a happy house!" It recalls old times, to hear a house thus familiarly spoken of; for a set is rising up among us which is vastly too genteel to admit that any one – man, woman, child, or Satan, ever had a member so homely as a 'Toe.

# CHAPTER VI

"They love their land, because it is their own,
And scorn to give aught other reason why;
Would shake hands with a king upon his throne,
And think it kindness to his majesty;
A stubborn race, fearing and flattering none,
Such are they nurtured, such they live and die;
All but a few apostates, who are meddling
With merchandise, pounds, shillings, pence and peddling."

– *Halleck.*

A day or two after my return to Lilacsbush, was presented one of these family scenes which are so common in the genial month of June, on the shores of the glorious old Hudson. I call the river the *old* Hudson, for it is quite as old as the Tiber, though the world has not talked of it as much, or as long. A thousand years hence, this stream will be known over the whole earth; and men will speak of it as they now speak of the Danube and the Rhine. As good wine may not be made on its banks as is made on the acclivities of the latter river; but, even to-day, better, both as to quality and variety, is actually drunk. On this last point, all intelligent travellers agree.

There stands a noble linden on the lawn of Lilacsbush, at no great distance from the house, and necessarily within a

short distance of the water. The tree had been planted there by my grandmother Mordaunt's father, to whom the place once belonged; and was admirably placed for the purposes of an afternoon's lounge. Beneath its shade we often took our dessert and wine, in the warm months; and thither, since their return from the army, General Littlepage and Colonel Dirck Follock used to carry their pipes, and smoke over a campaign, or a bottle, as chance directed the discourse. For that matter, no battle-field had ever been so veiled in smoke, as would have been the case with the linden in question, could there have been a concentration of all the vapor it had seen.

The afternoon of the day just mentioned, the whole family were seated beneath the tree, scattered round, as shade and inclination tempted; though a small table, holding fruits and wine, showed that the usual business of the hour had not been neglected. The wines were Madeira and claret, those common beverages in the country; and the fruits were strawberries, cherries, oranges and figs; the two last imported, of course. It was a little too early for us to get pines from the islands, a fruit which is so common in its season as to be readily purchased in town at the rate of four of a good size for a dollar. But, the abundance, and even luxury, of a better sort of the common American tables, is no news; viands, liquors and fruits appearing on them, that are only known to the very rich and very luxurious in the countries of Europe. If the service were only as tasteful, and the cooking as good with us, as both are in France, for instance, America would

be the very paradise of the epicure, let superficial travellers say what they please to the contrary. I have been abroad in these later times, and speak of what I know.

No one sat *at* the table, though my father, Colonel

Dirck, and I were near enough to reach our glasses, at need. My mother was next to me, and reasonably close; for I did not smoke, while aunt Mary and Kate had taken post just without the influence of the tobacco. On the shore was a large skiff, that contained a tolerably sized trunk or two, and a sort of clothes-bag. In the first were a portion of my clothes, while those of Jaap filled the bag. The negro himself was stretched on the grass, about half-way between the tree and the shore, with two or three of his grandchildren rolling about, at his feet. In the skiff was his son, seated in readiness to use the sculls, as soon as ordered.

All this arrangement denoted my approaching departure for the north. The wind was at the south, and sloops of various degrees of promise and speed were appearing round the points, coming on one in the wake of another, as each had been able to quit the wharves to profit by the breeze. In that day, the river had not a tenth part of the craft it now possesses; but still, it had enough to make a little fleet, so near town, and at a moment when wind and tide both became favorable. At that time, most of the craft on the Hudson belonged up the river, and they partook largely of the taste of our Dutch ancestors. Notable travellers before the gales, they did very little with foul winds, generally requiring from a week to a fortnight to tide it down from Albany,

with the wind at all from the south. Nevertheless, few persons thought of making the journey between the two largest towns of the state (York and Albany), without having recourse to one of these sloops. I was at that moment in waiting for the appearance of a certain "Eagle, of Albany, Captain Bogert," which was to run in close to Lilacsbush, and receive me on board, agreeably to an arrangement previously made in town. I was induced to take a passage in this vessel from the circumstance that she had a sort of after-cabin that was screened by an ample green curtain, an advantage that all the vessels which then plied on the river did not possess; though great improvements have been making ever since the period of which I am now writing.

Of course, the interval thus passed in waiting for the appearance of the Eagle was filled up, more or less, by discourse. Jaap, who was to accompany me in my journey to Ravensnest, knew every vessel on the river, as soon as he could see her, and we depended on him to let us know when I was to embark, though the movements of the sloop herself could not fail to give us timely notice of the necessity of taking leave.

"I should like exceedingly to pay a visit to old Mrs. Vander Heyden, at Kinderhook, Mordaunt," said my mother, after one of the frequent pauses that occurred in the discourse. "She is a relation, and I feel a great regard for her; so much the more, from the circumstance of her being associated in my mind with that frightful night on the river, of which you have heard me speak."

As my mother ceased speaking, she glanced affectionately

toward the general, who returned the look, as he returned all my mother's looks, with one filled with manly tenderness. A more united couple than my parents never existed. They seemed to me ordinarily to have but one mind between them; and when there did occur any slight difference of opinion, the question was not which should prevail, but which should yield. Of the two, my mother may have had the most native intellect, though the general was a fine, manly, sensible person, and was very universally respected.

"It might be well, Anneke," said my father, "if the major were to pay a visit to poor Guert's grave, and see if the stones are up, and that the place is kept as it should be. I have not been there since the year '68, when it looked as if a friendly eye might do some good at no distant day."

This was said in a low voice, purposely to prevent aunt Mary from hearing it; and, as she was a little deaf, it is probable the intention was successful. Not so, however, with Colonel Dirck, who drew the pipe from his mouth, and sat attentively listening, in the manner of one who felt great interest in the subject. Another pause succeeded.

"T'en t'ere ist my Lort Howe, Corny," observed the colonel, "how is it wit' his grave?"

"Oh! the colony took good care of that. They buried him in the main aisle of St. Peter's, I believe; and no doubt all is right with him. As for the other, major, it might be well to look at it."

"Great changes have taken place at Albany, since we were

there as young people!" observed my mother, thoughtfully. "The Cuylers are much broken up by the revolution, while the Schuylers have grown greater than ever. Poor aunt Schuyler, she is no longer living to welcome a son of ours!"

"Time will bring about such changes, my love; and we can only be thankful that so many of us remain, after so long and bloody a war."

I saw my mother's lips move, and I knew she was murmuring a thanksgiving to the power which had preserved her husband and son through the late struggle.

"You will write as often as opportunities occur, Mordaunt," said that dear parent, after a longer pause than usual. "Now there is peace, I can hope to get your letters with some little regularity."

"They tell me, cousin Anneke" – for so the colonel always called my mother when we were alone – "They tell me, cousin Anneke," said Colonel Dirck, "t'at t'ey actually mean to have a mail t'ree times a week petween Alpany and York! T'ere ist no knowing, general, what t'is glorious revolution will not do for us!"

"If it bring me letters three times a week from those I love," rejoined my mother, "I am sure my patriotism will be greatly increased. How will letters get out from Ravensnest to the older parts of the colony – I should say state, Mordaunt?"

"I must trust to the settlers for that. Hundreds of Yankees, they tell me, are out looking for farms this summer. I may use some of them for messengers."

"Don't trust 'em too much, or too many" – growled Colonel

Dirck, who had the old Dutch grudge against our eastern brethren. "See how they behav't to Schuyler."

"Yes," said my father, replenishing his pipe, "they *might* have manifested more justice and less prejudice to wise Philip; but prejudices will exist, all over the world. Even Washington has had his share."

"T'at is a great man!" exclaimed Colonel Dirck, with emphasis, and in the manner of one who felt certain of his point. "A *ferry* great man!"

"No one will dispute with you, colonel, on that subject; but have you no message to send to our old comrade, Andries Coejemans? He must have been at Mooseridge, with his party of surveyors, now near a twelvemonth, and I'll warrant you has thoroughly looked up the old boundaries, so as to be ready for Mordaunt to start afresh as soon as the boy reaches the patent."

"I hope he has not hiret a Yankee surveyor, Corny," put in the colonel, in some little alarm. "If one of t'em animals gets upon the tract, he will manage to carry off half of the lant in his compass-box! I hope olt Andries knows petter."

"I dare say he'll manage to keep all the land, as well as to survey it. It is a thousand pities the captain has no head for figures; for his honesty would have made his fortune. But I have seen him tried, and know it will not do. He was a week once making up an account of some stores received from head-quarters, and the nearest he could get to the result was twenty-five per cent. out of the way."

"I would sooner trust Andries Coejemans to survey my property, figures or no figures," cried Colonel Dirck, positively, "than any dominie in New England."

"Well, that is as one thinks," returned my father, tasting the Madeira. "For my part, I shall be satisfied with the surveyor he may happen to select, even though he should be a Yankee. Andries is shrewd, if he be no calculator; and I dare to say he has engaged a suitable man. Having taken the job at a liberal price, he is too honest a fellow not to hire a proper person to do the head-work. As for all the rest, I would trust him as soon as I would trust any man in America."

"T'at is gospel. Mordaunt will haf an eye on matters too, seein' he has so great an interest in the estate. T'ere is one t'ing, major, you must not forget. Five hundred goot acres must be surveyed off for sister Anneke, and five hundred for pretty Kate, here. As soon as t'at is done, the general and I will give each of the gals a deet."

"Thank you, Dirck," said my father, with feeling. "I'll not refuse the land for the girls, who may be glad enough to own it some time or other."

"It's no great matter now, Corny; put, as you say, it may be of use one day. Suppose we make old Andries a present of a farm, in his pargain."

"With all my heart," cried my father, quickly. "A couple of hundred acres might make him comfortable for the rest of his days. I thank you for the hint, Dirck, and we will let Mordaunt

choose the lot, and send us the description, that we may prepare the deed."

"You forget, general, that the Chainbearer has, or will have his military lot, as a captain," I ventured to remark. "Besides, land will be of little use to him, unless it might be to measure it. I doubt if the old man would not prefer going without his dinner, to hoeing a hill of potatoes."

"Andries had three slaves while he was with us; a man, a woman, and their daughter," returned my father. "He would not sell them, he said, on any consideration; and I have known him actually suffering for money when he was too proud to accept it from his friends, and too benevolent to part with family slaves, in order to raise it. 'They were born Coejemans,' he always said, 'as much as I was born one myself, and they shall die Coejemans.' He doubtless has these people with him, at the Ridge, where you will find them all encamped, near some spring, with garden-stuff and other small things growing around him, if he can find open land enough for such a purpose. He has permission to cut and till at pleasure."

"This is agreeable news to me, general," I answered, "since it promises a sort of home. If the Chainbearer has really these blacks with him, and has hutted judiciously, I dare say we shall have quite as comfortable a time as many of those we passed together in camp. Then, I shall carry my flute with me; for Miss Priscilla Bayard has given me reason to expect a very wonderful creature in Dus, the niece, of which old Andries used to talk so

much. You remember to have heard the Chainbearer speak of such a person, I dare say, sir; for he was quite fond of mentioning her."

"Perfectly well; Dus Malbone was a sort of toast among the young men of the regiment at one time, though no one of them all ever could get a sight of her, by hook or by crook."

Happening to turn my head at that moment, I found my dear mother's eyes turned curiously on me; brought there, I fancy, by the allusion to Tom's sister.

"What does Priscilla Bayard know of this Chainbearer's niece?" that beloved parent asked, as soon as she perceived that her look had attracted my attention.

"A great deal, it would seem; since she tells me they are fast friends; quite as great, I should judge from Miss Bayard's language and manner, as Kate and herself."

"That can scarcely be," returned my mother, slightly smiling, "since there the principal reason must be wanting. Then, this Dus can hardly be Priscilla Bayard's equal."

"One never knows such a thing, mother, until he has had an opportunity of making comparisons; though Miss Bayard herself says Dus is much her superior in many things. I am sure her uncle is *my* superior in some respects; in carrying chain, particularly so."

"Ay, but scarcely in station, Mordaunt."

"He was the senior captain of the regiment."

"True; but revolutions are revolutions. What I mean is, that

your Chainbearer can hardly be a gentleman."

"That is a point not to be decided in a breath. He is, and he is not. Old Andries is of a respectable family, though but indifferently educated. Men vastly his inferiors in birth, in habits, in the general notions of the caste, in the New England States, are greatly his superiors in knowledge. Nevertheless, while we must all admit how necessary a certain amount of education has become, at the present time, to make a gentleman, I think every gentleman will allow hundreds among us have degrees in their pockets with small claims to belong to the class. Three or four centuries ago, I should have answered that old Andries *was* a gentleman, though he had to bite the wax with his teeth and make a cross, for want of a better signature."

"And he what you call a chainbearer, Mordaunt!" exclaimed my sister.

"As well as late senior captain in your father's regiment, Miss Littlepage. But, no matter, Andries and Dus are such as they are, and I shall be glad to have them for companions this summer. Jaap is making signals, and I must quit you all. Heigho! It is very pleasant here, under this linden, and home begins to entwine its fibres around my heart. Never mind; it will soon be autumn, and I shall see the whole of you, I trust, as I leave you, well and happy in town."

My dear, dear mother had tears in her eyes, when she embraced me; so had Kate, who, though she did love Tom Bayard most, loved me very warmly too. Aunt Mary kissed me, in her

quiet but affectionate way; and I shook hands with the gentlemen, who accompanied me down to the boat. I could see that my father was affected. Had the war still continued, he would have thought nothing of the separation; but in that piping time of peace it seemed to come unseasonably.

"Now don't forget the great lots for Anneke and Katrinke," said Colonel Dirck, as we descended to the shore. "Let Andries pick out some of the best of the lant, t'at is well watered and timbered, and we'll call the lots after the gals; that is a goot idea, Corny."

"Excellent, my friend. Mordaunt, my son, if you come across any places that look like graves, I wish you would set up marks by which they may be known. It is true, a quarter of a century or more makes many changes in the woods; and it is quite likely no such remains will be found."

"A quarter of a century in the American forests, sir," I answered, "is somewhat like the same period in the wanderings of a comet; lost, in the numberless years of its growth. A single tree will sometimes outlast the generations of an entire nation."

"You wilt rememper, Mordaunt, that I wilt haf no Yankee tenants on *my* estate. Your father may lease 'em one-half of a lot, if he please; but I will not lease t'other."

"As you are tenants in common, gentlemen," I answered, smiling, "it will not be easy to separate the interests in this manner. I believe I understand you, however; I am to sell the lands of Mooseridge, or covenant to sell, as your attorney, while I

follow out my grandfather Mordaunt's ideas, and lease those that are not yet leased, on my own estate. This will at least give the settlers a choice, and those who do not like one plan of obtaining their farms may adopt the other."

I now shook hands again with the gentlemen, and stepping into the skiff, we pulled away from the shore. Jaap had made this movement in good season, and we were compelled to row a quarter of a mile down the river to meet the sloop. Although the wind was perfectly fair, it was not so fresh as to induce Mr. Bogert to round-to; but throwing us a rope, it was caught, when we were safely transferred, bag and baggage, to the decks of the Eagle.

Captain Bogert was smoking at the helm, when he returned my salute. Removing the pipe, after a puff or two, he pointed with the stem toward the group on the shore, and inquired if I wished to say "good-by."

"*Allponny*" – so the Dutch were wont to pronounce the name of their town in the last century – "is a long way off," he said, "and maype you woult like to see the frients ag'in."

This business of waving hats and handkerchiefs is a regular thing on the Hudson, and I expressed my willingness to comply with the usage, as a matter of course.[5] In consequence, Mr.

---

[5] Such were the notions of Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage, at the commencement of this century, and such his feeling shortly after the peace of 1783. Nothing of the sort more completely illustrates the general change that has come over the land, in habits and material things, than the difference between the movements of that day and those of our own. Then, the departure of a sloop, or the embarkation of a passenger along the

Bogert deliberately sheered in toward the shore, and I saw the whole family collecting on a low rock, near the water, to take the final look. In the background stood the Satanstoes, a dark, woolly group, including Mrs. Jaap, and two generations of descendants. The whites were weeping; that is to say, my dear mother and Kate; and the blacks were laughing, though the old lady kept her teeth to herself about as much as she exposed them. A sensation almost invariably produces laughter with a negro, the only exceptions being on occasions of singular gravity.

I believe, if the truth were known, Mr. Bogert greatly exulted in the stately movement of his sloop, as she brushed along the shore, at no great distance from the rocks, with her main-boom guyed out to starboard, and studding-sail boom to port. The flying-topsail, too, was set; and the Eagle might be said to be moving in all her glory. She went so near the rocks, too, as if she despised danger! Those were not the days of close calculations that have succeeded. Then, an Albany skipper did not mind losing a hundred or two feet of distance in making his run; whereas, now, it would not be an easy matter to persuade a Liverpool trader to turn as much aside in order to speak a stranger in the centre of the Atlantic; unless, indeed, he happened to want

---

shore, brought parties to the wharves, and wavings of handkerchiefs, as if those who were left behind felt a lingering wish to see the last of their friends. Now, literally thousands come and go daily, passing about as many hours on the Hudson as their grandfathers passed days; and the shaking of hands and leave-takings are usually done at home. It would be a bold woman who would think now of waving a handkerchief to a Hudson River steamboat! – Editor.

to get the other's longitude.

As the sloop swept past the rocks, I got bows, waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and good wishes enough to last the whole voyage. Even Jaap had his share; and "good-by, Jaap," came to my ears, from even the sweet voice of Kate. Away we went, in stately Dutch movement, slow *but sure*. In ten minutes Lilacsbush was behind us, and I was once more alone in the world, for months to come.

There was now time to look about me, and to ascertain who were my companions in this voyage. The skipper and crew were as usual the masters; and the pilots, both whites, and both of Dutch extraction, an old wrinkled negro, who had passed his life on the Hudson as a foremast hand, and two younger blacks, one of whom was what was dignified with the name of cabin-steward. Then there were numerous passengers; some of whom appeared to belong to the upper classes. They were of both sexes, but all were strangers to me. On the main-deck were six or eight sturdy, decent, quiet, respectable-looking laborers, who were evidently of the class of husbandmen. Their packs were lying in a pile, near the foot of the mast, and I did not fail to observe that there were as many axes as there were packs.

The American axe! It has made more real and lasting conquests than the sword of any warlike people that ever lived; but they have been conquests that have left civilization in their train instead of havoc and desolation. More than a million of

square miles of territory[6] have been opened up from the shades of the virgin forest, to admit the warmth of the sun; and culture and abundance have been spread where the beast of the forest so lately roamed, hunted by the savage. Most of this, too, has been effected between the day when I went on board the Eagle, and that on which I am now writing. A brief quarter of a century has seen these wonderful changes wrought; and at the bottom of them all lies this beautiful, well-prized, ready and efficient implement, the American axe!

It would not be easy to give the reader a clear notion of the manner in which the young men and men of all ages of the older portions of the new republic poured into the woods to commence the business of felling the forests, and laying bare the secrets of nature, as soon as the nation rose from beneath the pressure of war, to enjoy the freedom of peace. The history of that day in New York, which State led the van in the righteous strife of improvement, and has ever since so nobly maintained its vantage-ground, has not yet been written. When it is properly recorded names will be rescued from oblivion that better deserve statues and niches in the temple of national glory, than those of many who have merely got the start of them by means of the greater facility with which the public mind is led away in the train of brilliant exploits, than it is made sensible of the merits of those that are humane and useful.

It was not usual for settlers, as it has become the practice

---

[6] More than two millions at the present day.

to term those who first take up and establish themselves on new lands, to make their journeys from the neighborhood of the sea to the interior, other than by land; but a few passed out of Connecticut by the way of New York, and thence up the river in sloops. Of this character were those found on board the Eagle. In all, we had seven of these men, who got into discourse with me the first day of our passage, and I was a little surprised at discovering how much they already knew of me, and of my movements. Jaap, however, soon suggested himself to my mind, as the probable means of the intelligence they had gleaned; and, on inquiry, such I ascertained was the fact.

The curiosity and the questioning propensities of the people of New England, have been so generally admitted by writers and commentators on American character, that I suppose one has a right to assume the truth of these characteristics. I have heard various ways of accounting for them; and among others, the circumstances of their disposition to emigrate, which brings with it the necessity of inquiring after the welfare of friends at a distance. It appears to me, however, this is taking a very narrow view of the cause, which I attribute to the general activity of mind among a people little restrained by the conventional usages of more sophisticated conditions of society. The practice of referring so much to the common mind, too, has a great influence on all the opinions of this peculiar portion of the American population, seeming to confer the right to inquire into matters that are elsewhere protected by the sacred feeling of individual

privacy.

Let this be as it might, my axe-men had contrived to get out of Jaap all he knew about Ravensnest and Mooseridge, as well as my motives in making the present journey. This information obtained, they were not slow in introducing themselves to me, and of asking the questions that were uppermost in their minds. Of course, I made such answers as were called for by the case, and we established a sort of business acquaintance between us, the very first day. The voyage lasting several days, by the time we reached Albany, pretty much all that could be said on such a subject had been uttered by one side or the other.

As respected Ravensnest, my own property, my grandfather had requested in his will that the farms might be leased, having an eye to my children's profit, rather than to mine. His request was a law to me, and I had fully determined to offer the unoccupied lands of that estate, or quite three-fourths of the whole patent, on leases similar in their conditions to those which had already been granted. On the other hand, it was the intention to part with the lots of Mooseridge in fee. These conditions were made known to the axe-men, as my first essay in settling a new country; and, contrary to what had been my expectation, I soon discovered that these adventurers inclined more to the leases than to the deeds. It is true, I expected a small payment down, in the case of each absolute sale, while I was prepared to grant leases, for three lives, at very low rents at the best; and in the cases of a large proportion of the lots, those that were the least eligible by

situation, or through their quality, to grant them leases without any rent at all, for the first few years of their occupation. These last advantages, and the opportunity of possessing lands a goodly term of years, for rents that were put as low as a shilling an acre, were strong inducements, as I soon discovered, with those who carried all they were worth in their packs, and who thus reserved the little money they possessed to supply the wants of their future husbandry.

We talked these matters over during the week we were on board the sloop; and by the time we came in sight of the steeples of Albany, my men's minds were made up to follow me to the Nest. These steeples were then two in number, viz.: that of the English church, that stood near the margin of the town, against the hill; and that of the Dutch church, which occupied an humbler site, on the low land, and could scarcely be seen rising above the pointed roofs of the adjacent houses; though these last, themselves were neither particularly high nor particularly imposing.

# CHAPTER VII

"Who is that graceful female here
With yon red hunter of the deer?
Of gentle mien and shape, she seems
For civil halls design'd;
Yet with the stately savage walks,
As she were of his kind."

– *Pinckney.*

I made little stay in Albany, but, giving the direction to the patent to the axe-men, left it the very day of our arrival. There were very few public conveyances in that early day, and I was obliged to hire a wagon to transport Jaap and myself, with our effects, to Ravensnest. A sort of dull calm had come over the country, after the struggles of the late war; but one interest in it appearing to be alive and very active. That interest, fortunately for me, appeared to be the business of "land-hunting" and "settling." Of this I had sufficient proof in Albany itself; it being difficult to enter the principal street of that town, and not find in it more or less of those adventurers, the emblems of whose pursuit were the pack and the axe. Nine out of ten came from the Eastern or New England States; then the most peopled, while they were not very fortunate in either soil or climate.

We were two days in reaching Ravensnest, a property which

I had owned for several years, but which I now saw for the first time. My grandfather had left a sort of agent on the spot, a person of the name of Jason Newcome, who was of my father the general's age, and who had once been a school-master in the neighborhood of Satanstoe. This agent had leased extensively himself, and was said to be the occupant of the only mills of any moment on the property. With him a correspondence had been maintained; and once or twice during the war my father had managed to have an interview with this representative of his and my interests. As for myself, I was now to see him for the first time. We knew each other by reputation only; and certain passages in the agency had induced me to give Mr. Newcome notice that it was my intention to make a change in the management of the property.

Any one who is familiar with the aspect of things in what is called a "new country" in America, must be well aware it is not very inviting. The lovers of the picturesque can have little satisfaction in looking even on the finest natural scenery at such moments; the labor that has been effected usually having done so much to mar the beauties of nature, without having yet had time to supply the deficiencies by those of art. Piles of charred or half-burned logs: fields covered with stumps, or ragged with *stubs*; fences of the rudest sorts, and filled with brambles; buildings of the meanest character; deserted clearings; and all the other signs of a state of things in which there is a manifest and constant struggle between immediate necessity and

future expediency, are not calculated to satisfy either the hopes or the tastes. Occasionally a different state of things, however, under circumstances peculiarly favorable, does exist; and it may be well to allude to it, lest the reader form but a single picture of this transition state of American life. When the commerce of the country is active, and there is a demand for the products of new lands, a settlement often presents a scene of activity in which the elements of a thriving prosperity make themselves apparent amid the smoke of fallows, and the rudeness of border life. Neither, however, was the case at Ravensnest when I first visited the place; though the last was, to a certain extent, its condition two or three years later, or after the great European war brought its wheat and ashes into active demand.

I found but few more signs of cultivation, between the point where I left the great northern road and the bounds of the patent, than had been found by my father, as he had described them to me in his first visit, which took place a quarter of a century earlier than this of mine. There was one log tavern, it is true, in the space mentioned; but it afforded nothing to drink but rum, and nothing to eat but salted pork and potatoes, the day I stopped there to dine. But there were times and seasons when, by means of venison, wild-fowl and fish, a luxurious board might have been spread. That this was not the opinion of my landlady, nevertheless, was apparent from the remarks she made while I was at table.

"You are lucky, Major Littlepage," she said, "in not having

come among us in one of what I call our 'starving times' – and awful times they be, if a body may say what she thinks on 'em."

"Starvation is a serious matter at any time," I answered, "though I did not know you were ever reduced to such difficulties in a country as rich and abundant as this."

"Of what use is riches and abundance if a man will do nothing but fish and shoot? I've seen the day when there wasn't a mouthful to eat in this house, but a dozen or two of squabs, a string of brook trout, and maybe a deer, or a salmon from one of the lakes."

"A little bread would have been a welcome addition to such a meal."

"Oh! as for bread, I count that for nothin'. We always have bread and potatoes enough; but I hold a family to be in a desperate way, when the mother can see the bottom of the pork barrel. Give me the children that's raised on good sound pork, afore all the game in the country. Game's good as a relish, and so's bread; but pork is the staff of life! To have good pork, a body must have good corn; and good corn needs hoeing; and a hoe isn't a fish-pole or a gun. No, my children I calkerlate to bring up on pork, with just as much bread and butter as they may want!"

This was American poverty as it existed in 1784. Bread, butter, and potatoes, *ad libitum*; but little pork, and no tea. Game in abundance in its season; but the poor man who lived on game was supposed to be keeping just as poor an establishment as the epicure in town who gives a dinner to his brethren, and is

compelled to apologize for there being no game in the market. Curious to learn more from this woman, I pursued the discourse.

"There are countries, I have read," I continued, "in which the poor do not taste meat of any sort, not even game, from the beginning of the year to its end; and sometimes not even bread."

"Well, I'm no great hand for bread, as I said afore, and should eat no great matter of it, so long as I could get pork," the woman answered, evidently interested in what I had said; "but I shouldn't like to be without it altogether; and the children, especially, do love to have it with their butter. Living on potatoes alone must be a wild animal sort of a life."

"Very tame animals do it, and that from dire necessity."

"Is there any law ag'in their using bread and meat?"

"No other law than the one which forbids their using that which is the property of another."

"Good land!" This is a very common American expression among the women – "Good land! Why don't they go to work and get in crops, so they might live a little?"

"Simply because they have no land to till. The land belongs to others, too."

"I should think they might hire, if they couldn't buy. It's about as good to hire as it is to buy – some folks (folk) think it's better. Why don't they take land on shares, and live?"

"Because land itself is not to be had. With us, land is abundant; we have more of it than is necessary, or than will be necessary, for ages to come; perhaps it would be better for our civilization

were there less of it, but, in the countries of which I speak, there are more people than there is land."

"Well, land is a good thing, I admit, and it's right there should be an owner to it; yet there are folks who would rather squat than buy or hire, any day. Squatting comes nat'ral to 'em."

"Are there many squatters in this part of the country?"

The woman looked a little confused, and she did not answer me, until she had taken time to reflect on what she should say.

"Some folks call *us* squatters, I s'pose," was the reluctant answer, "but *I* do not. We have bought the betterments of a man who hadn't much of a title, I think likely; but as *we* bought his betterments fairly, Mr. Tinkum" – that was the husband's name – "is of opinion that we live under title, as it is called. What do you say to it, Major Littlepage?"

"I can only say that naught will produce naught; nothing, nothing. If the man of whom you purchased owned nothing, he could sell nothing. The betterments he called his, were not his; and in purchasing them, you purchased what he did not own."

"Well, it's no great shakes, if he hadn't any right, sin' Tinkum only gi'n an old saddle, that warn't worth two dollars, and part of a set of single harness, that I'd defy a conjuror to make fit any mule, for the whull right. One year's rent of this house is worth all put together, and that twice over, if the truth must be said; and we've been in it, now seven years. My four youngest were all born under this blessed roof, such as it is!"

"In that case, you will not have much reason to complain,

when the real owner of the soil appears to claim it. The betterments came cheap, and they will go as cheap."

"That's just it; though I don't call ourselves much of squatters, a'ter all, seein' we *have* paid suthin' for the betterments. They say an old nail, paid in due form, will make a sort of title in the highest court of the state. I'm sure the laws should be considerate of the poor."

"Not more so than of the rich. The laws should be equal and just; and the poor are the last people who ought to wish them otherwise, since they are certain to be the losers when any other principle governs. Rely on it, my good woman, the man who is forever preaching the rights of the poor is at bottom a rogue, and means to make that cry a stalking-horse for his own benefit; since nothing can serve the poor but severe justice. No class suffers so much by a departure from the rule, as the rich have a thousand other means of attaining their ends, when the way is left clear to them, by setting up any other master than the right."

"I don't know but it may be so; but I don't call ourselves squatters. There is dreadful squatters about here, though, and on your lands too, by the tell."

"On my lands? I am sorry to hear it, for I shall feel it a duty to get rid of them. I very well know that the great abundance of land that we have in the country, its little comparative value, and the distance at which the owners generally reside from their estates, have united to render the people careless of the rights of those who possess real property; and I am prepared to view

things as they are among ourselves, rather than as they exist in older countries; but I shall not tolerate squatters."

"Well, by all I hear, I think you'll call old Andries, the Chainbearer, a squatter of the first class. They tell me the old chap has come back from the army as fierce as a catamount, and that there is no speaking to him, as one used to could, in old times."

"You are, then, an old acquaintance of the Chainbearer?"

"I should think I was! Tinkum and I have lived about, a good deal, in our day; and old Andries is a desp'ate hand for the woods. He surveyed out for us, once, or half-surveyed, another betterment; but he proved to be a spiteful rogue afore he got through with the business; and we have not set much store by him ever sin' that time."

"The Chainbearer a rogue! Andries Coejemans any thing but an honest man! You are the first person, Mrs. Tinkum, I have ever heard call in question his sterling integrity."

"Sterling money doesn't pass now, I conclude, sin' it's revolution times. We all know which side your family was on in the war, Major Littlepage; so it's no offence to you. A proper sharp lookout they had of it here, when you quit college; for some said old Herman Mordaunt had ordered in his will that you should uphold the king; and then, most of the tenants concluded *they* would get the lands altogether. It is a sweet thing, major, for a tenant to get his farm without paying for it, as you may judge! Some folks was desp'ate sorry when they heern tell that

the Littlepages went with the colonies."

"I hope there are few such knaves on the Ravensnest estate as to wish anything of the sort. But, let me hear an explanation of your charge against the Chainbearer. I have no great concern for my own rights in the patent that I claim."

The woman had the audacity, or the frankness, to draw a long, regretful sigh, as it might be, in my very face. That sigh expressed her regrets that I had not taken part with the crown in the last struggle; in which case, I do suppose, she and Tinkum would have contrived to squat on one of the farms of Ravensnest. Having sighed, however, the landlady did not disdain to answer.

"As for the Chainbearer, the simple truth is this," she said. "Tinkum hired him to run a line between some betterments we had bought, and some that had been bought by a neighbor of our'n. This was long afore the war, and when titles were scarcer than they're gettin' to be now, some of the landlords living across the water. Well, what do you think the old fellow did, major? He first asked for our deeds, and we showed them to him; as good and lawful warrantees as was ever printed and filled up by a 'squire. He then set to work, all by himself, jobbing the whull survey, as it might be, and a prettier line was never run, as far as he went, which was about half-way. I thought it would make etarnel peace atween us and our neighbor, for it had been etarnel war afore that, for three whull years; sometimes with clubs, and sometimes with axes, and once with scythes. But, somehow – I never know'd *how*– but *somehow*, old Andries found out that the

man who deeded to us had no deed to himself, or no mortal right to the land, any more than that sucking pig you see at the door there; when he gi'n right up, refusing to carry out another link, or p'int another needle, he did! Warn't that being cross-grained and wilful! No, there's no dependence to be put on the Chainbearer."

"Wilful in the cause of right, as glorious old Andries always is! I love and honor him all the better for it."

"La! Do you love and honor sich a one as him! Well, I should have expected suthin' else from sich a gentleman as you! I'd no idee Major Littlepage could honor an old, worn-out chainbearer, and he a man that couldn't get up in the world, too, when he had hands and feet, all on 'em together on some of the very best rounds of the ladder! Why, I judge that even Tinkum would have gone ahead, if he had been born with sich a chance."

"Andries has been a captain in my own regiment, it is true, and was once my superior officer; but he served for his country's sake, and not for his own. Have you seen him lately?"

"That we have! He passed here about a twelvemonth ago, with his whull party, on their way to squat on your own land, or I'm mistaken. There was the Chainbearer himself, two helpers, Dus and young Malbone."

"Young who?" I asked, with an interest that induced the woman to turn her keen, sunken, but sharp gray eyes, intently on me.

"Young Malbone, I said; Dus's brother, and the youngster who does all old Andries's 'rithmetic. I suppose you know as well as

I do, that the Chainbearer can't calkerlate any more than a wild goose, and not half as well as a crow. For that matter, I've known crows that, in plantin' time, would measure a field in half the number of minutes that the state surveyor would be hours at it."

"This young Malbone, then, is the Chainbearer's nephew? And he it is who does the surveying?"

"He does the 'rithmetic part, and he is a brother of old Andries's niece. I know'd the Coejemans when I was a gal, and I've known the Malbones longer than I want to know them."

"Have you any fault to find with the family, that you speak thus of them?"

"Nothin' but their desperate pride, which makes them think themselves so much better than everybody else; yet, they tell me, Dus and all on 'em are just as poor as I am myself."

"Perhaps you mistake their feeling, good woman; a thing I think the more probable, as you seem to fancy money the source of their pride, at the very moment you deny their having any. Money is a thing on which few persons of cultivated minds pride themselves. The purse-proud are, almost invariably, the vulgar and ignorant."

No doubt this was a moral thrown away with such an auditor; but I was provoked; and when a man is provoked, he is not always wise. The answer showed the effect it had produced.

"I don't pretend to know how that is; but if it isn't pride, what is it that makes Dus Malbone so different from my da'ters? She'd no more think of being like one on 'em, scouring about the lots,

riding bare-backed, and scampering through the neighborhood, than you'd think of cooking my dinner – that she wouldn't."

Poor Mrs. Tinkum – or, as she would have been apt to call herself, *Miss* Tinkum! She had betrayed one of the commonest weaknesses of human nature, in thus imputing pride to the Chainbearer's niece because the latter behaved differently from her and hers. How many persons in this good republic of ours judge their neighbors on precisely the same principle; inferring something unsuitable, because it *seems* to reflect on their own behavior! But by this time, I had got to hear the name of Dus with some interest, and I felt disposed to push the subject further.

"Miss Malbone, then," I said, "does *not* ride bare-back?"

"La! major, what in natur' puts it into your head to call the gal *Miss* Malbone! There's no Miss Malbone living sin' her own mother died."

"Well, Dus Malbone, I mean; she is above riding bare-backed?"

"That she is; even a pillion would be hardly grand enough for her, allowing her own brother to use the saddle."

"Her own brother! This young surveyor, then, *is* Dus's brother?"

"Sort o', and sort o' not, like. They had the same father, but different mothers."

"That explains it; I never heard the Chainbearer speak of any nephew, and it seems the young man is not related to him at all – he is the *half*-brother of his niece."

"Why can't that niece behave like other young women? that's the question I ask. My girls hasn't as much pride as would be good for 'em, not they! If a body wants to borrow an article over at the Nest, and that's seven miles off, the whull way in the woods, just name it to Poll, and she'd jump on an ox, if there warn't a hoss, and away she'd go a'ter it, with no more bit of a saddle, and may be nothin' but a halter, like a deer! Give me Poll, afore all the gals I know, for ar'nds?"

By this time, disrelish for vulgarity was getting the better of curiosity; and my dinner of fried pork being done, I was willing to drop the discourse. I had learned enough of Andries and his party to satisfy my curiosity, and Jaap was patiently waiting to succeed me at the table. Throwing down the amount of the bill, I took a fowling-piece, with which we always travelled in those days, bade Mrs. Tinkum good-day, ordered the black and the wagoner to follow with the team as soon as ready, and went on toward my own property on foot.

In a very few minutes I was quite beyond the Tinkum betterments, and fairly in the forest again. It happened that the title to a large tract of land adjoining Ravensnest was in dispute, and no attempt at a serious settlement had ever been made on it. Some one had "squatted" at this spot, to enjoy the advantage of selling rum to those who went and came between my own people and the inner country; and the place had changed hands half a dozen times, by fraudulent, or at least, by worthless sales, from one squatter to another. Around the house, by this

time a decaying pile of logs, time had done a part of the work of the settler, and aided by that powerful servant but fearful master, fire, had given to the small clearing somewhat of the air of civilized cultivation. The moment these narrow limits were passed, however, the traveller entered the virgin forest, with no other sign of man around him than what was offered in the little worked and little travelled road. The highway was not much indebted to the labors of man for any facilities it afforded the traveller. The trees had been cut out of it, it is true, but their roots had not been extracted, and time had done more toward destroying them than the axe or the pick. Time *had* done a good deal, however, and the inequalities were getting to be smooth under the hoof and wheel. A tolerably good bridle-path had long been made, and I found no difficulty in walking in it, since that answered equally well for man and beast.

The virgin forest of America is usually no place for the ordinary sportsman. The birds that are called game are but rarely found in it, one or two excepted; and it is a well-known fact that while the frontier-man is certain death with a rifle-bullet, knocking the head off a squirrel or a wild turkey at his sixty or eighty yards, it is necessary to go into the older parts of the country, and principally among sportsmen of the better classes, in order to find those who knock over the woodcock, snipe, quail, grouse, and plover, on the wing. I was thought a good shot on the "plains," and over the heaths or commons of the Island of Manhattan, and among the rocks of Westchester; but I saw

nothing to do up there, where I then was, surrounded by trees that had stood there centuries. It would certainly have been easy enough for me to kill a blue jay now and then, or a crow, or even a raven, or perhaps an eagle, had I the proper shot; but as for anything that is ordinarily thought to adorn a game-bag, not a feather could I see. For the want of something better to do, then, if a young man of three or four and twenty ought thus to express himself, I began to ruminate on the charms of Pris Bayard, and on the singularities of Dus Malbone. In this mood I proceeded, getting over the grounds at a rapid rate, leaving Miss Tinkum, the clearing with its betterments, and the wagon, far behind me.

I had walked an hour alone, when the silence of the woods was suddenly interrupted by the words of a song that came not from any of the feathered race, though the nightingale itself could hardly have equalled the sweetness of the notes, which were those of a female voice. The low notes struck me as the fullest, richest, and most plaintive I had ever heard; and I fancied they could not be equalled, until the strain carried the singer's voice into a higher key, where it seemed equally at home. I thought I knew the air, but the words were guttural, and in an unknown tongue. French and Dutch were the only two foreign languages in which one usually heard any music in our part of the woods at that day; and even the first was by no means common. But with both these languages I had a little acquaintance, and I was soon satisfied that the words I heard belonged to neither. At length it flashed on my mind that the song was Indian; not the music, but the words. The

music was certainly Scotch, or that altered Italian that time has attributed to the Scotch; and there was a moment when I fancied some Highland girl was singing near me one of the Celtic songs of the country of her childhood. But closer attention satisfied me that the words were really Indian; probably belonging to the Mohawk, or some other language that I had often heard spoken.

The reader may be curious to know whence these sounds proceeded, and why I did not see the being who gave birth to such delicious harmony. It was owing to the fact that the song came from out of a thicket of young pines, that grew on an ancient opening at a little distance from the road, and which I supposed contained a hut of some sort or other. These pines, however, completely concealed all within them. So long as the song lasted, no tree of the forest was more stationary than myself; but when it ended, I was about to advance toward the thicket, in order to pry into its mysteries, when I heard a laugh that had scarcely less of melody in it than the strains of the music itself. It was not a vulgar, clamorous burst of girlish impulses, nor was it even loud; but it was light-hearted, mirthful, indicating humor, if a mere laugh *can* do so much; and in a sense it was contagious. It arrested my movement, in order to listen; and before any new impulse led me forward, the branches of the pines opened, and a man passed out of the thicket into the road. A single glance sufficed to let me know that the stranger was an Indian.

Notwithstanding I was apprised of the near vicinity of others, I was a little startled with this sudden apparition. Not so with

him who was approaching; he could not have known of my being anywhere near him; yet he manifested no emotion as his cold, undisturbed glance fell on my form. Steadily advancing, he came to the centre of the road; and, as I had turned involuntarily to pursue my own way, not sure it was prudent to remain in that neighborhood alone, the red man fell in, with his moccasined foot, at my elbow, and I found that we were thus strangely pursuing our journey, in the same direction, side by side.

The Indian and myself walked in this manner, within a yard of each other, in the midst of that forest, for two or three minutes without speaking. I forbore to say anything, because I had heard that an Indian respected those most who knew best how to repress their curiosity; which habit, most probably, had its effect on my companion. At length, the red man uttered, in the deep, guttural manner of his people, the common conventional salutation of the frontier —

"Sa-a-go?"

This word, which has belonged to some Indian language once, passes everywhere for Indian with the white man; and, quite likely for English, with the Indian. A set of such terms has grown up between the two races, including such words as "moccasin," "pappoose," "tomahawk," "squaw," and many others. "Sa-a-go," means "how d'ye do?"

"Sa-a-go?" – I answered to my neighbor's civil salutation.

After this we walked along for a few minutes more, neither party speaking. I took this opportunity to examine my red

brother, an employment that was all the easier from the circumstance that he did not once look at me; the single glance sufficing to tell him all he wanted to know. In the first place, I was soon satisfied that my companion did not drink, a rare merit in a red man who lived near the whites. This was evident from his countenance, gait, and general bearing, as I thought, in addition to the fact that he possessed no bottle, or anything else that would hold liquor. What I liked the least was the circumstance of his being completely armed; carrying knife, tomahawk, and rifle, and each seemingly excellent of its kind. He was not painted, however, and he wore an ordinary calico shirt, as was then the usual garb of his people in the warm season. The countenance had the stern severity that is so common to a red warrior; and, as this man was turned of fifty, his features began to show the usual signs of exposure and service. Still, he was a vigorous, respectable-looking red man, and one who was evidently accustomed to live much among civilized men. I had no serious uneasiness, of course, at meeting such a person, although we were so completely buried in the forest but, as a soldier, I could not help reflecting how inferior my fowling-piece would necessarily prove to be to his rifle should he see fit to turn aside, and pull upon me from behind a tree, for the sake of plunder. Tradition said such things had happened; though, on the whole, the red man of America has perhaps proved to be the most honest of the two, as compared with those who have supplanted him.

"How ole chief?" the Indian suddenly asked, without even

raising his eyes from the road.

"Old chief! Do you mean Washington, my friend?"

"Not so – mean ole chief, out here, at Nest. Mean fader."

"My father! Do you know General Littlepage?"

"Be sure, know him. Your fader – see" – holding up his two forefingers – "just like – dat him; dis you."

"This is singular enough! And were you told that I was coming to this place?"

"Hear dat, too. Always talk about chief."

"Is it long since you saw my father?"

"See him in war-time – nebber hear of ole Sureflint?"

I had heard the officers of our regiment speak of such an Indian, who had served a good deal with the corps, and been exceedingly useful, in the two great northern campaigns especially. He never happened to be with the regiment after I joined it, though his name and services were a good deal mixed up with the adventures of 1776 and 1777.

"Certainly," I answered, shaking the red man cordially by the hand. "Certainly, have I heard of you, and something that is connected with times before the war. Did you never meet my father before the war?"

"Sartain; meet in *ole* war. Gin'ral young man, den – just like son."

"By what name were you then known, Oneida?"

"No Oneida – Onondago – sober tribe. Hab plenty name. Sometime one, sometime anoder. Pale-face say 'Trackless,'

cause he can't find his trail – warrior call him 'Susquesus.'"

# CHAPTER VIII

"With what free growth the elm and plane
Fling their huge arms across my way;
Gray, old, and cumber'd with a train
Of vines, as huge, and old, and gray!
Free stray the lucid streams, and find
No taint in these fresh lawns and shades;
Free spring the flowers that scent the wind,
Where never scythe has swept the glades."

*– Bryant.*

I had heard enough of my father's early adventures to know that the man mentioned in the last chapter had been a conspicuous actor in them, and remembered that the latter enjoyed the fullest confidence of the former. It was news to me, however, that Sureflint and the Trackless were the same person; though, when I came to reflect on the past, I had some faint recollection of having once before heard something of the sort. At any rate, I was now with a friend, and no longer thought it necessary to be on my guard. This was a great relief, in every point of view, as one does not like to travel at the side of a stranger, with an impression, however faint, that the latter may blow his brains out, the first time he ventures to turn his own head aside.

Susquesus was drawing near to the decline of life. Had he been a white man, I might have said he was in a "green old age;" but the term of "*red* old age" would suit him much better. His features were still singularly fine; while the cheeks, without being very full, had that indurated, solid look, that flesh and muscles get from use and exposure. His form was as erect as in his best days, a red man's frame rarely yielding in this way to any pressure but that of exceeding old age, and that of rum. Susquesus never admitted the enemy into his mouth, and consequently the citadel of his physical man was secure against every invader but time. In-toed and yielding in his gait, the old warrior and runner still passed over the ground with an easy movement; and when I had occasion to see him increase his speed, as soon after occurred, I did not fail to perceive that his sinews seemed strung to their utmost force, and that every movement was free.

For a time, the Indian and I talked of the late war, and of the scenes in which each of us had been an actor. If my own modesty was as obvious as that of Sureflint, I had no reason to be dissatisfied with myself; for the manner in which he alluded to events in which I knew he had been somewhat prominent, was simple and entirely free from that boasting in which the red man is prone to indulge; more especially when he wishes to provoke his enemies. At length I changed the current of the discourse, by saying abruptly:

"You were not alone in that pine thicket, Susquesus; that from which you came when you joined me?"

"No – sartain; wasn't alone. Plenty people dere."

"Is there an encampment of your tribe among those bushes?"

A shade passed over the dark countenance of my companion, and I saw a question had been asked that gave him pain. He paused some little time before he answered; and when he did, it was in a way that seemed sad.

"Susquesus got tribe no longer. Quit Onondagos t'irty summer, now; don't like Mohawk."

"I remember to have heard something of this from my father, who told me at the same time, that the reason why you left your people was to your credit. But you had music in the thicket?"

"Yes; gal sing – gal love sing; warrior like to listen."

"And the song? In what language were the words?"

"Onondago," answered the Indian, in a low tone.

"I had no idea the music of the red people was so sweet. It is many a day since I have heard a song that went so near to my heart, though I could not understand what was said."

"Bird, pretty bird – sing like wren."

"And is there much of this music in your family, Susquesus? If so, I shall come often to listen."

"Why not come? Path got no briar; short path, too. Gal sing, when you want."

"Then I shall certainly be your guest, some day, soon. Where do you live, now? Are you Sureflint, or Trackless, to-day? I see you are armed, but not painted."

"Hatchet buried berry deep, dis time. No dig him up, in

great many year. Mohawk make peace; Oneida make peace; Onondago make peace – all bury 'e hatchet."

"Well, so much the better for us landholders. I have come to sell and lease my lands; perhaps you can tell me if many young men are out hunting for farms this summer?"

"Wood full. Plenty as pigeons. How you sell land?"

"That will depend on where it is, and how good it is. Do you wish to buy, Trackless?"

"Injin own all land, for what he want now. I make wigwam where I want; make him, too, when I want."

"I know very well that you Indians do claim such a right; and, so long as the country remains in its present wild state, no one will be apt to refuse it to you. But you cannot plant and gather, as most of your people do in their own country."

"Got no squaw – got no papoose – little corn do for Susquesus. No tribe – no squaw – no pappose!"

This was said in a low, deliberate voice, and with a species of manly melancholy that I found very touching. Complaining men create very little sympathy, and those who whine are apt to lose our respect; but I know no spectacle more imposing than that of one of stern nature smothering his sorrows beneath the mantle of manliness and self-command.

"You have friends, Susquesus," I answered, "if you have no wife nor children."

"Fader, good friend; hope son friend, too. Grandfader great friend, once; but he gone far away, and nebber come back. Know

moder, know fader – all good."

"Take what land you want, Trackless – till it, sell it – do what you wish with it."

The Indian eyed me keenly, and I detected a slight smile of pleasure stealing over his weather-worn face. It was not easy to throw him off his habitual guard over his emotions, however; and the gleam of illumination passed away, like a ray of sunshine in mid-winter. The sternest white man might have grasped my hand, and something like a sign of gratitude would probably have escaped him; but, the little trace of emotion I have mentioned having disappeared, nothing remained on the dark visage of my companion that in the least resembled an evidence of yielding to any of the gentler feelings. Nevertheless, he was too courteous, and had too much of the innate sentiment of a gentleman, not to make some return for an offer that had so evidently and spontaneously come from the heart.

"Good" – he said, after a long pause. "Berry good, dat; good, to come from young warrior to ole warrior. T'ankee – bird plenty; fish plenty; message plenty, now; and don't want land. Time come, maybe – s'pose he must come – come to all old red men, hereabout; so s'pose *must* come."

"What time do you mean, Trackless? Let it come when it may, you have a friend in me. What time do you mean, my brave old Sureflint?"

The Trackless stopped, dropped the breech of his rifle on the ground, and stood meditating a minute, motionless, and as grand

as some fine statue.

"Yes; time come, *do* s'pose," he continued. "One time, ole warrior live in wigwam, and tell young warrior of scalp, and council-fire, and hunt, and war-path; *now*, make *broom* and *basket*."

It was not easy to mistake this; and I do not remember ever to have felt so lively an interest, on so short an acquaintance, as I began to feel in this Onondago. Priscilla Bayard herself, however lovely, graceful, winning, and feminine, had not created a feeling so strong and animated, as that which was awakened within me in behalf of old Sureflint. But I fully understood that this was to be shown in acts, and not in words. Contenting myself for the present, after the fashion of the pale-faces, by grasping and squeezing the sinewy hand of the warrior, we walked on together, making no farther allusion to a subject that I can truly say was as painful to me as it was to my companion.

"I have heard your name mentioned as one of those who were at the Nest with my father when he was a young man, Susquesus," I resumed, "and when the Canada Indians attempted to burn the house."

"Good – Susquesus dere – young Dutch chief kill dat time."

"Very true – his name was Guert Ten Eyke; and my father and mother, and your old friend Colonel Follock, who was afterward major of our regiment, you will remember, they love his memory to this day, as that of a very dear friend."

"Dat all, love memory now?" asked the Indian, throwing one

of his keenest glances at me.

I understood the allusion, which was to aunt Mary, whom I had heard spoken of as the betrothed, or at least as the beloved of the young Albanian.

"Not all; for there is a lady who still mourns his loss, as if she had been his widow."

"Good – do' squaw don't mourn fery long time. Sometime not always."

"Pray, Trueflint, do you happen to know any thing of a man called the Chainbearer? He was in the regiment, too, and you must have seen him in the war."

"Sartain – know Chainbearer – know him on war-path – know him when hatchet buried. Knew Chainbearer afore ole French war. Live in wood wid him – one of *us*. Chainbearer *my* friend."

"I rejoice to hear this, for he is also mine; and I shall be glad to come into the compact, as a friend of both."

"Good – Susquesus and young landlord friend of Chainbearer – good."

"It is good, and a league that shall not be forgotten easily by me. The Chainbearer is as honest as light, and as certain as his own compass, Trueflint – true, as yourself."

"'Fraid he make broom 'fore great while, too," said the Indian, expressing the regret I have no doubt he felt, very obviously in his countenance.

Poor old Andries! But for the warm and true friends he had in my father, Colonel Dirck, and myself, there was some danger this

might be the case, indeed. The fact that he had served his country in a revolution would prove of little avail, that country being too poor to provide for its old servants, and possibly indisposed, had she the means.[7] I say this without intending to reflect on either the people or the government; for it is not easy to make the men of the present day understand the deep depression, in a pecuniary sense, that rested on the land for a year or two after peace was made. It recovered, as the child recovers from indisposition, by the vigor of its constitution and the power of its vitality; and one of the means by which it recovered, was by turning to the soil, and wielding the sickle instead of the sword. To continue the discourse:

"The Chainbearer is an honest man, and, like too many of his class, poor," I answered; "but he has friends; and neither he nor you, Sureflint, shall be reduced to that woman's work without your own consent, so long as I have an unoccupied house, or a

---

[7] This must pass for one of the hits the republic is exposed to, partly because it deserves them, and partly because it is a republic. One hears a great deal of this ingratitude of republics, but few take the trouble of examining into the truth of the charge, or its reason, if true. I suppose the charge to be true in part, and for the obvious reason that a government founded on the popular will, is necessarily impulsive in such matters, and feels no necessity to be just, in order to be secure. Then, a democracy is always subject to the influence of the cant of economy, which is next thing to the evil of being exposed to the waste and cupidity of those who take because they have the power. As respects the soldiers of the revolution, however, America, under the impulsive feeling, rather than in obedience to a calm, deliberate desire to be just, has, since the time of Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage, made such a liberal provision for pensioning them, as to include a good many of her enemies, as well as all her friends. – Editor.

farm, at Ravensnest."

Again the Indian manifested his sense of my friendship for him by that passing gleam on his dark face; and again all signs of emotion passed slowly away.

"How long since see him?" he asked me suddenly.

"See him – the Chainbearer, do you mean? I have not seen him, now, for more than a twelvemonth; not since we parted when the regiment was disbanded."

"Don't mean Chainbearer – mean *him*," pointing ahead – "house, tree, farm, land, Nest."

"Oh! How long is it since I saw the patent? I never saw it, Sureflint; this is my first visit."

"Dat queer! How you own land, when nebber see him?"

"Among the pale-faces we have such laws, that property passes from parent to child; and I inherit mine in this neighborhood, from my grandfather, Herman Mordaunt."

"What dat mean, 'herit? How man haf land, when he don't keep him?"

"We do keep it, if not by actually remaining on the spot, by means of our laws and our titles. The pale-faces regulate all these things on paper, Sureflint."

"T'ink dat good? Why no let man take land where he want him, *when* he want him? Plenty land. Got more land dan got people. 'Nough for ebberybody."

"That fact makes our laws just; if there were not land enough for everybody, these restrictions and divisions might seem to be,

and in fact be, unjust. Now, any man can have a farm, who will pay a very moderate price for it. The state sells, and landlords sell; and those who don't choose to buy of one can buy of the other."

"Dat true 'nough; but don't see need of dat paper. When he want to stay on land, let him stay; when he want to go somewhere, let 'noder man come. What good pay for betterment?"

"So as to have betterments. These are what we call the rights of property, without which no man would aim at being anything more than clad and fed. Who would hunt, if anybody that came along had a right to pick up and skin his game?"

"See dat well 'nough – nebber do; no, nebber. Don't see why land go like skin, when skin go wid warrior and hunter, and land stay where he be."

"That is because the riches of you red men are confined to movable property, and to your wigwams, so long as you choose to live in them. Thus far, you respect the rights of property as well as the pale-faces; but you must see a great difference between your people and mine! between the red man and the white man?"

"Be sure, differ; one strong, t'oder weak – one rich, t'oder poor – one great, t'oder little – one drive 'way, t'oder haf to go – one get all, t'oder keep nuttin' – one march large army, t'oder go Indian file, fifty warrior, p'raps —*dat* reason t'ing so."

"And why can the pale-faces march in large armies, with cannon, and horses, and bayonets, and the red man not do the same?"

"Cause he no got 'em – no got warrior – no got gun – no got baggonet – no got nuttin'."

"You have given the effect for the cause, Sureflint, or the consequences of the reason for the reason itself. I hope I make you understand me. Listen, and I will explain. You have lived much with the white men, Susquesus, and can believe what I say. There are good, and there are bad, among all people. Color makes no difference in this respect. Still, all people are not alike. The white man is stronger than the red man, and has taken away his country, because he *knows* most."

"He most, too. Count army, den count war-trail; you see."

"It is true the pale-faces are the most numerous, now; but once they were not. Do not your traditions tell you how few the Yangeese were, when they first came across the salt lake?"

"Come in big canoe – two, t'ree full – no more."

"Why then did two or three shipfuls of white men become so strong as to drive back from the sea all the red warriors, and become masters of the land? Can you give a reason for that?"

"'Cause he bring fire-water wid him, and red man big fool to drink."

"Even that fire-water, which doubtless has proved a cruel gift to the Indians, is one of the fruits of the white man's knowledge. No, Susquesus; the redskin is as brave as the pale-face; as willing to defend his rights, and as able-bodied; but he does not know as much. He had no gunpowder until the white man gave it to him – no rifle – no hoe, no knife, no tomahawk, but such as he made

himself from stones. Now, all the knowledge, and all the arts of life that the white man enjoys and turns to his profit, come from the rights of property. No man would build a wigwam to make rifles in, if he thought he could not keep it as long as he wished, sell it when he pleased, and leave it to his son when he went to the land of spirits. It is by encouraging man's love of himself, in this manner, that he is got to do so much. Thus it is, too, that the father gives to the son what he has learned, as well as what he has built or bought; and so, in time, nations get to be powerful, as they get to be what we called civilized. Without these rights of property, no people could be civilized; for no people would do their utmost, unless each man were permitted to be master of what he can acquire, subject to the great and common laws that are necessary to regulate such matters. I hope you understand my meaning, Trackless."

"Sartain – no like Trackless' moccasin – my young friend's tongue leave trail. But you t'ink Great Spirit say who shall haf land; who no haf him?"

"The Great Spirit has created man as he is, and the earth as it is; and he has left the one to be master of the other. If it were not his pleasure that man should not do as he has done, it would not be done. Different laws and different feelings would then bring about different ends. When the law places all men on a level, as to rights, it does as much as can be expected of it. Now, this level does not consist in pulling everything to pieces periodically, but in respecting certain great principles that are just in themselves;

but which, once started, must be left to follow their own course. When the rights of property are first established, they must be established fairly, on some admitted rule; after which they are to remain inviolable – that is to say, sacred."

"Understand – no live in clearin' for nuttin'. Mean, haf no head widout haf farm."

"That is the meaning, substantially, Sureflint; though I might have explained it a little differently. I wish to say pale-faces would be like the red man without civilization; and without civilization if they had no rights in their land. No one will work for another as he will work for himself. We see that every day, in the simplest manner, when we see that the desire to get good wages will not make the common laborer do as much by the day as he will do by the job."

"Dat true," answered the Indian, smiling; for he seldom laughed; and repeating a common saying of the country – "By – de – day – by – de – day – By de job, job, job! Dat pale-face religion, young chief."

"I don't know that our religion has much to do with it; but I will own it is our practice. I fancy it is the same with all races and colors. A man must work for himself to do his most; and he cannot work for himself unless he enjoy the fruits of his labor. Thus it is, that he must have a right of property in land, either bought or hired, in order to make him cause that land to produce all that nature intended it should produce. On this necessity is founded the rights of property; the gain being civilization; the

loss ignorance, and poverty, and weakness. It is for this reason, then, that we buy and sell land, as well as clothes and arms, and beads."

"T'ink, understand. Great Spirit, den, say must have farm?"

"The Great Spirit has said we must have wants and wishes, that can be met, or gratified only by having farms. To have farms we must have owners; and owners cannot exist unless their rights in their lands are protected. As soon as these are gone, the whole building would tumble down about our ears, Susquesus."

"Well, s'pose him so. We see, some time. Young chief know where he is?"

"Not exactly; but I suppose we are drawing near to the lands of Ravensnest."

"Well, queer 'nough, too! Own land, but don't know him. See – marked tree – dat sign your land begin."

"Thank you, Sureflint – a parent would not know his own child, when he saw him for the first time. If I am owner here, you will remember that this is my first visit to the spot."

While conversing, the Trackless had led me from the highway into a foot-path, which, as I afterward discovered, made a short-cut across some hills, and saved us near two miles in the distance. In consequence of this change in our course, Jaap could not have overtaken me, had he moved faster than he did; but, owing to the badness of the road, our gait on foot was somewhat faster than that of the jaded beasts who dragged the wagon. My guide knew the way perfectly; and, as we ascended a hill, he pointed

out the remains of an old fire, near a spring, as a spot where he was accustomed to "camp," when he wished to remain near, but not *in* the 'Nest.

"Too much rum in tavern," he said. "No good stay near rum."

This was extraordinary forbearance for an Indian; but Susquesus, I had ever understood, was an extraordinary Indian. Even for an Onondago, he was temperate and self-denying. The reason why he lived away from his tribe was a secret from most persons; though I subsequently ascertained it was known to the Chainbearer, as well as my father. Old Andries always affirmed it was creditable to his friend; but he would never betray the secret. Indeed, I found that the sympathy which existed between these two men, each of whom was so singular in his way, was cemented by some occurrences of their early lives, to which occasional, but vague allusions were made, but which neither ever revealed to me, or to any other person, so far as I could ascertain.

Soon after passing the spring, Sureflint led me out to a cleared spot on the eminence, which commanded an extensive view of most of that part of my possessions which was under lease and occupied. Here we halted, seating ourselves on a fallen tree, for which one could never go amiss in that region, and at that day; and I examined the view with the interest which ownership is apt to create in us all. The earth is very beautiful in itself; but it is most beautiful in the eye of those who have the largest stake in it, I fear.

Although the property of Ravensnest had been settled fully

thirty years when I first saw it, none of those signs of rapid and energetic improvement were visible that we have witnessed in the efforts of similar undertakings since the Revolution. Previously to that great event, the country filled up very slowly, and each colony seemed to regard itself, in some measure, as a distinct country. Thus it was that we in New York obtained very few immigrants from New England, that great hive which has so often swarmed since, and the bees of which have carried their industry and ingenuity over so much of the republic in our own time. We of New York have our prejudices against the Yankees, and have long looked upon them with eyes of distrust and disfavor. They have repaid us in kind, perhaps; but their dislikes have not been strong enough to prevent them from coming to take possession of our lands. For my own part, while I certainly see much in the New England character that I do not like (more in their manners and minor ways, perhaps, than in essentials), I as certainly see a great deal to command my respect. If the civilization that they carry with them is not of a very high order, as is connected with the tastes, sentiments, and nicer feelings, it is superior to that of any other country I have visited, in its common-sense provisions, and in its care over the intellectual being, considered in reference to the foundations of learning. More persons are dragged from out the mire of profound ignorance under their system, than under that of any other people; and a greater number of candidates are brought forward for intellectual advancements. That so few of these candidates rise very high in the scale of

knowledge, is in part owing to the circumstance that their lives are so purely practical; and, possibly, in part to the fact that while so much attention has been paid to the foundations of the social edifice, that little art or care has as yet been expended on the superstructure. Nevertheless, the millions of Yankees that are spreading themselves over the land, are producing, and have already produced, a most salutary influence on its practical knowledge, on its enterprise, on its improvements, and consequently on its happiness. If they have not done much for its tastes, its manners, and its higher principles, it is because no portion of the earth is perfect. I am fully aware that this is conceding more than my own father would have conceded in their favor, and twice as much as could have been extracted from either of my grandfathers. But prejudice is wearing away, and the Dutchman and the Yankee, in particular, find it possible to live in proximity and charity. It is possible that my son may be willing to concede even more. Our immigrant friends should remember one thing, however, and it would render them much more agreeable as companions and neighbors, which is this: – he who migrates is bound to respect the habits and opinions of those whom he joins; it not being sufficient for the perfection of everything under the canopy of heaven, that it should come from our own little corner of the earth. Even the pumpkin-pies of the Middle States are vastly better than those usually found in New England. To return to Ravensnest.

The thirty years of the settlement of my patent, then, had

not done much for it, in the way of works of art. Time, it is true, had effected something, and it was something in a manner that was a little peculiar, and which might be oftener discovered in the country at the time of which I am writing, than at the present day. The timber of the 'Nest, with the exception of some mountain-land, was principally what, in American parlance, is termed "hard wood." In other words, the trees were not perennial, but deciduous; and the merest tyro in the woods knows that the roots of the last decay in a fourth of the time that the roots of the first endure, after the trunk is severed. As a consequence, the stumps had nearly all disappeared from the fields; a fact that, of itself, gave to the place the appearance of an old country, according to our American notions. It is true, the virgin forest still flourished in immediate contact with those fields, shorn, tilled, and smoothed as they were, giving a wild and solemn setting to the rural picture the latter presented. The contrast was sufficiently bold and striking, but it was not without its soft and pleasant points. From the height whither the Indian had led me, I had a foreground of open land, dotted with cottages and barns, mostly of logs, beautified by flourishing orchards, and garnished with broad meadows, or enriched by fields, in which the corn was waving under the currents of a light summer air. Two or three roads wound along the settlement, turning aside with friendly interest, to visit every door; and at the southern termination of the open country there was a hamlet, built of wood framed, which contained one house that had little taste, but a good deal more

of pretension than any of its neighbors; another, that was an inn; a store, a blacksmith's-shop, a school-house, and three or four other buildings, besides barns, sheds, and hog-pens. Near the hamlet, or the "'Nest Village," as the place was called, were the mills of the region. These were a grist-mill, a saw-mill, a fulling-mill, and an oil-mill. All were of moderate dimensions, and, most probably, of moderate receipts. Even the best house was not painted, though it had some very ambitious attempts at architecture, and enjoyed the benefits of no less than four exterior doors, the uses of one of which, as it opened into the air from the second story, it was not very easy to imagine. Doubtless some great but unfinished project of the owner lay at the root of this invention. But living out of doors, as it were, is rather a characteristic of a portion of our people.

The background of this picture, to which a certain degree of rural beauty was not wanting, was the "boundless woods." Woods stretched away, north, and south, and east, far as eye could reach; woods crowned the sides and summits of all the mountains in view; and woods rose up, with their leafy carpeting, from out the ravines and dells. The war had prevented any very recent attempts at clearing, and all the open ground wore the same aspect of homely cultivation, while the dark shades of an interminable forest were spread around, forming a sort of mysterious void, that lay between this obscure and remote people, and the rest of their kind. That forest, however, was not entirely savage. There were other settlements springing up in its

bosom; a few roads wound their way through its depth; and, here and there, the hunter, the squatter, or the red man, had raised his cabin, and dwelt amid the sullen but not unpleasant abundance and magnificence of the wilderness.

# CHAPTER IX

"O masters! if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honorable men;
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honorable men."

*– Shakspeare.*

"This, then, is Ravensnest!" I exclaimed, after gazing on the scene for several minutes in silence; "the estate left me by my grandfather, and where events once occurred that are still spoken of in my family as some of the most momentous in its history; events, Susquesus, in which you were an actor."

The Indian made a low interjection, but it is not probable he fully understood me. What was there so remarkable in a savage inroad, a house besieged, men slain and scalps taken, that he should remember such things for a quarter of a century!

"I do not see the 'Nest itself, Trueflint," I added; "the house in which my grandfather once lived."

The Onondago did not speak, but he pointed with a finger in a northeasterly direction, making the action distinct and impressive, as is usual with his people. I knew the place by the

descriptions I had heard, though it was now mouldering, and had gone far into decay. Logs piled up green, and confined in such a structure, will last some thirty or forty years, according to the nature of the trees from which they come, and the manner in which they have been covered. At that distance I could not well distinguish how far, or how much, time had done its work; but I fancied I knew enough of such matters to understand I was not to expect in the 'Nest a very comfortable home. A family dwelt in the old place, and I had seen some cheeses that had been made on the very fine farm that was attached to it. There was a large and seemingly a flourishing orchard, and the fields looked well; but as for the house, at that distance it appeared sombre, dark, and was barely to be distinguished by its form and chimneys, from any other pile of logs.

I was struck with the silent, dreamy, sabbath-like air of the fields, far and near. With the exception of a few half-naked children who were visible around the dwellings to which we were the closest, not a human being could I discover. The fields were tenantless, so far as men were concerned, though a good many horned cattle were to be seen grazing.

"My tenants are not without stock, I find, Trueflint," I remarked. "There are plenty of cattle in the pastures."

"You see, all young," answered the Onondago. "War do dat. Kill ole one for soldier."

"By the way, as this settlement escaped plunder, I should think its people may have done something by selling supplies to

the army. Provisions of all kinds were very high and scarce, I remember, when we met Burgoyne."

"Sartain. Your people sell both side – good trade, den. Feed Yankees – feed Yengeese."

"Well, I make no doubt it was so; for the husbandman is not very apt to hesitate when he can get a good price; and if he were, the conscience of the drover would stand between him and treason. But where are all the men of this country? I do not see a single man, far or near."

"No see him! – dere," answered the Indian, pointing in the direction of the hamlet. "'Squire light council-fire to-day, s'pose, and make speech."

"True enough – there they are, gathered about the school-house. But whom do you mean by the 'squire, who is so fond of making speeches?"

"Ole school-master. Come from salt lake – great friend of grandfader."

"Oh! Mr. Newcome, my agent – true; I might have known that he was king of the settlement. Well, Trueflint, let us go on; and when we reach the tavern we shall be able to learn what the 'great council' is about. Say nothing of my business; for it will be pleasant to look on a little, before I speak myself."

The Indian arose, and led the way down the height, following a foot-path with which he appeared to be familiar. In a few minutes we were in a highway, and at no great distance from the hamlet. I had laid aside most of the dress that it was the fashion

of gentlemen to wear in 1784, and put on a hunting-shirt and leggings, as more fitting for the woods; consequently it would not have been easy for one who was not in the secret to imagine that he who arrived on foot, in such a garb, carrying his fowling-piece, and accompanied by an Indian, was the owner of the estate. I had sent no recent notice of my intended arrival; and as we went along, I took a fancy to get a faint glimpse of things *incognito*. In order to do this it might be necessary to say a word more to the Indian.

"Susquesus," I added, as we drew near the school-house, which stood between us and the tavern, "I hope you have understood me – there is no need of telling any one who I am. If asked, you can answer I am your friend. That will be true, as you will find as long as you live."

"Good – young chief got eyes; want to look wid 'em himself. Good – Susquesus know."

In another minute we stopped in the crowd, before the door of the school-house. The Indian was so well known, and so often at the 'Nest, that *his* appearance excited no attention. Some important business appeared on the carpet, for there was much caucusing, much private conversation, many eager faces, and much putting together of heads. While the public mind was thus agitated, few were disposed to take any particular notice of me, though I had not stood long in the outer edge of the crowd, which may have contained sixty or seventy men, besides quite as many well-grown lads, before I overheard an interrogatory put as to

who I was, and whether I had "a right to a vote." My curiosity was a good deal excited, and I was on the point of asking some explanation, when a man appeared in the door of the school-house, who laid the whole matter bare, in a speech. This person had a shrivelled, care-worn, but keen look, and was somewhat better dressed than most around him, though not particularly elegant, or even very neat, in his *toilette*. He was gray-headed, of a small, thin figure, and might have been drawing hard upon sixty. He spoke in a deliberate, self-possessed manner, as if long accustomed to the sort of business in which he was engaged, but in a very decided Connecticut accent. I say *Connecticut*, in contradistinction to that of New England generally; for while the Eastern States have many common peculiarities in this way, a nice and practised ear can tell a Rhode-Islander from a Massachusetts man, and a Connecticut man from either. As the orator opened his mouth to remove a chew of tobacco previously to opening it to speak, a murmur near me said – "Hist! there's the squire; now we shall get suthin'." This, then, was Mr. Jason Newcome, my agent, and the principal resident in the settlement.

"Fellow-citizens" – Mr. Newcome commenced – "you are assembled this day on a most important, and, I may say, trying occasion; an occasion calculated to exercise all our spirits. Your business is to decide on the denomination of the church building that you are about to erect; and the futur' welfare of your souls may, in one sense, be said to be interested in your decision. Your deliberations have already been opened by prayer;

and now you are about to come to a final vote. Differences of opinion have, and do exist among you; but differences of opinion exist everywhere. They belong to liberty, the blessings of which are not to be enj'yed without full and free differences of opinion. Religious liberty demands differences of opinion, as a body might say; and without them there would be no religious liberty. You all know the weighty reason there is for coming to some conclusion speedily. The owner of the sile will make his appearance this summer, and his family are all of a desperate tendency toward an idolatrous church, which is unpleasant to most of *you*. To prevent any consequences, therefore, from his interference, we ought to decide at once, and not only have the house raised, but ruffed in afore he arrives. Among ourselves, however, we have been somewhat divided, and that is a different matter. On the former votes it has stood twenty-six for Congregational to twenty-five Presbytery, fourteen Methodist, nine Baptist, three Universal, and one Episcopal. Now, nothin' is clearer than that the majority ought to rule, and that it is the duty of the minority to submit. My first decision, as moderator, was that the Congregationals have it by a majority of one, but some being dissatisfied with that opinion, I have been ready to hear reason, and to take the view that twenty-six is not a majority, but a plurality, as it is called. As twenty-six, or twenty-five, however, is a majority over nine, and over three, and over one, taking their numbers singly or together, your committee report that the Baptists, Universals and Episcopals ought to be dropped, and

that the next vote, now to be taken, shall be confined to the three highest numbers; that is to say, to the Congregationals, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists. Everybody has a right to vote for which he pleases, provided he vote for one of them three. I suppose I am understood, and shall now put the question, unless some gentleman has any remarks to make."

"Mr. Moderator," cried out a burly, hearty-looking yeoman, "is it in order now to speak?"

"Quite so, sir – order, gentlemen, order – Major Hosmer is up."

Up we all were, if standing on one's feet be up; but the word was parliamentary, and it appeared to be understood.

"Mr. Moderator, I am of the Baptist order, and I do not think the decision just; sin' it compels us Baptists to vote for a denomination we don't like, or not to vote at all."

"But you will allow that the majority ought to rule?" interrupted the chair.

"Sartain – I agree to *that*; for *that* is a part of my religion, too," returned the old yeoman heartily, and with an air of perfect good faith – "the majority ought to rule; but I do not see that a majority is in favor of the Congregationals any more than it is of the Baptists."

"We will put it to vote ag'in, major, just for your satisfaction," returned Mr. Newcome, with an air of great candor and moderation. "Gentlemen, those of you who are in favor of the Baptists *not* being included in the next vote for denomination,

will please to hold up your hands."

As every man present who was not a Baptist voted "ay," there were sixty-nine hands shown. The "no's" were then demanded in the same way, and the Baptists got their nine own votes, as before. Major Hosmer admitted he was satisfied, though he looked as if there might be something wrong in the procedure, after all. As the Baptists were the strongest of the three excluded sects, the other two made a merit of necessity, and said nothing. It was understood they were in a minority; and a minority, as it very often happens in America, has very few rights.

"It now remains, gentlemen," resumed the moderator, who was a model of submission to the public voice, "to put the vote, as between the Congregationals, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists. I shall first put the Congregationalists. Those who are in favor of that sect, the old Connecticut standing order, will please to hold up their hands."

The tone of voice, the coaxing expression of the eye, and the words "old Connecticut standing order," let me at once into the secret of the moderator's wishes. At first but thirty-four hands appeared; but the moderator having counted these, he looked round the crowd, until he fairly looked up three more; after which he honestly enough announced the vote to be thirty-seven for the Congregationalists. So eleven of the thirteen of silenced sects, had most probably voted with the moderator. The Presbyterians came next, and they got their own people, and two of the Baptists, making twenty-seven in all, on a trial in their

behalf. The Methodists got only their own fourteen.

"It evidently appearing, gentleman," said the moderator, "that the Methodists gain no strength, and being less than half the Congregational vote, and much lower than the Presbyterian, I put it to their own well-known Christian humility, whether they ought not to withdraw?"

"Put it openly to vote, as you did ag'in us," came out a Baptist.

"Is that your pleasure, gentlemen? Seeing that it is, I will now try the vote. Those who are in favor of the Methodists withdrawing, will hold up their hands."

Sixty-four hands were raised for, and fourteen against the withdrawal.

"It is impossible for any religion to flourish ag'in such a majority," said the moderator, with great apparent candor; "and though I regret it, for I sincerely wish we were strong enough to build meetin'-houses for every denomination in the world; but as we are not, we must take things as they are, and so the Methodists must withdraw. Gentlemen, the question is now narrowed down to the Congregationals and the Presbyterians. There is not much difference between them, and it is a thousand pities there should be *any*. Are you ready for the question, gentlemen? No answer being given, I shall put the vote."

And the vote was put, the result being thirty-nine to thirty-nine, or a tie. I could see that the moderator was disappointed, and supposed he would claim a casting vote, in addition to the one he had already given; but I did not know my man. Mr. Newcome

avoided all appearances of personal authority; majorities were his cardinal rule, and to majorities alone he would defer. Whenever he chose to govern, it was by means of majorities. The exercise of a power as accidentally bestowed as that of presiding officer, might excite heart-burnings and envy; but he who went with a majority was certain of having the weight of public sympathies on his side. No – no – Mr. Newcome never had an opinion, as against numbers.

I am sorry to say that very mistaken notions of the power of majorities are beginning to take root among us.

It is common to hear it asserted, as a political axiom, that the majority *must* rule! The axiom may be innocent enough, when its application is properly made, which is simply to say that in the control of those interests of which the decision is referred to majorities, majorities must rule but, God forbid that the majorities should ever rule in all things, in this republic or anywhere else! Such a state of things would soon become intolerable, rendering the government that admitted of its existence the most odious tyranny that has been known in Christendom in modern times. The government of this country is the sway of certain great and incontestable *principles*, that are just in themselves, and which are set forth in the several constitutions, and under which certain minor questions are periodically referred to local majorities, or of necessity, out of the frequency of which appeals has arisen a mistake that is getting to be dangerously general. God forbid, I repeat, that a mere

personal majority should assume the power which alone belongs to principles.

Mr. Newcome avoided a decision, as from the chair; but three several times did he take the vote, and each time was there a tie. I could now perceive that he was seriously uneasy. Such steadiness denoted that men had made up their minds, and that they would be apt to adhere to them, since one side was apparently as strong as the other. The circumstance called for a display of democratical tactics; and Mr. Newcome being very expert in such matters, he could have little difficulty in getting along with the simple people with whom he had to deal.

"You see how it is, fellow-citizens. The public has taken sides, and formed itself into two parties. From this moment the affair must be treated as a *party* question, and be decided on *party* principles; though the majority must rule. Oh! here, neighbor Willis; will you just step over to my house, and ask Miss Newcome (Anglice, *Mrs.* Newcome) to hand you the last volume of the State Laws? Perhaps *they* have a word to say in the matter." Here neighbor Willis did as desired, and moved out of the crowd. As I afterward discovered, he was a warm Presbyterian, who happened, unfortunately for his sect, to stand so directly before the moderator, as unavoidably to catch his eye. I suspected that Squire Newcome would now call a vote on the main question. But I did not know my man. This would have been too palpably a trick, and he carefully avoided committing the blunder. There was plenty of time, since the moderator knew his wife could not

very readily find a book he had lent to a magistrate in another settlement twenty miles off; so that he did not hesitate to have a little private conversation with one or two of his friends.

"Not to be losing time, Mr. Moderator," said one of 'Squire Newcome's confidants, "I will move you that it is the sense of this meeting, that the government of churches by means of a presbytery is anti-republican, opposed to our glorious institutions, and at variance with the best interests of the human family. I submit the question to the public without debate, being content to know the unbiased sentiments of my fellow-citizens on the subject."

The question was duly seconded and put, the result being thirty-nine for, and thirty-eight against; or a majority of *one*, that Presbyterian rule was anti-republican. This was a great *coup de maître*. Having settled that it was opposed to the institutions to have a presbytery, a great deal was gained toward establishing another denomination in the settlement. No religion can maintain itself against political sentiments in this country, politics coming home daily to men's minds and pockets.

It is odd enough that, while all sects agree in saying that the Christian religion comes from God, and that its dogmas are to be received as the laws of Infinite Wisdom, men should be found sufficiently illogical, or sufficiently presumptuous, to imagine that any, the least of its rules, are to be impaired or strengthened by their dissemblance or their conformity to any provisions of human institutions. As well might it be admitted

at once, that Christianity is *not* of divine origin, or the still more extravagant position be assumed, that the polity which God himself has established can be amended by any of the narrow and short-sighted devices of man. Nevertheless, it is not to be concealed, that here, as elsewhere, churches are fashioned to suit the institutions, and not the institutions to suit the church.

Having achieved so much success, the moderator's confidant pushed his advantage.

"Mr. Moderator," he continued, "as this question has altogether assumed a party character, it is manifestly proper that the party which has the majority should not be encumbered in its proceedings by the movements of the minority. Presbytery has been denounced by this meeting, and its friends stand in the light of a defeated party at a state election. They can have nothin' to do with the government. I move, therefore, that those who are opposed to presbytery go into caucus, in order to appoint a committee to recommend to the majority a denomination which will be acceptable to the people of Ravensnest. I hope the motion will be put without debate. The subject is a religious one, and it is unwise to awaken strife on anything at all connected with religion."

Alas! alas! How much injury has been done to the cause of Christianity, how much wrong to the laws of God, and even to good morals, by appeals of this nature, that are intended to smother inquiry, and force down on the timid, the schemes of the designing and fraudulent! Integrity is ever simple and frank;

while the devil resorts to these plans of plausible forbearance and seeming concessions, in order to veil his nefarious devices.

The thing took, however; for popular bodies, once under control, are as easily managed as the vessel that obeys her helm; the strength of the current always giving additional power to that material portion of the ship. The motion was accordingly seconded and put. As there was no debate, which had been made to appear anti-religious, the result was precisely the same as on the last question. In other words, there was one majority for disfranchising just one-half the meeting, counting the above man; and this, too, on the principle that the majority ought to rule. After this the caucus people went into the school-house, where it was understood a committee of twenty-six was appointed, to recommend a denomination to the majority. This committee, so respectable in its character, and of so much influence by its numbers, was not slow in acting. As became its moral weight, it unanimously reported that the Congregational polity was the one most acceptable to the people of Ravensnest. This report was accepted by acclamation, and the caucus adjourned *sine die*.

The moderator now called the whole meeting to order again.

"Mr. Moderator," said the confidant, "it is time that this community should come to some conclusion in the premises. It has been agitated long enough, in its religious feelings, and further delay might lead to unpleasant and lasting divisions. I therefore move that it is the sense of this meetin' that the people of Ravensnest ardently wish to see the new meetin'-us, which

is about to be raised, devoted and set apart for the services of the Congregational church, and that a Congregational church be organized, and a Congregational pastor duly called. I trust this question, like all the others, will be passed in perfect harmony, and without debate, as becomes the solemn business we are on."

The question was taken, and the old majority of *one* was found to be in its favor. Just as Mr. Moderator meekly announced the result, his messenger appeared in the crowd, bawling out, "'Squire, Miss Newcome says she can't noway find the volum', which she kind o' thinks you've lent."

"Bless me! so I have!" exclaimed the surprised magistrate. "It's not in the settlement, I declare; but it's of no importance now, as a majority has fairly decided. Fellow-citizens, we have been dealing with the most important interest that consarns man; his religious state, government, and well-being. Unanimity is very desirable on such a question; and as it is to be presumed no one will oppose the pop'lar will, I shall now put the question to vote for the purpose of obtaining that unanimity. Those who are in favor of the Congregationals, or who ardently wish that denomination, will hold up their hands."

About three-fourths of the hands went up at once. Cries of "unanimity – unanimity" – followed, until one hand after another went up, and I counted seventy-three. The remaining voters continued recusant; but as no question was taken on the other side, the vote may be said to have been a very decided one, if not positively unanimous. The moderator and two or three of

his friends made short speeches, commending the liberality of a part of the citizens, and congratulating all, when the meeting was adjourned.

Such were the facts attending the establishment of the Congregational church in the settlement of Ravensnest, on purely republican principles; the question having been carried unanimously in favor of that denomination, although fifty-two votes out of seventy-eight were pretty evidently opposed to it. But republican principles were properly maintained, and the matter was settled; the people having solemnly decided that they ardently wished for a church that in truth they did not desire at all.

No complaints were made, on the spot at least. The crowd dispersed, and as Mr. Newcome walked through it, with the air of a beaten, rather than of a successful man, I came under his observation for the first time. He examined me keenly, and I saw a certain air of doubt and misgiving in his manner. Just at that moment, however, and before he had time to put a question, Jaap drove up in the wagon, and the negro was an old acquaintance, having often been at the Nest, and knowing the 'squire for more than a quarter of a century. This explained the whole affair, a certain mixed resemblance to both father and mother which I am said to bear probably aiding in making the truth more apparent.

Mr. Newcome was startled – that was apparent in his countenance – but he was, nevertheless, self-possessed. Approaching, he saluted me, and at once let me know he understood who I was.

"This is Major Littlepage, I s'pose," he said "I can see a good deal of the gin'ral in you, as I know'd your father when a young man; and something of Herman Mordaunt, your mother's father. How long is it sin' your arrival, Major Littlepage?"

"But a few minutes," I answered, evasively. "You see my wagon and servant there, and we are fresh from Albany. My arrival has been opportune, as all my tenants must be collected here at this moment."

"Why, yes, sir – yes; here are pretty much the whull of them. We have had a little meetin' to-day, to decide on the natur' of our religion, as one might say. I s'pose the major didn't get here until matters were coming to a head?"

"You are quite right, Mr. Newcome, matters were coming to a head, as you say, before I got on the ground."

The 'squire was a good deal relieved at this, for his conscience doubtless pricked him a little on the subject of the allusion he had made to me, and my own denomination. As for myself, I was not sorry to have got so early behind the curtain as to the character of my agent. It was pretty clear he was playing his own game as to some things, and it might be necessary for me to see that this propensity did not extend itself into other concerns. It is true, my mind was made up to change him, but there were long and intricate accounts to settle.

"Yes, sir, religion is an interest of the greatest importance to man's welfare, and it has b'en (Anglice, been) too long neglected among us," continued the late moderator. "You see yonder the

frame of a meetin'-us, the first that was ever commenced in this settlement, and it is our intention to put it up this a'ternoon. The bents are all ready. The pike-poles are placed, and all is waiting for the word to 'heave.' You'll perceive, 'squire, it was judicious to go to a sartain p'int, afore we concluded on the denomination. Up to *that* p'int every man would nat'rally work as if he was workin' for his own order, and we've seen the benefit of such policy, as there you can see the clapboards planed the sash made and glazed, stuff cut for pews, and everything ready to put together. The very nails and paints are bought and paid for. In a word, nothing remains to be done, but to put together, and finish off, and preach."

"Why did you not erect the edifice, 'and finish off,' as you call it, before you came to the test-vote, that I perceive you have just taken?"

"That would have been goin' a le-e-e-tle too far, major – a very le-e-e-tle. If you give a man too tight a hold, he doesn't like to let go, sometimes. We talked the matter over among us, and concluded to put the question before we went any further. All has turned out happily, and we have unanimously resolved to be Congregational. Unanimity in religion is a blessed thing!"

"Do you apprehend no falling off in zeal, in consequence of this work? no refusing to help pay the carpenters, and painters, and priest?"

"No much – a little, perhaps; but no great matter, I should judge. Your own liberal example, major, has had its influence,

and I make no doubt will produce an effect."

"My example, sir! I do not understand you, Mr. Newcome, never having heard of the church, until I heard your own allusions to it, as chairman of this very meeting."

'Squire Newcome hemmed, cleared his throat, took an extra-sized chew of tobacco, and then felt himself equal to attempting an answer.

"I call it *your* example, sir; though the authority for what I have done came from your honored father, General Littlepage, as long ago as before the revolution. Wartimes, you know, major, is no time for buildin' meetin'-uses; so we concluded to defer the matter until peace. Peace we have, and our own eends are fast approaching; and I thought if the work was ever to be done, so that this generation should get the benefit of it, it should be done now. I was in hopes we should have had preachin' in the house afore your arrival, and surprised you with the cheerin' sight of a worshipping people on your lands. Here is your father's letter, from which I read a paragraph to the people, half an hour sin'."

"I trust the people have always been worshippers, though it may not have been in a house built expressly for the purpose. With your permission, I will read the letter."

This document bore the date of 1770, or fourteen years before the time the building was erected, and five years before the battle of Lexington was fought. I was a little surprised at this, but read on. Among other things, I found that my father had given a general consent to credit his tenants with five hundred dollars to

aid in the erection of a place of worship; reserving to himself, as my guardian, a voice in the choice of the denomination. I may add, here, that on examining the leases, I found credits had been given, in 1770, for the full amount; and that the money, or what passed for money, the proceeds of work produce, cattle, butter, cheese, &c., had been in Mr. Newcome's hands the whole of the intervening time, no doubt to his great advantage. Thus, by a tardy appropriation of my father's bounty, the agent was pretty certain of being able to finish the job in hand, even admitting that some of the people should prove restive under the recent decision.

"And the money thus appropriated has gone to its destination?" I asked, on returning the letter.

"Every copper has thus gone, major, or will soon go. When the First Congregational, of Ravensnest, is up, you can contemplate the house with the satisfaction of knowing that your own money has largely aided in the good work of its erection. What a delightful sentiment that must awaken! It must be a great blessin' to landlords, to be able to remember how much of their money goes for the good of their fellow-mortals."

"In my case, it certainly should, as I understand my father, and indeed have myself seen, by the accounts rendered to me, that not one dollar of rent has ever yet left the settlement, to go into the pocket of the owner of the estate – nay, that the direct outlays of my grandfather were considerable, in addition to the first cost of the patent."

"I do not deny it, major; I do not deny it. It is quite probable. But, you will consider what the spirit of Public Improvement demands; and you gentlemen-proprietors nat'rally look forward to futur' generations for your reward – yes, sir, to futur' generations. Then will come the time when these leased lands will turn to account, and you will enj'y the fruits of your liberality."

I bowed, but made no answer. By this time the wagon had reached the inn, and Jaap was getting out the trunk and other luggage. A rumor had gone forth among the people that their landlord had arrived, and some of the older tenants, those who had known "Herman Mordaunt," as they all called my grandfather, crowded around me in a frank, hearty manner, in which good feeling was blended with respect. They desired to take my hand. I shook hands with all who came, and can truly say that I took no man's palm into my own that day, without a sentiment that the relation of landlord and tenant was one that should induce kind and confidential feelings. The Ravensnest property was by no means necessary to my comfortable subsistence; and I was really well enough disposed to look forward, if not to "future generations," at least to a future day, for the advantages that were to be reaped from it. I asked the crowd in, ordered a tub of punch made, for, in that day, liquor was a necessary accompaniment of every welcome, and endeavored to make myself acceptable to my new friends. A throng of women, of whom I have not yet spoken, were also

in attendance; and I had to go through the ceremony of being introduced to many of the wives and daughters of Ravensnest. On the whole, the meeting was friendly, and my reception warm.

# CHAPTER X

"Bear, through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth."

– *Longfellow.*

The ceremony of the introduction was not half through, when there was a noisy summons to the pike-poles. This called away the crowd in a body; a raising in the country being an incident of too much interest to be overlooked. I profited by the occasion to issue a few orders that related to my own comfort, when I went, myself, to the scene of present toil and future Congregationalism.

Everybody in America, a few inveterate cockneys excepted, have seen a "raising." Most people have seen hundreds; and, as for myself, I believe I should be safe in saying I had, even at that day, seen a thousand. In this particular instance, there were great felicitations among the yeomen, because the frame "had come together well." I was congratulated on this score, the hearty old Rhode Islander, my brother major, assuring me that "he couldn't get the blade of his knife, and it's no great matter of a knife either, into a single j'int. And, what is more, 'squire" – as the sturdy yeoman was a major himself, though only in the militia, *that* title would not have been honorable enough for his landlord – "and, what is more, 'squire, they tell me not a piece was ever

tried, until we put the bents together, this a'ternoon, ourselves! Now, down country, I never see'd sich a thing; but, up here, the carpenters go by what they call the 'square-rule;' and quick work they make on't!" This speech contained the substance of one of the contrivances by which the "new countries" were endeavoring to catch up with the "old," as I learned on further inquiries.

It may be well to describe the appearance of the place, when I reached the site of the new "meetin'-us." The great body of the "people" had just taken their stands at the first bent, ready for a lift, while trusty men stood at the feet of the posts, armed with crowbars, broad-axes, or such other suitable implements as offered, in readiness to keep those essential uprights in their places; for, on the steadiness of these persons, depended the limbs and lives of those who raised the bent. As this structure was larger than common, the danger was increased, and the necessity of having men that could be relied on was obviously so much the greater. Of one post, in particular, for some reason that I do not know, all the trusty men seemed shy; each declaring that he thought some one else better suited to take charge of it, than he was himself. The "boss" – that Manhattanese word having travelled up to Ravensnest – called out for some one to take the delicate station, as nothing detained the work but the want of a hand there; and one looked at another, to see who would step forward, when a sudden cry arose of "the Chainbearer! – the Chainbearer! Here's your man!"

Sure enough, there came old Andries Coejemans, hale,

upright, vigorous, and firm-treading, though he had actually seen his threescore years and ten. My ancient comrade had thrown aside nearly every trace of his late military, profession, though the marchings and drillings of eight years were not to be worked out of a man's air and manner in a twelvemonth. The only sign of the soldier, other than in his bearing, I could trace about my brother captain, was the manner in which his queue was clubbed. Andries wore his own hair; this his early pursuits in the forest rendered necessary; but it had long been clubbed in a sort of military fashion, and to that fashion he now adhered. In other respects he had transformed himself entirely into a woodsman. He wore a hunting-shirt, like myself; leggings, moccasons, and a cap of skins that had been deprived of their furs. So far from lessening in any degree the fine effect of his green old age, however, this attire served to increase it. Andries Coejemans stood six feet, at seventy; was still as erect as he had been at twenty; and so far from betraying the inroads of age on his frame, the last appeared to be indurated and developed by what it had borne. His head was as white as snow, while his face had the ruddy, weather-beaten color of health and exposure. The face had always been handsome, having a very unusual expression of candor and benevolence impressed on features that were bold and manly.

The Chainbearer could not have seen me until he stepped upon the frame. Then, indeed, there was no mistaking the expression of his countenance, which denoted pleasure and

friendly interest. Striding over the timber, with the step of a man long accustomed to tread among dangers of all sorts, he grasped my hand, and gave it such a squeeze as denoted the good condition of his own muscles and sinews. I saw a tear twinkling in his eye; for had I been his own son, I do not think he could have loved me more.

"Mortaunt, my poy, you're heartily welcome," said my old comrade. "You haf come upon t'ese people, I fancy, as t'e cat steals upon t'e mice; but I had titings of your march, and have peen a few miles town t'e roat to meet you. How, or where you got past me, is more t'an I know, for I haf seen nuttin' of you or of your wagon."

"Yet here we both are, my excellent old friend, and most happy am I to meet you again. If you will go with me to the tavern, we can talk more at our ease."

"Enough, enough for t'e present, young comrate. Pusiness is standing still a little, for t'e want of my hant; step off the frame, lat, and let us get up t'ese pents, when I am your man for a week or a year."

Exchanging looks, and renewing the warm and friendly pressure of the hand, we parted for the moment; I quitting the frame, while the Chainbearer went at once to the foot of the important post, or to that station no one else would assume. Then commenced, without further delay, the serious toil of raising a bent. This work is seldom entirely free from hazard; and on this particular occasion, when the force in men was a

little disproportioned to the weight of the timber, it was doubly incumbent on every man to be true and steady. My attention was at once attracted to the business in hand; and for several minutes I thought of little else. The females had drawn as near the spot where their husbands, brothers, and lovers were exerting every muscle and nerve, as comported with prudence; and a profound and anxious quiet pervaded the whole of a crowd that was gay with rustic finery, if not very remarkable for taste or refinement. Still, the cluster of females had little in it that was coarse or even unfeminine, if it had not much that would be so apt to meet the eye, in the way of the attractive, in a similar crowd of the present day. The improvement in the appearance and dress of the wives and daughters of husbandmen has been very marked among us within the last five-and-twenty years. Fully one-half of those collected on this occasion were in short gowns, as they were called, a garb that has almost entirely disappeared; and the pillions that were to be seen on the bodies of nearly all the horses that were fastened to the adjacent fences, showed the manner in which they had reached the ground. The calicoes of that day were both dear and homely; and it required money to enable a woman to appear in a dress that would be thought attractive to the least practised eye. Nevertheless, there were many pretty girls in that row of anxious faces, with black eyes and blue, light, black, and brown hair, and of the various forms and hues in which female beauty appears in the youthful.

I flatter myself that I was as comely as the generality of young

men of my age and class, and that, on ordinary occasions, I could not have shown myself before that cluster of girls, without drawing to myself some of their glances. Such was not the case, however, when I left the frame, which now attracted all eyes. On that, and on those who surrounded it, every eye and every anxious face was turned, my own included. It was a moment of deep interest to all; and most so to those who could only *feel*, and not act.

At the word, the men made a simultaneous effort; and they raised the upper part of the bent from the timber on which it lay. It was easy to see that the laborers, stout and willing as they were, had as much as they could lift. Boys stood ready, however, with short pieces of scantling to place upright beneath the bent; and the men had time to breathe. I felt a little ashamed of having nothing to do at such a moment; but, fearful of doing harm instead of good, I kept aloof, and remained a mere spectator.

"Now, men," said the boss, who had taken his stand where he could overlook the work, "we will make ready for another lift. All at once makes light work – are you ready? – H-e-a-ve."

Heave, or lift, the stout fellows did; and with so much intelligence and readiness, that the massive timber was carried up as high as their heads. There it stopped, supported as before, by short pieces of scantling.

The pike-poles next came in play. This is always the heaviest moment of a lift of that sort, and the men made their dispositions accordingly. Short poles were first got under the bent, by

thrusting the unarmed ends into the cavity of the foundation; and a few of the stoutest of the men stood on blocks, prepared to apply their strength directly.

"Are you ready, men?" called out the boss. "This is our heaviest bent, and we come to it fresh. Look out well to the foot of each post – Chainbearer, I count on *you*– your post is the king-post of the whole frame; if that goes, all goes. Make ready, men; heave altogether – that's a lift. Heave again, men – h-e-a-ve – altogether now – he-e-a-ve! Up she goes; he-e-a-ve – more pike-poles – stand to the frame, boys – get along some studs – he-e-a-ve – in with your props – so, catch a little breath, men."

It was time to take breath, of a certainty; for the effort had been tremendously severe. The bent had risen, however, and now stood, supported as before by props, at an angle of some fifteen degrees with the plane of the building, which carried all but the posts beyond the reach of hands. The pike-pole was to do the rest; and the next ten degrees to be overcome would probably cause the greatest expenditure of force. As yet, all had gone well, the only drawback being the certainty which had been obtained, that the strength present was hardly sufficient to get up so heavy a bent. Nevertheless there was no remedy, every person on the ground who could be of use, but myself having his station. A well-looking, semi-genteel young man, whose dress was two-thirds forest and one-third town, had come from behind the row of females, stepped upon the frame, and taken his post at a pike-pole. The uninitiated reader will understand that those

who raise a building necessarily stand directly under the timber they are lifting; and that a downfall would bring them beneath a fearful trap. Bents do sometimes come down on the laborers; and the result is almost certain destruction to those who are caught beneath the timber. Notwithstanding the danger and the difficulty in the present case, good-humor prevailed, and a few jokes were let off at the expense of the Congregationalists and the late moderator.

"Agree, 'squire," called out the hearty old Rhode Islander, "to let in some of the other denominations occasionally, and see how the bent will go up. Presbytery is holding back desperately!"

"I hope no one supposes," answered Mr. Moderator, "that religious liberty doesn't exist in this settlement. Sartainly – sartainly – other denominations can always use this house, when it isn't wanted by the right owners."

Those words "right owners" were unfortunate; the stronger the right, the less the losing party liking to hear of it. Notwithstanding, there was no disposition to skulk, or to abandon the work; and two or three of the dissentients took their revenge on the spot, by hits at the moderator. Fearful that there might be too much talk, the boss now renewed his call for attention to the work.

"Let us all go together, men," he added. "We've got to the pinch, and must stand to the work like well-broke cattle. If every man at the frame will do his best for just one minute, the hardest will be over. You see that upright stud there, with that boy, Tim

Trimmer at it; just raise the bent so that Timmy can get the eend of that stud under it, and all will be safe. Look to the lower eend of the stud, Tim; is it firm and well stopped?"

Tim declared it was; but two or three of the men went and examined it, and after making a few alterations, they too assured the boss it could not get away. A short speech was then made, in which every man was exhorted to do his best; and everybody in particular, was reminded of the necessity of standing to his work. After that speech, the men raised the pike-poles, and placed themselves at their stations. Silent expectation succeeded.

As yet, not a sign, look, or word, had intimated either wish or expectation that I was to place myself in the ranks. I will confess to an impulse to that effect; for who can look on and see their fellow-creatures straining every muscle, and not submit to human sympathy? But the recollection of military rank, and private position, had not only their claims, but their feelings. I did go a step or two nearer to the frame, but I did not put my foot on it.

"Get ready, men" – called the boss, "for a last time. Altogether at the word – now's your time – he-e-a-ve – he-e-e-a-ve – he-e-e-e-ave!"

The poor fellows did heave, and it was only too evident that they were staggering under the enormous pressure of the massive timber. I stepped on the frame at the very centre, or at the most dangerous spot, and applied all my strength to a pike-pole.

"Hurrah!" shouted the boss – "there comes the young

landlord! – he-e-ave, every man his best! – he-e-e-e-ave!"

We did heave our best, and we raised the bent several feet above its former props, but not near enough to reach the new ones, by an inch or two. Twenty voices now called on every man to stand to his work; for everybody felt the importance of even a boy's strength. The boss rushed forward like a man, to our aid; and then Tim, fancying his stud would stand without his support, left it and flew to a pike-pole. At this mistake the stud fell a little on one side, where it could be of no use. My face was so placed that I saw this dangerous circumstance; and I felt that the weight I upheld, individually, grew more like lead at each instant. I knew by this time that our force was tottering under the downward pressure of the enormous bent.

"He-e-e-ave, men – for your lives, he-eave!" exclaimed the boss, like one in the agony.

The tones of his voice sounded to me like those of despair. Had a single boy deserted us then, and we had twenty of them on the frame, the whole mass of timber must have come down upon us. Talk of charging into a battery? What is there in that to try men's nerves like the situation in which we were placed? The yielding of a muscle, in all that straining, lifting body, might have ruined us. A most fearful, frightful, twenty seconds followed; and just as I had abandoned hope, a young female darted out of the anxious, pale-faced crowd that was looking on in a terror and agony that may be better conceived than described, and seizing the stud, she placed it alongside of the post. But an inch was

wanted to gain its support; but how to obtain that inch! I now raised my voice, and called on the fainting men to heave. They obeyed; and I saw that spirited, true-eyed, firm-handed girl place the prop precisely where it was wanted. All that end of the bent felt the relief instantly, and man after man cautiously withdrew from under the frame, until none remained but those who upheld the other side. We flew to the relief of those, and soon had a number of props in their places, when all drew back and looked on the danger from which they had escaped, breathless and silent. For myself, I felt a deep sense of gratitude to God for the escape.

This occurrence made a profound impression. Everybody was sensible of the risk that had been run, and of the ruin that might have befallen the settlement. I had caught a glimpse of the rare creature whose decision, intelligence, and presence of mind had done so much for us all; and to me she seemed to be the loveliest being of her sex my eyes had ever lighted on! Her form, in particular, was perfection; being just the medium between feminine delicacy and rude health; or just so much of the last as could exist without a shade of coarseness; and the little I saw of a countenance that was nearly concealed by a maze of curls that might well be termed golden, appeared to me to correspond admirably with that form. Nor was there anything masculine or unseemly in the deed she had performed to subtract in any manner from the feminine character of her appearance. It was decided, useful, and in one sense benevolent; but a boy might have executed it so far as physical force was concerned.

The act required coolness, intelligence, and courage, rather than any masculine power of body.

It is possible that, aware as I was of the jeopardy in which we were all placed, my imagination may have heightened the effect of the fair apparition that had come to save us, as it might be, like a messenger from above. But, even there, where I stood panting from the effect of exertions that I have never equalled in my own case most certainly, exhausted, nearly breathless, and almost unable to stand, my mind's-eye saw nothing but the flexible form, the elastic, ready step, the golden tresses, the cheek suffused by excitement, the charming lips compressed with resolution, and the whole air, attitude, and action characterized, as was each and all, by the devotion, readiness, and loveliness of her sex. When my pulses beat more regularly, and my heart ceased to throb, I looked around in quest of that strange vision, but saw no one who could, in the least, claim to be connected with it. The females had huddled together, like a covey that was frightened, and were exclaiming, holding up their hands, and indulging in the signs of alarm that are customary with their sex and class. The "vision" was certainly not in that group, but had vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.

At this juncture, the Chainbearer came forward, and took the command. I could see he was agitated – affected might be a better word – but he was, nevertheless, steady and authoritative. He was obeyed, too, in a manner I was delighted to see. The order of the "boss" had produced no such impressions as those which old

Andries now issued; and I really felt an impulse to obey them myself, as I would have done eighteen months before, when he stood on the right of our regiment as its oldest captain.

The carpenter yielded his command to the Chainbearer without a murmur. Even 'Squire Newcome evidently felt that Andries was one who, in a certain way, could influence the minds of the settlers more than he could do it himself. In short, everybody listened, everybody seemed pleased, and everybody obeyed. Nor did my old friend resort to any of the coaxing that is so common in America, when men are to be controlled in the country. In the towns, and wherever men are to be commanded in bodies, authority is as well understood as it is in any other quarter of the world; but, in the interior, and especially among the people of New England habits, very few men carry sufficient command with them to say, "John, do this," or "John, do that;" but it is "Johnny, *why won't you* do this?" or "Johnny, *don't you think you'd better* do that?" The Chainbearer had none of this mystified nonsense about him. He called things by their right names; and when he wanted a spade, he did not ask for a hoe. As a consequence, he was obeyed, command being just as indispensable to men, on a thousand occasions, as any other quality.

Everything was soon ready again, with the men stationed a little differently from what they had previously been. This change was the Chainbearer's, who understood mechanics practically; better, perhaps, than if he had been a first-rate mathematician.

The word was given to heave, all of us being at the pike-poles; when up went the bent, as if borne upon by a force that was irresistible. Such was the effect of old Andries' habits of command, which not only caused every man to lift with all his might, but the whole to lift together. A bent that is perpendicular is easily secured; and then it was announced that the heaviest of the work was over. The other bents were much lighter; and one up, there were means of aiding in raising the rest that were at first wanting.

"The Congregationals has got the best on't," cried out the old Rhode Islander, laughing, as soon as the bent was stay-lathed, "by the help of the Chainbearer and somebody else I wunt name! Well, our turn will come, some day; for Ravensnest is a place in which the people wont be satisfied with one religion. A country is badly on't, that has but one religion in't; priests getting lazy, and professors dull!"

"You may be sure of t'at," answered the Chainbearer, who was evidently making preparations to quit the frame. "Ravensnest will get as many religions, in time, as t'ere are discontented spirits in it; and t'ey will need many raisings, and more priests."

"Do you intend to leave us, Chainbearer? There's more posts to hold, and more bents to lift?"

"The worst is over, and you've force enough wit'out me, for what remains to be tone. I haf t'e lantlort to take care of. Go to your work, men; and, if you can, rememper you haf a peing to worship in t'is house, t'at is neit'er Congregational, nor

Presbyterian, nor anything else of the nature of your disputes and self-conceit. 'Squire Newcome wilt gif you a leat in t'e way of l'arning, and t'e carpenter can act boss well enough for t'e rest of t'e tay."

I was surprised at the coolness with which my old friend delivered himself of sentiments that were not very likely to find favor in such a company, and the deference that he received, while thus ungraciously employed. But I afterward ascertained Andries commanded respect by means of his known integrity; and his opinions carried weight because he was a man who usually said "*come*, boys," and not one who issued his orders in the words "go, boys." This had been his character in the army, where, in his own little circle, he was known as one ever ready to lead in person. Then Andries was a man of sterling truth; and such a man, when he has the moral courage to act up to his native impulses, mingled with discretion enough to keep him within the boundaries of common prudence, insensibly acquires great influence over those with whom he is brought in contact. Men never fail to respect such qualities, however little they put them in practice in their own cases.

"Come Morty, my poy," said the Chainbearer, as soon as we were clear of the crowd, "I will pe your guite, ant take you to a roof unter which you will pe master."

"You surely do not mean the 'Nest?"

"T'at, and no ot'er. T'e olt place looks, like us olt soltiers, a little rusty, and t'e worse for sarvice; put it is comfortaple, and I

haf had it put in order for you, poy. Your grantfat'er's furniture is still t'ere; and Frank Malpone, Dus, and I, haf mate it head-quarters, since we haf peen in t'is part of t'e country. You know I haf your orters for t'at."

"Certainly, and to use anything else that is mine. But I had supposed you fairly hutted in the woods of Mooseridge!"

"T'at hast peen tone too; sometimes we are at one place, and sometimes at anot'er. My niggers are at t'e hut; put Frank and Dus and I haf come ofer to welcome you to t'e country."

"I have a wagoner here, and my own black – let me step to the inn, and order them to get ready for us."

"Mortaunt, you and I haf peen uset to our feet. The soltier marches, and countermarches, wit' no wagon to carry him; he leafs t'em to t'e paggage, and t'e paggage-guart."

"Come on, old Andries; I will be your comrade, on foot or on horseback. It can only be some three or four miles, and Jaap can follow with the trunks at his leisure."

A word spoken to the negro was all that was necessary; though the meeting between him and the Chainbearer was that of old friends. Jaap had gone through the whole war with the regiment, sometimes acting as my father's servant, sometimes carrying a musket, sometimes driving a team; and, at the close of his career, as my particular attendant. He consequently regarded himself as a sort of soldier, and a very good one had he proved himself to be, on a great many occasions.

"One word before we start, Chainbearer," I said, as old

Andries and Jaap concluded their greetings; "I fell in with the Indian you used to call Sureflint, in the woods, and I wish to take him with us."

"He hast gone aheat, to let your visit pe known," answered my friend. "I saw him going up t'e roat, at a quick trot, half an hour since. He is at t'e 'Nest py t'is time."

No more remained to be said or done, and we went our way, leaving the people busily engaged in getting up the remainder of the frame. I had occasion to observe that my arrival produced much less sensation in the settlement than it might have done had not the "meeting-house" been my competitor in attracting attention. One was just as much of a novelty as the other; just as much of a stranger. Although born in a Christian land, and educated in Christian dogmas, very few of those who dwelt on the estate of Ravensnest, and who were under the age of five-and-twenty, had ever seen an edifice that was constructed for the purpose of Christian worship at all. Such structures were rare indeed, in the year 1784, and in the interior of New York. Albany had but two, I believe; the capital may have had a dozen; and most of the larger villages possessed at least one; but with the exception of the old counties, and here and there one on the Mohawk, the new State could not boast of many of "those silent fingers pointing to the sky," rising among its trees, so many monitors of a future world, and of the great end of life. As a matter of course, all those who had never seen a church felt the liveliest desire to judge of the form and proportions of this;

and as the Chainbearer and I passed the crowd of females, I heard several good-looking girls expressing their impatience to see something of the anticipated steeple, while scarce a glance was bestowed on myself.

"Well, my old friend, here we are together, again, marching on a public highway," I remarked, "but with no intention of encamping in front of an enemy."

"I hope not," returned Andries, dryly; "t'ough all is not golt t'at glitters. We have fought a hard battle, Major Littlepage; I hope it will turn out for a goot end."

I was a little surprised at this remark; but Andries was never very sanguine in his anticipations of good. Like a true Dutchman, he particularly distrusted the immigration from the Eastern States, which I had heard him often say could bring no happy results.

"All will come round in the end, Chainbearer," I answered, "and we shall get the benefits of our toil and dangers. But how do you come on at the Ridge, and who is this surveyor of yours?"

"T'ings do well enough at t'e Ridge, Mortaunt; for *t'ere* t'ere is not a soul yet to make trouple. We have prought you a map of ten t'ousant acres, laid off in huntret acre lots, which I will venture to say haf peen as honestly and carefully measuret as any other ten t'ousant acres in t'e State. We pegan next to t'is property, and you may pegin to lease, on your fat'er's lant, just as soon as you please."

"And the Frank Malbone you have written about did the

surveying?"

"He worket up *my* measurements, lat, and closely tone t'ey are, I'll answer for it. T'is Frank Malbone is t'e brot'er of Dus – t'at is to say, her half-brot'er; peing no nephew of mine. Dus, you know, is only a half-niece in bloot; but she is a full da'ter in lofe. As for Frank, he is a goot fellow; and t'ough t'is is his first jop at surfeying, he may be dependet on wit' as much confitence as any ot'er man going."

"No matter if a few mistakes are made, Andries; land is not diamonds in this country; there is plenty for us all, and a great deal to spare. It would be a different matter if there was a scarcity; but as it is, give good measure to the tenant, or the purchaser. A first survey can only produce a little loss or gain; whereas surveys between old farms are full of trouble."

"Ant lawsuits" – put in the Chainbearer, nodding his head. "To tell you my mint, Mortaunt, I would rat'er take a jop in a Dutch settlement, at half-price, t'an run a line petween two Yankees for twice the money. Among t'e Dutch, t'e owners light their pipes, and smoke whilst you are at work; but the Yankees are the whole time trying to cut off a little here, and to gain a little t'ere; so t'at it is as much as a man's conscience is wort' to carry a chain fairly petween 'em."

As I knew his prejudice on this subject formed the weak point in the Chainbearer, I gave the discourse a new turn, by leading it to political events, of which I knew him to be fond. We walked on, conversing on various topics connected with this theme, for

near an hour, when I found myself rather suddenly quite near to my own particular house. Near by, the building had more of shape and substance than it had seemed to possess when seen from the height; and I found the orchards and meadows around it free from stumps and other eyesores, and in good order. Still, the place on its exterior, had a sort of jail look, there being no windows, nor any other outlet than the door. On reaching the latter, which was a gate, rather than an ordinary entrance, we paused a moment to look about us. While we stood there, gazing at the fields, a form glided through the opening, and Sureflint stood by my side. He had hardly got there, when there arose the strains of the same full, rich, female voice, singing Indian words to a civilized melody, as I had heard issuing from the thicket of pines, among the second growth of the forest. From that moment I forgot my fields and orchards, forgot the Chainbearer and Sureflint, and could think of nothing but the extraordinary circumstance of a native girl's possessing such a knowledge of our music. The Indian himself seemed entranced; never moving until the song or verses were ended. Old Andries smiled, waited until the last strain was finished, pronounced the word "Dus" with emphasis, and beckoned for me to follow him into the building.

# CHAPTER XI

> "The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time; if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure for every thing, and so dance out the answer." —*Beatrice.*

"Dus!" I repeated to myself – "This, then, is Dus, and no Indian girl; the Chainbearer's 'Dus;' Priscilla Bayard's 'Dus;' and Sureflint's 'wren'!"

Andries must have overheard me, in part; for he stopped just within the court on which the gate opened, and said —

"Yes, t'at is Dus, my niece. The girl is like a mocking-pird, and catches the songs of all languages and people. She is goot at Dutch, and quite melts my heart, Mortaunt, when she opens her throat to sing one of our melancholy Dutch songs; and she gives the English too, as if she knowet no ot'er tongue."

"But that song was Indian – the words, at least, were Mohawk or Oneida."

"Onondago – t'ere is little or no tifference. Yes, you're right enough; the worts are Indian, and they tell me t'e music is Scotch. Come from where it will, it goes straight to the heart, poy."

"How came Dus – how came Miss Ursula – that is, your niece, to understand an Indian dialect?"

"Didn't I tell you she is a perfect mocking-bird, and that she imitates all she hears? Yes, Dus would make as goot a surveyor

as her brot'er, after a week's trial. You've heart me say how much I livet among the tripes before t'e war, and Dus was t'en wit' me. In that manner she has caught the language; and what she has once l'arnet she nefer forget. Dus is half wilt from living so much in the woots, and you must make allowances for her; put she is a capital gal, and t'e very prite of my heart!"

"Tell me one thing before we enter the house – does any one else sing Indian about here? – has Sureflint any women with him?"

"Not he! – t'e creatur' hast not'ing to do wit' squaws. As for any one else's singing Intian, I can only tell you I never heart of such a person."

"But, you told me you were down the road to meet me this morning – were you alone!"

"Not at all – we all went; Sureflint, Frank, Dus, and I. I t'ought it due to a lantlort, Mortaunt, to gif him a hearty welcome; t'ough Dus did mutiny a little, and sait t'at, lantlort or no lantlort, it was not proper for a young gal to go forth to meet a young man. I might have t'ought so too, if it hadn't peen yourself, my poy; but, with you, I couldn't play stranger, as one woult wit' a straggling Yankee. I wishet to welcome you wit' the whole family; put I'll not conceal Dus's unwillingness to be of t'e party."

"But Dus *was* of your party! It is very odd we did not meet!"

"Now, you speak of it, I do pelief it wast all owin' to a scheme of t'at cunnin' gal! You must know, Mortaunt, a'ter we had got a pit down t'e roat, she persuatet us to enter a t'icket of pines, in

order to eat a mout'ful; and I do pelief the cunnin' hussy just did it t'at you might slip past, and she safe her female dignity!"

"And from those pines Sureflint came, just after Dus, as you call her, but Miss Ursula Malbone, as I ought to style her, had been singing this very song?"

"Wast you near enough to know all t'is, poy, and we miss you! The gal dit sing t'at ferry song; yes, I rememper it; and a sweet, goot song it is. Call her Miss Ursula Malbone? Why shouldn't you call her Dus, as well as Frank and I?"

"For the simple reason that you are uncle, and Frank her brother, while I am a total stranger."

"Poh – poh – Morty; t'is is peing partic'lar. I am only a half-uncle, in the first place; and Frank is only a half-brot'er; and I dares to say you wilt pe her *whole* frient. T'en, you are not a stranger to any of t'e family, I can tell you, lat; for I have talket enough apout you to make bot' t'e poy and t'e gal lofe you almost as much as I do myself."

Poor, simple-hearted, upright old Andries! What an unpleasant feeling did he give me, by letting me into the secret that I was about to meet persons who had been listening to his partial accounts for the last twelve months. It is so difficult to equal expectations thus awakened; and I will own that I had begun to be a little sensitive on the subject of this Dus. The song had been ringing in my ears from the moment I first heard it; and now that it became associated with Priscilla Bayard's Ursula Malbone, the latter had really become a very formidable

person to my imagination. There was no retreating, however, had I wished it; and a sign induced the Chainbearer to proceed. Face the young woman I must, and the sooner it was done the better.

The 'Nest-house, as my homely residence was termed, had been a sort of fortress, or "garrison," in its day, having been built around three sides of a parallelogram, with all its windows and doors opening on the court. On the fourth side were the remains of pickets, or palisades, but they were mostly rotted away, being useless as a fence, from the circumstance that the buildings stood on the verge of a low cliff that, of itself, formed a complete barrier against the invasions of cattle, and no insignificant defence against those of man.

The interior of the 'Nest-house was far more inviting than its exterior. The windows gave the court an appearance of life and gayety, at once converting that which was otherwise a pile of logs, thrown together in the form of a building, into a habitable and inhabited dwelling. One side of this court, however, was much neater, and had much more the air of comfort than the other; and toward the first Andries led the way. I was aware that my grandfather Mordaunt had caused a few rooms in this building to be furnished for his own particular purposes, and that no orders had ever been given to remove or to dispose of the articles thus provided. I was not surprised, therefore, on entering the house, to find myself in apartments which, while they could not be called in any manner gayly or richly furnished, were nevertheless quite respectably supplied with most of the articles that are thought

necessary to a certain manner of living.

"We shall fint Dus in here, I dare say," observed the Chainbearer, throwing open a door, and signing for me to precede him. "Go in, and shake t'e gal's hand, Mortaunt; she knows you well enough, name and natur', as a poty may say."

I did go in, and found myself within a few feet of the fair, golden-haired girl of the raising; she who had saved the frame from falling on us all, by a decision of mind and readiness of exertion that partook equally of courage and dexterity. She was in the same dress as when first seen by me, though the difference in attitude and employment certainly gave her air and expression a very different character. Ursula Malbone was now quietly occupied in hemming one of those coarse checked handkerchiefs that the poverty of her uncle compelled him, or at least induced him to use, and of which I had seen one in his hands only a minute before. On my entrance she rose, gravely but not discourteously answering my bow with a profound courtesy. Neither spoke, though the salutes were exchanged as between persons who felt no necessity for an introduction in order to know each other.

"Well, now," put in Andries, in his strongest Dutch accent, "t'is wilt never do, ast petween two such olt frients. Come hit'er, Dus, gal, and gif your hant to Mortaunt Littlepage, who ist a sort of son of my own."

Dus obeyed, and I had the pleasure of holding her soft velvet-like hand in mine for one moment. I felt a gratification I cannot

describe in finding the hand *was* so soft, since the fact gave me the assurance that necessity had not yet reduced her to any of the toil that is unsuited to a gentlewoman. I knew that Andries had slaves, his only possession, indeed, besides his compass, chains and sword, unless a few arms and some rude articles of the household were excepted; and these slaves, old and worn out as they must be by this time, were probably the means of saving the niece from the performance of offices that were menial.

Although I got the hand of Ursula Malbone, I could not catch her eye. She did not avert her face, neither did she affect coldness; but she was not at her ease. I could readily perceive that she would have been better pleased had her uncle permitted the salutations to be limited to the bows and courtesies. As I had never seen this girl before, and could not have done anything to offend her, I ascribed the whole to *mauvaise honte*, and the embarrassment that was natural enough to one who found herself placed in a situation so different from that in which she had so lately been. I bowed on the hand, possibly gave it a gentle pressure in order to reassure its owner, and we separated.

"Well, now, Dus, haf you a cup of tea for the lantlort – to welcome him to his own house wit'?" demanded Andries, perfectly satisfied with the seemingly amicable relations he had established between us. "T'e major hast hat a long march, for peaceable times, and woult be glat to git a little refreshment."

"You call me major, Chainbearer, while you refuse to accept the same title for yourself."

"Ay, t'ere ist reason enough for t'at. *You* may lif to be a general; *wilt* probably be one before you're t'irty; but I am an olt man, now, and shall never wear any ot'er uniform than this I have on again. I pegan t'e worlt in this corps, Morty, and shall end it in the rank in which I began."

"I thought you had been a surveyor originally, and that you fell back on the chain because you had no taste for figures. I think I have heard as much from yourself."

"Yes, t'at is t'e fact. Figures and I didn't agree; nor do I like 'em any petter at seventy t'an I liket 'em at seventeen. Frank Malbone, now, Dus's brother, t'ere, ist a lat that takes to 'em nat'rally, and he works t'rough a sum ast your fat'er would carry a battalion t'rough a ravine. Carrying chain I like; it gives sufficient occupation to t'e mind; put honesty is the great quality for the chainbearer. They say figures can't lie, Mortaunt; but 'tis not true wit' chains; sometimes they do lie, desperately."

"Where is Mr. Francis Malbone? I should be pleased to make his acquaintance."

"Frank remainet pehint to help 'em up with their timber. He is a stout chap, like yourself, and can lent a hant; while, poor fellow! he has no lantlort tignity to maintain."

I heard a gentle sigh from Dus, and involuntarily turned my head; for she was occupied directly behind my chair. As if ashamed of the weakness, the spirited girl colored, and for the first time in my life I heard her voice, the two instances of the Indian songs excepted. I say heard her voice; for it was an event

to record. A pleasant voice, in either sex, is a most pleasant gift from nature. But the sweet tones of Ursula Malbone were all that the most fastidious ear could have desired; being full, rich, melodious, yet on the precise key that best satisfies the taste, bringing with it assurances of a feminine disposition and regulated habits. I detest a shrill, high-keyed female voice, more than that of a bawling man, while one feels a contempt for those who mumble their words in order to appear to possess a refinement that the very act itself contradicts. Plain, direct, but regulated utterance, is indispensable to a man or woman of the world; anything else rendering him or her mean or affected.

"I was in hopes," said Dus, "that evil-disposed frame was up and secured, and that I should see Frank in a minute or two. I was surprised to see you working so stoutly for the Presbyterians, uncle Chainbearer!"

"I might return t'e compliment, and say I wast surpriset to see *you* doing the same t'ing, Miss Dus! Pesides, the tenomination is Congregational and not Prespyterian; and one is apout as much to your taste as t'e ot'er."

"The little I did was for you, and Frank, and – Mr. Littlepage, with all the rest who stood under the frame."

"I am sure, Miss Ursula," I now put in, "we all ought, and I trust we all *do* feel truly grateful for your timely aid. Had that timber come down, many of us must have been killed, and more maimed."

"It was not a very feminine exploit," answered the girl,

smiling, as I thought, a little bitterly. "But one gets accustomed to being *useful* in the woods."

"Do you dislike living in the forest, then?" I ventured to ask.

"Certainly not. I like living anywhere that keeps me near uncle Chainbearer, and Frank. They are all to me, now my excellent protectress and adviser is no more; and their home is my home, their pleasure my pleasure, their happiness mine."

This might have been said in a way to render it suspicious and sentimental; but it was not. On the contrary, it was impulsive, and came from the heart. I saw by the gratified look of Andries that he understood his niece, and was fully aware how much he might rely on the truthful character of the speaker. As for the girl herself, the moment she had given utterance to what she felt, she shrunk back, like one abashed at having laid bare feelings that ought to have been kept in the privacy of her own bosom. Unwilling to distress her, I turned the conversation in a way to leave her to herself.

"Mr. Newcome seems a skilful manager of the multitude," I remarked. "He contrived very dexterously to give to the twenty-six Congregationalists he had with him, the air of being a majority of the whole assembly; while in truth, they were barely a third of those present."

"Let Jason Newcome alone for t'at?" exclaimed Andries. "He understants mankint, he says, and sartainly he hast a way of marching and countermarching just where he pleases wit' t'ese people, makin' 'em t'ink t'e whole time t'ey are doing just what

t'ey want to do. It ist an art, major – it ist an art!"

"I should think it must be, and one worth possessing, if, indeed, it can be exercised with credit."

"Ay, t'ere's the rub! Exerciset it is; but as for t'e credit, *t'at* I will not answer for. It sometimes makes me angry, and sometimes it makes me laugh, when I look on, and see t'e manner in which Jason makes t'e people rule t'emselves, and how *he* wheels 'em apout, and faces 'em, and t'rows them into line, and out of line, at t'eir own wort of commant! His Excellency coult hartly do more wit' us, a'fer t'e Baron[8] had given us his drill."

"There must be some talent necessary, in order to possess so much influence over one's fellow-creatures."

"It is a talent you woult be ashamed to exercise, Mortaunt Littlepage, t'ough you hat it in cart loats. No man can use such talent wit'out peginning wit' lying and deceifing; and you must be greatly changet, major, if you are the he't of your class, in such a school."

"I am sorry to see, Chainbearer, that you have no better opinion of my agent; I must look into the matter a little, when this is the case."

"You wilt fint him law-honest enough; for he swears py t'e law, and lifs py t'e law. No fear for your tollars, poy; t'ey pe all safe, unless, inteet, t'ey haf all vanishet in t'e law."

---

[8] This allusion is evidently to a German officer, who introduced the Prussian drill into the American army, Baron Steuben – or *Stuy*ben, as I think he must have been called in Germany – Steu*ben*, as he is universally termed in this country. – Editor.

As Andries was getting more and more Dutch, I knew he was growing more and more warm, and I thought it might be well to defer the necessary inquiries to a cooler moment. This peculiarity I have often observed in most of those who speak English imperfectly, or with the accent of some other tongue. They fall back, as respects language, to that nearest to nature, at those moments when natural feeling is asserting its power over them the least equivocally.

I now began to question the Chainbearer concerning the condition in which he found the 'Nest-house and farm, over which I had given him full authority, when he came to the place, by a special letter to the agent. The people in possession were of very humble pretensions, and had been content to occupy the kitchen and servants' rooms ever since my grandfather's death, as indeed, they had done long before that event. It was owing to this moderation, as well as to their perfect honesty, that I found nothing embezzled, and most of the articles in good condition. As for the farm, it had flourished, on the "let alone" principle. The orchards had grown, as a matter of course; and if the fields had not been improved by judicious culture, neither had they been exhausted by covetous croppings. In these particulars, there was nothing of which to complain. Things might have been better, Andries thought; but he also thought it was exceedingly fortunate they were no worse. While we were conversing on this theme, Dus moved about the room silently, but with collected activity, having arranged the tea-table with her own hands. When invited

to take our seats at it – everybody drew near to a tea-table in that day, unless when there was too large a party to be accommodated – I was surprised to find everything so perfectly neat, and some things rich. The plates, knives, etc., were of good quality, but the tray was actually garnished with a set of old-fashioned silver, such as was made when tea was first used, of small size, but very highly chased. The handle of the spoons represented the stem of the tea-plant, and there was a crest on each of them; while a full coat of arms was engraved on the different vessels of the service, which were four in all. I looked at the crest, in a vague, but surprised expectation of finding my own. It was entirely new to me. Taking the cream-jug in my hand, I could recall no arms resembling those that were engraved on it.

"I was surprised to find this plate here," I observed; "for, though my grandfather possessed a great deal of it, for one of his means, I did not think he had enough to be as prodigal of it as leaving it here would infer. This is family plate, too, but those arms are neither Mordaunt nor Littlepage. May I ask to whom they do belong?"

"The Malpones," answered the Chainbearer. "T'e t'ings are t'e property of Dus."

"And you may add, uncle Chainbearer, that they are *all* her property" – added the girl, quickly.

"I feel much honored in being permitted to use them, Miss Ursula," I remarked; "for a very pretty set they make."

"Necessity, and not vanity, has brought them out to-day.

I broke the only teapot of yours there was in the house this morning, and was in hopes Frank would have brought up one from the store to supply its place, before it would be wanted; but he does not come. As for spoons, I can find none belonging to the house, and we use these constantly. As the teapot was indispensable, I thought I might as well display all my wealth at once. But this is the first time the things have been used in many, many years!"

There was a plaintive melody in Dus's voice, spite of her desire and effort to speak with unconcern, that I found exceedingly touching. While few of us enter into the exultation of successful vulgarity, as it rejoices in its too often random prosperity, it is in nature to sympathize with a downward progress, and with the sentiments it leaves, when it is connected with the fates of the innocent, the virtuous, and the educated. That set of silver was all that remained to Ursula Malbone of a physical character, and which marked the former condition of her family; and doubtless she cherished it with no low feeling of morbid pride, but as a melancholy monument of a condition to which all her opinions, tastes, and early habits constantly reminded her she properly belonged. In this last point of view, the sentiment was as respectable, and as much entitled to reverence, as in the other case it would have been unworthy, and meriting contempt.

There is a great deal of low misconception, as well as a good deal of cant, beginning to prevail among us, on the subject of the qualities that mark a gentleman, or a lady. The day has gone

by, and I trust forever, when the mere accidents of birth are to govern such a claim; though the accidents of birth are very apt to supply the qualities that may really form the caste. For my own part, I believe in the exaggerations of neither of the two extremes that so stubbornly maintain their theories on this subject; or, that a gentleman may not be formed exclusively by birth on the one hand, and that the severe morality of the Bible on the other is by no means indispensable to the character. A man may be a very perfect gentleman, though by no means a perfect man, or a Christian; and he may be a very good Christian, and very little of a gentleman. It is true, there is a connection in manners, as a result, between the Christian and the gentleman; but it is in the result, and not in the motive. That Christianity has little necessary connection with the character of a gentleman may be seen in the fact that the dogmas of the first teach us to turn another cheek to him who smites; while the promptings of the gentleman are – not to wipe out the indignity in the blood of the offender, but – to show that rather than submit to it he is ready to risk his own life.[9]

But, I repeat, there is no *necessary* connection between the

---

[9] Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage would seem to have got hold of the only plausible palliative for a custom that originated in those times when abuses could only be corrected by the strong arm; and which, in our own days, is degenerating into the merest system of chicanery and trick. The duellist who, in his "practice," gets to be "certain death to a shingle" and then misses his man, instead of illustrating his chivalry, merely lets the world into the secret that his nerves are not equal to his drill! There was something as respectable as anything *can* be in connection with a custom so silly, in the conduct of the Englishman who called out to his adversary, a near-sighted man, "that if he wished to shoot at *him*, he must turn his pistol in another direction." – Editor.

Christian and the gentleman, though the last who is the first attains the highest condition of humanity. Christians, under the influence of their educations and habits, often do things that the code of the gentleman rejects; while it is certain that gentlemen constantly commit unequivocal sins. The morality of the gentleman repudiates meannesses and low vices, rather than it rigidly respects the laws of God; while the morality of the Christian is unavoidably raised or depressed by the influence of the received opinions of his social caste. I am not maintaining that "the ten commandments were not given for the obedience of people of quality," for their obligations are universal; but, simply, that the qualities of a gentleman are the best qualities of man unaided by God, while the graces of the Christian come directly from his mercy.

Nevertheless, there is that in the true character of a gentleman that is very much to be respected. In addition to the great indispensables of tastes, manners, and opinions, based on intelligence and cultivation, and all those liberal qualities that mark his caste, he cannot and does not stoop to meannesses of any sort. He is truthful out of self-respect, and not in obedience to the will of God; free with his money, because liberality is an essential feature of his habits, and not in imitation of the self-sacrifice of Christ; superior to scandal and the vices of the busybody, inasmuch as they are low and impair his pride of character, rather than because he has been commanded not to bear false witness against his neighbor. It is a great mistake to

confound these two characters, one of which is a mere human embellishment of the ways of a wicked world, while the other draws near to the great end of human existence. The last is a character I revere; while I am willing to confess that I never meet with the first without feeling how vacant and repulsive society would become without it; unless, indeed, the vacuum could be filled by the great substance, of which, after all, the gentleman is but the shadow.

Ursula Malbone lost nothing in my respect by betraying the emotion she did, while thus speaking of this relic of old family plate. I was glad to find, however, that she *could* retain it; for, though dressed in no degree in a style unbecoming her homely position as her uncle's housekeeper, there were a neatness and taste in her attire that are not often seen in remote parts of the country. On this subject, the reader will indulge my weaknesses a little, if I pause to say a word. Ursula had neither preserved in her dress the style of one of her sex and condition in the world, nor yet entirely adopted that common to girls of the class to which she now seemingly belonged. It struck me that some of those former garments that were the simplest in fashion, and the most appropriate in material, had been especially arranged for present use; and sweetly becoming were they, to one of her style of countenance and perfection of form. In that day, as every one knows, the different classes of society – and, kingdom or republic, classes *do* and ever *will* exist in this country, as an incident of civilization; a truth every one can see as respects those

*below*, though his vision may be less perfect as respects those *above* him – but every one knows that great distinctions in dress existed, as between classes, all over the Christian world, at the close of the American war, that are fast disappearing, or have altogether disappeared. Now Ursula had preserved just enough of the peculiar attire of her own class, to let one understand that she, in truth, belonged to it without rendering the distinction obtrusive. Indeed, the very character of that which she did preserve, sufficiently told the story of her origin, since it was a subdued, rather than an exaggerated imitation of that to which she had been accustomed, as would have been the case with a mere copyist. I can only add, that the effect was to render her sufficiently charming.

"Taste t'ese cakes," said old Andries, who, without the slightest design, did love to exhibit the various merits of his niece – "Dus mate t'em, and I'll engage Matam Washington herself couldn't make pleasanter!"

"If Mrs. Washington was ever thus employed," I answered, "she might turn pale with envy here. Better cakes of the sort I never ate."

"'Of the sort' is well added, Mr. Littlepage," the girl quietly observed; "my protectress and friend made me rather skilful in this way, but the ingredients are not to be had here as they were in her family."

"Which, being a boarding-school for young ladies, was doubtless better supplied than common with the materials and

knowledge necessary for good cakes."

Dus laughed, and it startled me, so full of a wild but subdued melody did that laugh seem to be.

"Young ladies have many foibles imputed to them, of which they are altogether innocent," was her answer. "Cakes were almost forbidden fruit in the school, and we were taught to make them in pity to the palates of the men."

"Your future huspants, gal," cried the Chainbearer, rising to quit the room.

"Our fathers, brothers, and *uncles*," returned his niece, laying an emphasis on the last word.

"I believe, Miss Ursula," I resumed, as soon as Andries had left us alone, "that I have been let behind the curtain as respects your late school, having an acquaintance of a somewhat particular nature with one of your old school-fellows."

My companion did not answer, but she fastened those fascinating blue eyes of hers on me, in a way that asked a hundred questions in a moment. I could not but see that they were suffused with tears; allusions to her school often producing that effect.

"I mean Miss Priscilla Bayard, who would seem to be, or to have been, a very good friend of yours," I added, observing that my companion was not disposed to say anything.

"Pris Bayard!" Ursula now suffered to escape her, in her surprise – "and *she* an acquaintance of a somewhat particular nature!"

"My language has been incautious; not to say that of a

coxcomb. Certainly, I am not authorized to say more than that our *families* are very intimate, and that there are some particular reasons for that intimacy. I beg you to read only as I have corrected the error."

"I do not see that the correction changes things much; and you will let me say I am grieved, sadly grieved, to learn so much."

This was odd! That Dus really meant what she said was plain enough by a face that had actually lost nearly all of its color, and which expressed an emotion that was most extraordinary. Shall I own what a miserably conceited coxcomb I was for a single moment? The truth must be said, and I will confess it. The thought that crossed my mind was this: Ursula Malbone was pained at the idea that the only man whom she had seen for a year, and who could, by possibility, make any impression on one of her education and tastes, was betrothed to another! Under ordinary circumstances, this precocious preference might have caused me to revolt at its exhibition; but there was far too much of nature in all of Dus's emotions, acts, and language, to produce any other impression on me than that of intense interest. I have always dated the powerful hold that this girl so soon obtained on my heart, to the tumult of feeling awakened in me at that singular moment. Love at first sight may be ridiculous, but it is sometimes true. That a passion may be aroused by a glance, or a smile, or any other of those secret means of conveying sympathy with which nature has supplied us, I fully believe; though its duration must depend on qualities of a higher and more permanent influence.

It is the imagination that is first excited; the heart coming in for its share by later and less perceptible degrees.

My delusion, however, did not last long. Whether Ursula Malbone was conscious of the misconstruction to which she was liable, I cannot say; but I rather think not, as she was much too innocent to dread evil; or whether she saw some other necessity for explaining herself, remains a secret with me to this hour; but explain she did. How judiciously this was done, and with how much of that female tact that taught her to conceal the secrets of her friend, will appear to those who are sufficiently interested in the subject to pursue it.

# CHAPTER XII

"Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth —
Joy, gentle friends! joy, and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!"

– *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"I ought not to leave you in any doubts as to my meaning, Mr. Littlepage," resumed Ursula, after a short pause. "Priscilla Bayard is very dear to me, and is well worthy of all your love and admiration – "

"Admiration, if you please, and as much as you please, Miss Ursula; but there is no such feeling as love, as yet certainly, between Miss Bayard and myself."

The countenance of Dus brightened sensibly. Truth herself, she gave immediate credit to what I said; and I could not but see that she was greatly relieved from some unaccountable apprehension. Still, she smiled a little archly, and perhaps a little sadly, as she continued —

"'As yet, certainly,' is very equivocal on your side, when a young woman like Priscilla Bayard is concerned. It may at any moment be converted into '*now*, certainly,' with that certainty the other way."

"I will not deny it. Miss Bayard is a charming creature – yet, I do not know how it is – there seems to be a fate in these

things. The peculiar relation to which I alluded, and alluded so awkwardly, is nothing more than the engagement of my youngest sister to her brother. There is no secret in that engagement, so I shall not affect to conceal it."

"And it is just such an engagement as might lead to one between yourself and Priscilla!" exclaimed Dus, certainly not without alarm.

"It might, or it might not, as the parties happen to view such things. With certain temperaments it might prove an inducement; while with others it would not."

"*My* interest in the subject," continued Dus, "proceeds altogether from the knowledge I have that another has sought Miss Bayard; and I will own, with my hearty good wishes for his success. You struck me as a most formidable rival; nor do you seem any the less so, now I know that your families are to be connected."

"Have no fears on my account, for I am as heart-whole as the day I first saw the lady."

A flash of intelligence – a most meaning flash it was – gleamed on the handsome face of my companion; and it was followed by a mournful, though I still thought not an entirely dissatisfied smile.

"These are matters about which one had better not say much," Dus added, after a pause. "My sex has its 'peculiar rights,' and no woman should disregard them. You have been fortunate in finding all your tenants collected together, Mr. Littlepage, in a

way to let you see them at a single glance."

"I was fortunate in one sense, and a most delightful introduction I had to the settlement – such an introduction as I would travel another hundred miles to have repeated."

"Are you, then, so fond of raisings? or do you really love excitement to such a degree as to wish to get under a trap, like one of the poor rabbits my uncle sometimes takes?"

"I am not thinking of the raising, or of the frame; although your courage and presence of mind might well indelibly impress both on my mind" – Dus looked down and the color mounted to her temple – "but, I was thinking of a certain song, an Indian song, sung to Scotch music, that I heard a few miles from the clearings, and which was my real introduction to the pleasant things one may both hear and see in this retired part of the world."

"Which is not so retired after all that flattery cannot penetrate it, I find. It is pleasant to hear one's songs extolled, even though they may be Indian; but, it is not half so pleasant as to hear tidings of Priscilla Bayard. If you wish truly to charm my ear, talk of *her*!"

"The attachment seems mutual, for I can assure you Miss Bayard manifested just the same interest in you."

"In me! Priscilla then remembers a poor creature like me, in her banishment from the world! Perhaps she remembers me so much the more, because I *am* banished. I hope she does not, *can*not think I regret my condition —*that* I could hardly forgive

her."

"I rather think she does not; I know she gives you credit for more than common excellencies."

"It is strange that Priscilla Bayard should speak of me to you! I have been a little unguarded myself, Mr. Littlepage, and have said so much, that I begin to feel the necessity of saying something more. There is some excuse for my not feeling in your presence as in that of a stranger, since uncle Chainbearer has your name in his mouth at least one hundred times each day. Twelve different times in one hour did he speak of you yesterday."

"Excellent old Andries! It is the pride of my life that so honest a man loves me; and now for the explanation I am entitled to receive as his friend by your own acknowledgment."

Dus smiled, a little saucily I thought – but saucily or not, that smile made her look extremely lovely. She reflected a moment, like one who thinks intensely, even bending her head under the painful mental effort; then she drew her form to its usual attitude, and spoke.

"It is always best to be frank," she said, "and it can do no harm, while it *may* do good to be explicit with you. You will not forget, Mr. Littlepage, that I believe myself to be conversing with my uncle's very best friend?"

"I am too proud of the distinction to forget it, under any circumstances; and least of all in *your* presence."

"Well, then, I will be frank. Priscilla Bayard was for eight years my associate and closest friend. Our affection for each

other commenced when we were mere children, and increased with time and knowledge. About a year before the close of the war, my brother Frank, who is now here as my uncle's surveyor, found opportunities to quit his regiment, and to come to visit me quite frequently – indeed, his company was sent to Albany, where he could see me as often as he desired. To see me, was to see Priscilla, for we were inseparable; and to see Priscilla was, for poor Frank at least, to love her. He made me his confidant, and my alarm was nothing but natural concern lest he might have a rival as formidable as you."

A flood of light was let in upon me by this brief explanation, though I could not but wonder at the simplicity, or strength of character, that induced so strange a confidence. When I got to know Dus better, the whole became clear enough; but, at the moment, I was a little surprised.

"Be at ease on my account, Miss Malbone – "

"Why not call me Dus at once? You will do it in a week, like everyone else here; and it is better to begin our acquaintance as I am sure it will end. Uncle Chainbearer calls me Dus; Frank calls me Dus; most of your settlers call me Dus, to my very face; and even our blacks call me Miss Dus. You cannot wish to be singular."

"I will gladly venture so far as to call you Ursula; but Dus does not please me."

"No! I have become so accustomed to be called Dus by all my friends, that it sounds distant to be called by any other name. Do

you not think Dus a pretty diminutive?"

"I *did* not, most certainly; though all these things depend on the associations. Dus Malbone sounded sweetly enough in Priscilla Bayard's mouth; but I fear it will not be so pleasant in mine."

"Do as you please – but do not call me *Miss* Ursula, or *Miss* Malbone. It would have displeased me once, *not* to have been so addressed by any man; but it has an air of mockery, now that I know myself to be only the companion and housekeeper of a poor chainbearer."

"And yet, the owner of that silver, the lady I see seated at this table, in this room, is not so very inappropriately addressed as Miss Ursula!"

"You know the history of the silver, and the table and room are your own. No – Mr. Littlepage, we are poor – very, *very* poor – uncle Chainbearer, Frank, and I – all alike, have nothing."

This was not said despairingly, but with a sincerity that I found exceedingly touching.

"Frank, at least, should have something," I answered. "You tell me he was in the army?"

"He was a captain at the last, but what did he receive for that? We do not complain of the country, any of us; neither my uncle, my brother, nor myself; for we know it is poor, like ourselves, and that its poverty even is like our own, that of persons reduced. I was long a charge on my friends, and there have been debts to pay. Could I have known it, such a thing should not have

happened. Now I can only repay those who have discharged these obligations by coming into the wilderness with them. It is a terrible thing for a woman to be in debt."

"But you have remained in this house; you surely have not been in the hut, at Mooseridge?"

"I have gone wherever uncle Chainbearer has gone, and shall go with him, so long as we both live. Nothing shall ever separate us again. His years demand this, and gratitude is added to my love. Frank might possibly do better than work for the little he receives; but *he* will not quit us. The poor love each other intensely!"

"But I have desired your uncle to use this house, and for your sake I should think he would accept the offer."

"How could he, and carry chain twenty miles distant? We have been here, occasionally, a few days at a time; but the work was to be done and it must be done on the land itself."

"Of course, you merely gave your friends the pleasure of your company, and looked a little to their comforts, on their return from a hard day's work?"

Dus raised her eyes to mine; smiled; then she looked sad, her under-lip quivering slightly; after which a smile that was not altogether without humor succeeded. I watched these signs of varying feeling with an interest I cannot describe; for the play of virtuous and ingenuous emotion on a lovely female countenance is one of the rarest sights in nature.

"I can carry chain," said the girl, at the close of this exhibition

of feeling.

"You *can* carry chain, Ursula – Dus, or whatever I am to call you – "

"Call me Dus – I love that name best."

"You *can* carry chain, I suppose, is true enough – but, you do not mean that you *have*?"

The face of Dus flushed; but she looked me full in the eye, as she nodded her head to express an affirmative; and she smiled as sweetly as ever woman smiled.

"For amusement – to say you have done it – in jest!"

"To help my uncle and brother, who had not the means to hire a second man."

"Good God! Miss Malbone – Ursula – Dus – "

"The last is the most proper name for a chainbear*ess*," rejoined the girl, smiling; and actually taking my hand by an involuntary movement of her sympathy in the shock I so evidently felt. "But, why should you look upon that little toil as so shocking, when it is healthful and honest? You are thinking of a sister reduced to what strikes you as man's proper work."

Dus relinquished my hand almost as soon as she had touched it; and she did it with a slight start, as if shocked at her own temerity.

"What *is* man's work, and man's work, *only*."

"Yet woman can perform it; and, as uncle Chainbearer will tell you, perform it *well*. I had no other concern, the month I was at work, than the fear that my strength would not enable me to

do as much as my uncle and brother, and thus lessen the service they could render you each day. They kept me on the dry land, so there were no wet feet, and your woods are as clear of underbrush as an orchard. There is no use in attempting to conceal the fact, for it is known to many, and would have reached your ears sooner or later. Then concealment is always painful to me, and never more so than when I hear you, and see you treating your hired servant as an equal."

"Miss Malbone! For God's sake, let me hear no more of this – old Andries judged rightly of me, in wishing to conceal this; for I should never have allowed it to go on for a moment."

"And in what manner could you have prevented it, Major Littlepage? My uncle has taken the business of you at so much the day, finding surveyor and laborers – poor, dear Frank! He, at least, does not rank with the laborers, and as for my uncle, he has long had an honest pride in being the best chainbearer in the country – why need his niece scruple about sharing in his well-earned reputation?"

"But you, Miss Malbone – dearest Dus – who have been so educated, who are born a lady, who are loved by Priscilla Bayard, the sister of Frank, are not in your proper sphere, while thus occupied."

"It is not so easy to say what is the proper sphere of a woman. I admit it ought to be, in general, in the domestic circle and under the domestic roof; but circumstances must control that. We hear of wives who follow their husbands to the camp, and we hear

of nuns who come out of their convents to attend the sick and wounded in hospitals. It does not strike me, then, as so bad in a girl who offers to aid her parent as I have aided mine, when the alternative was to suffer by want."

"Gracious Providence! And Andries has kept me in ignorance of all this; he knew my purse would have been his, and how could you have been in want in the midst of the abundance that reigns in this settlement, which is only fifteen or twenty miles from your hut, as I know from the chainbearer's letters."

"Food is plenty, I allow, but we had no money; and when the question was between beggary or exertion, we merely chose the last. My uncle did try old Killian, the black, for a day; but you know how hard it is to make one of those people understand anything that is a little intricate; and then I offered my services. I am intelligent enough, I trust" – the girl smiled a little proudly as she said this – "and you can have no notion how active and strong I am for light work like this, and on my feet, until you put me to the proof. Remember, carrying chain is neither chopping wood nor piling logs; nor is it absolutely unfeminine."

"Nor raising churches" – I answered, smiling; for it was not easy to resist the contagion of the girl's spirit – "at which business I have been an eye-witness of your dexterity. However, there will now be an end of this. It is fortunately in my power to offer such a situation and such emoluments to Mr. Malbone, as will at once enable him to place his sister in this house as its mistress, and under a roof that is at least respectable."

"Bless you for that!" cried Dus, making a movement toward catching my hand again; but checking it in time to render the deep blush that instantly suffused her face, almost unnecessary. "Bless you for that! Frank is willing to do anything that is honest, and capable of doing anything that a gentleman should do. I am the great encumbrance on the poor fellow; for, could he leave me, many situations must be open to him in the towns. But I cannot quit my uncle, and Frank will not quit me. He does not understand uncle Chainbearer."

"Frank must be a noble fellow, and I honor him for his attachment to such a sister. This makes me only the more anxious to carry out my intentions."

"Which are such, I hope, that there is no impropriety in his sister's knowing them?"

This was said with such an expression of interest in the sweet, blue eyes, and with so little of the air of common curiosity, that it completely charmed me.

"Certainly there is none," I answered, promptly enough even for a young man who was acting under the influence of so much ingenuous and strong native feeling; "and I shall have great pleasure in telling you. We have long been dissatisfied with our agent on this estate, and I had determined to offer it to your uncle. The same difficulty would have to be overcome in this case, as there was in making him a safe surveyor – the want of skill in figures; now this difficulty will not exist in the instance of your brother; and the whole family, Chainbearer as well as the rest,

will be benefited by giving the situation to Frank."

"You call him Frank!" cried Dus, laughing, and evidently delighted with what she heard. "That is a good omen; but if you raise me to the station of an agent's sister, I do not know but I shall insist on being called Ursula, at least, if not Miss Ursula."

I scarce knew what to make of this girl; there was so much of gayety, and even fun, blended with a mine of as deep feeling as I ever saw throwing up its signs to the human countenance. Her brother's prospects had made her even gay; though she still looked as if anxious to hear more.

"You may claim which you please, for Frank shall have his name put into the new power of attorney within the hour. Mr. Newcome has had a hint, by letter, of what is to come, and professes great happiness in getting rid of a vast deal of unrequited trouble."

"I am afraid there is little emolument, if *he* is glad to be rid of the office."

"I do not say he is *glad*; I only say he *professes* to be so. These are different things with certain persons. As for the emolument, it will not be much certainly; though it will be enough to prevent Frank's sister from carrying chain, and leave her to exercise her talents and industry in their proper sphere. In the first place, every lease on the estate is to be renewed; and there being a hundred, and the tenant bearing the expense, it will at once put a considerable sum at your brother's disposition. I cannot say that the annual commissions will amount to a very great deal, though

they will exceed a hundred a year by the terms on which the lands will be relet. The use of this house and farm, however, I did intend to offer to your uncle; and, for the same reason, I shall offer them to Frank."

"With this house and farm we shall be rich!" exclaimed Dus, clasping her hands in delight. "I can gather a school of the better class of girls, and no one will be useless – no one idle. If I teach your tenants' daughters some of the ideas of their sex and station, Mr. Littlepage, *you* will reap the benefit in the end. That will be some slight return for all your kindness."

"I wish all of your sex, and of the proper age, who are connected with me, no better instructress. Teach them your own warmth of heart, your own devotedness of feeling, your own truth, and your own frankness, and I will come and dwell on my own estate, as the spot nearest to paradise."

Dus looked a little alarmed, I thought, as if she feared she might have uttered too much; or, perhaps, that *I* was uttering too much. She rose, thanked me hurriedly, but in a very lady-like manner, and set about removing the breakfast service, with as much diligence as if she had been a mere menial.

Such was my very first conversation with Ursula Malbone; her, with whom I have since held so many, and those that have been very different! When I rose to seek the Chainbearer, it was with a feeling of interest in my late companion that was as strong as it was sudden. I shall not deny that her beauty had its influence – it would be unnatural that it should not – but it was less her

exceeding beauty, and Ursula Malbone would have passed for one of the fairest of her sex – but it was less her beauty that attracted me than her directness, truth, and ingenuousness, so closely blended as all were with the feelings and delicacy of her sex. She had certainly done things which, had I merely *heard* of them, would have struck me unpleasantly, as even bold and forward, and which may now so strike the reader; but this would be doing Dus injustice. No act, no word of hers, not even the taking of my hand, seemed to me, at the time, as in the least forward; the whole movement being so completely qualified by that intensity of feeling which caused her to think only of her brother. Nature and circumstances had combined to make her precisely the character she was; and I will confess I did not wish her to be, in a single particular, different from what I found her.

Talk of Pris Bayard in comparison with Ursula Malbone! Both had beauty, it is true, though the last was far the handsomest; both had delicacy, and sentiment, and virtue, and all that pertains to a well-educated young woman, if you will; but Dus had a character of her own, and principles, and an energy, and a decision, that made her the girl of ten thousand. I do not think I could be said to be actually in love when I left that room, for I do not wish to appear so very easy to receive impressions as all that would come to; but I will own no female had ever before interested me a tenth part as much, though I had known, and possibly admired her, a twelvemonth.

In the court I found Andries measuring his chains. This he did

periodically; and it was as conscientiously as if he were weighing gold. The old man manifested no consciousness of the length of the *tête-à-tête* I had held with his niece; but on the contrary, the first words he uttered were to an effect that proved he fancied I had been alone.

"I peg your parton, lat," he said, holding his measuring rod in his mouth while he spoke. "I peg your parton, put this is very necessary work. I do not wish to haf any of your Yankee settlers crying out hereafter against the Chainpearer's surveys. Let 'em come a huntret or a t'ousant years hence, if t'ey will, and measure t'e lant; I want olt Andries' survey to stant."

"The variation of the compass will make some difference in the two surveys, my good friend, unless the surveyors are better than one commonly finds."

The old man dropped his rod and his chain, and looked despondingly at me.

"True," he said, with emphasis. "You haf hit t'e nail on t'e heat, Mortaunt – t'at fariation is t'e fery teffil to get along wit'! I haf triet it t'is-a-way, and I haf triet it t'at-away, and never coult I make heat or tail of it! I can see no goot of a fariation at all."

"What does your pretty assistant Dus think of it? Dus, the pretty chainbearer? You will lose your old, hard-earned appellation, which will be borne off by Miss Malbone."

"Ten Dus has peen telling you all apout it! A woman never can keep a secret. No, natur' hast mate 'em talkatif, and t'e parrot will chatter."

"A woman likes variation, notwithstanding – did you consult Dus on that difficulty?"

"No, no, poy; I sait not'ing to Dus, and I am sorry she has said anyt'ing to you apout t'is little matter of t'e chain. It was sorely against my will, Mortaunt, t'at t'e gal ever carriet it a rot; and was it to do over ag'in, she shoult not carry it a rot – yet it woult have tone your heart goot to see how prettily she did her work; and how quick she wast, and how true; and how accurate she put down the marker; and how sartain was her eye. Natur' made t'at fery gal for a chainpearer!"

"And a chainbearer she has been, and a chainbearer she ever will be, until she throws her chains on some poor fellow, and binds him down for life. Andries, you have an angel with you here, and not a woman."

Most men in the situation of the Chainbearer might have been alarmed at hearing such language coming from a young man, and under all the circumstances of the case. But Andries Coejemans never had any distrust of mortal who possessed his ordinary confidence; and I question if he ever entertained a doubt about myself on any point, the result of his own, rather than of my character. Instead of manifesting uneasiness or displeasure, he turned to me, his whole countenance illuminated with the affection he felt for his niece, and said —

"T'e gal ist an excellent girl, Mortaunt, a capital creature! It woult haf tone your heart goot, I tell you, to see her carry chain! Your pocket is none t'e worse for t'e mont' she worked, t'ough I

would not haf you t'ink I charget for her ast a man – no – she is town at only half-price, woman's work peing only woman's work; and yet I do pelieve, on my conscience, t'at we went over more grount in t'at mont', t'an we could haf tone wit' any man t'at wast to pe hiret in t'is part of t'e worlt – I do, indeet!"

How strange all this sounded to me! Charged for work done by Ursula Malbone, and charged at half-price! We are the creatures of convention, and the slaves of opinions that come we know not whence. I had got the notions of my caste, obtained in the silent, insinuating manner in which all our characters are formed; and nothing short of absolute want could have induced me to accept pecuniary compensation from an individual for any personal service rendered. I had no profession, and it did not comport with our usages for a gentleman to receive money for personal service out of the line of a profession; an arbitrary rule, but one to which most of us submit with implicit obedience. The idea that Dus had been paid by myself for positive toil, therefore, was extremely repugnant to me; and it was only after reflection that I came to view the whole affair as I ought, and to pass to the credit of the noble-minded girl, and this without any drawback, an act that did her so much honor. I wish to represent myself as no better or no wiser, or more rational than I was; and, I fancy, few young men of my age and habits would hear with much delight, at first, that the girl he himself felt impelled to love had been thus employed; while, on the other hand, few would fail to arrive at the same conclusions, on reflection, as those I reached myself.

The discourse with Andries Coejemans was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Frank Malbone into the court. This was my first meeting with my young surveyor, and the Chainbearer introduced us to each other in his usual hearty and frank manner. In a minute we were acquainted; the old man inquiring as to the success of the settlers in getting up their "meetin'-us."

"I staid until they had begun to place the rafters," answered young Malbone, cheerfully, "and then I left them. The festivities are to end with a ball, I hear; but I was too anxious to learn how my sister reached home – I ought to say reached the 'Nest – to remain. We have little other home now, Mr. Littlepage, than the hut in the woods, and the roof your hospitality offers."

"Brother soldiers, sir, and brother soldiers in *such a cause*, ought to have no more scruples about accepting such hospitalities, as you call them, than in offering them. I am glad, however, that you have adverted to the subject, inasmuch as it opens the way to a proposition I have intended to make; which, if accepted, will make me *your* guest, and which may as well be made now as a week later."

Both Andries and Frank look surprised; but I led them to a bench on the open side of the court, and invited them to be seated, while I explained myself. It may be well to say a word of that seat in passing. It stood on the verge of a low cliff of rocks, on the side of the court which had been defended by palisades, when the French held the Canadas, and the remains of which were still to be seen. Here, as I was told before we left the spot, Dus,

*my* pretty chainbearer, with a woman's instinct for the graceful and the beautiful, had erected an arbor, principally with her own hands, planted one of the swift-growing vines of our climate, and caused a seat to be placed within. The spot commanded a pleasing view of a wide expanse of meadows, and of a distant hill-side, that still lay in the virgin forest. Andries told me that his niece had passed much of her leisure time in that arbor, since the growth of the plant, with the advance of the season, had brought the seat into the shade.

Placing myself between the Chainbearer and Malbone, I communicated the intention I had formed of making the latter my agent. As an inducement to accept the situation, I offered the use of the 'Nest house and the 'Nest farm, reserving to myself the room or two that had been my grandfather's, and that only at the times of my annual visits to the property. As the farm was large, and of an excellent quality of land, it would abundantly supply the wants of a family of modest habits, and even admit of sales to produce the means of purchasing such articles of foreign growth as might be necessary. In a word, I laid before the listeners the whole of my plan, which was a good deal enlarged by a secret wish to render Ursula comfortable, without saying anything about the motive.

The reader is not to suppose I was exhibiting any extraordinary liberality in doing that which I have related. It must not be forgotten that land was a drug in the State of New York in the year 1784, as it is to-day on the Miami, Ohio, Mississippi,

and other inland streams. The proprietors thought but little of their possessions as the means of *present* support, but rather maintained their settlements than their settlements maintained them looking forward to another age, and to their posterity, for the rewards of all their trouble and investments.[10]

It is scarcely necessary to say my proposals were gladly accepted. Old Andries squeezed my hand, and I understood the pressure as fully as if he had spoken with the eloquence of Patrick Henry. Frank Malbone was touched; and all parties were perfectly satisfied. The surveyor had his field-inkstand with him, as a matter of course, and I had the power of attorney in my pocket ready for the insertion of the Chainbearer's name, would he accept the office of agent. That of Malbone was written in its stead; I signed; Andries witnessed; and we left the seat together, Frank Malbone, in effect, temporarily master of the house in which we were, and his charming sister, as a necessary consequence, its mistress. It was a delicious moment to me, when I saw Dus throw herself into her brother's arms and weep on his bosom, as he communicated to her the joyful intelligence.

---

[10] The Manor of Rensselaerwick virtually extends forty-eight miles east and west, and twenty-four north and south. It is situated in the very heart of New York, with three incorporated cities within its limits, built, in part, on small, older grants. Albany is a town of near, if not of quite, 40,000 souls; and Troy must now contain near 28,000. Yet the late patroon, in the last conversation he ever held with the writer, only a few months before he died, stated that *his* grandfather was the first proprietor who ever reaped any material advantage from the estate, and his father the first who received any income of considerable amount. The home property, farms and mills, furnished the income of the family for more than a century. – Editor.

# CHAPTER XIII

"A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it.
Where lies your text?" —*Twelfth Night; or, What You Will.*

A month glided swiftly by. During that interval, Frank Malbone was fully installed, and Andries consented to suspend operations with his chain until this necessary work was completed. Work it was; for every lease granted by my grandfather having run out, the tenants had remained on their farms by sufferance, or as occupants at will, holding from year to year under parole agreements made with Mr. Newcome, who had authority to go that far, but no farther.

It was seldom that a landlord, in that day, as I have already said, got any income from his lands during the first few years of their occupation. The great thing was to induce settlers to come; for, where there was so much competition, sacrifices had to be made in order to effect this preliminary object. In compliance with this policy, my grandfather had let his wild lands for nominal rents in nearly every instance, with here and there a farm of particular advantages excepted; and, in most cases, the settler had enjoyed the use of the farm for several years, for no rent at all. He paid the taxes, which were merely nominal, and principally to support objects that were useful to the immediate neighborhood; such as the construction of roads, bridges, pounds, with other similar works, and the administration of justice. At the expiration

of this period of non-payment of rents, a small sum per acre was agreed to be paid, rather than actually paid, not a dollar of which had ever left the settlement. The landlord was expected to head all subscriptions for everything that was beneficial, or which professed to be beneficial to the estate; and the few hundreds a year, two or three at most, that my rent-roll actually exhibited, were consumed among the farms of the 'Nest. It was matter of record that not one shilling had the owner of this property, as yet, been able to carry away with him for his own private purposes. It is true, it had been in his power to glean a little each year for such a purpose; but it was not considered politic, and consequently it was not the practice of the country, in regard to estates so situated and before the revolution; though isolated cases to the contrary, in which the landlord was particularly avaricious, or particularly necessitous, may have existed. Our New York proprietors, in that day, were seldom of the class that needed money. Extravagance had been little known to the province, and could not yet be known to the State; consequently, few lost their property from their expenditures, though some did from mismanagement. The trade of "puss in the corner," or of shoving a man out of his property, in order to place one's self in it, was little practised previously to the revolution; and the community always looked upon the intruder into family property with a cold eye, unless he came into possession by fair purchase, and for a sufficient price. Legal speculations were then nearly unknown; and he who got rich was expected to do so by manly exertions, openly exercised, and not

by the dark machinations of a sinister practice of the law.

In our case, not a shilling had we, as yet, been benefited by the property of Ravensnest. All that had ever been received, and more too, had been expended on the spot; but a time had now arrived when it was just and reasonable that the farms should make some returns for all our care and outlays.

Eleven thousand acres were under lease, divided among somewhat less than a hundred tenants. Until the first day of the succeeding April, these persons could hold their lands under the verbal contracts; but, after that day, new leases became necessary. It is not usual for the American landlord to be exacting. It is out of his power, indeed, for the simple reason that land is so much more abundant than men; but, it is not the practice of the country, a careless indulgence being usually the sin of the caste; an indulgence that admits of an accumulation of arrears, which, when pay-day does arrive, is apt to bring with it ill-blood and discontent. It is an undeniable truth in morals, that, whatever may be the feeling at the time, men are rarely grateful for a government that allows their vices to have a free exercise. They invariably endeavor to throw a portion of the odium of their own misdeeds on the shoulders of those who should have controlled them. It is the same with debts; for, however much we may beg for lenity at the time, accumulations of interest wear a very hostile aspect when they present themselves in a sum-total, at a moment it is inconvenient to balance the account. If those who have been thus placed would only remember that there is a

last account that every man must be called on to settle, arrearages and all, the experience of their worldly affairs might suggest a lesson that would be infinitely useful. It is fortunate for us, without exception, that there is a Mediator to aid us in the task.

The time had come when Ravensnest might be expected to produce something. Guided by the surveys, and our own local knowledge, and greatly aided by the Chainbearer's experience, Frank Malbone and I passed one entire fortnight in classifying the farms; putting the lowest into the shilling category; others into the eighteen pence; and a dozen farms or so into the two shillings. The result was, that we placed six thousand acres at a shilling a year rent; three thousand eight hundred at eighteen pence the acre; and twelve hundred acres at two shillings. The whole made a rental of fourteen thousand one hundred shillings, or a fraction more than seventeen hundred and forty-two dollars per annum. This sounded pretty well for the year 1784, and it was exclusively of the 'Nest farm, of Jason Newcome's mills and timber-land, which he had hitherto enjoyed for nothing, or for a mere nominal rent, and all the wild lands.

I will confess I exulted greatly in the result of our calculations. Previously to that day I placed no dependence on Ravensnest for income, finding my support in the other property I had inherited from my grandfather. On paper, my income was more than doubled, for I received *then* only some eleven hundred a year (I speak of dollars, not pounds) from my other property. It is true, the last included a great many town-lots that were totally

unproductive, but which promised to be very valuable, like Ravensnest itself, at some future day. Most things in America looked to the future, then as now; though I trust the hour of fruition is eventually to arrive. My town property has long since become very valuable, and tolerably productive.

As soon as our scheme for reletting was matured, Frank summoned the occupants of the farms, in bodies of ten, to present themselves at the 'Nest, in order to take their new leases. We had ridden round the estate, and conversed with the tenantry, and had let my intentions be known previously, so that little remained to be discussed. The farms were all relet for three lives, and on my own plan, no one objecting to the rent, which, it was admitted all round, was not only reasonable, but low. Circumstances were then too recent to admit of the past's being forgotten; and the day when the last lease was signed was one of general satisfaction. I did think of giving a landlord's dinner, and of collecting the whole settlement in a body, for the purpose of jovial and friendly communion; but old Andries threw cold water on the project.

"T'at would do, Mortaunt," he said, "if you hat only raal New Yorkers, or Middle States men to teal wit'; but more t'an half of t'ese people are from t'e Eastern States, where t'ere are no such t'ings as lantlorts and tenants, on a large scale you unterstant; and t'ere isn't a man among 'em all t'at isn't looking forwart to own his farm one tay, by hook or by crook. T'ey're as jealous of t'eir tignities as if each man wast a full colonel, and will not t'ank you

for a tinner at which t'ey will seem to play secont fittle."

Although I knew the Chainbearer had his ancient Dutch prejudices against our Eastern brethren, I also knew that there was a good deal of truth in what he said. Frank Malbone, who was Rhode Island born, had the same notions, I found on inquiry; and I was disposed to defer to his opinions. Frank Malbone was a gentleman himself, and men of that class are always superior to low jealousies; but Frank must know better how to appreciate the feelings of those among whom he had been bred and born than I could possibly know how to do it myself. The project of the dinner was accordingly abandoned.

It remained to make a new arrangement and a final settlement with Mr. Jason Newcome, who was much the most thriving man at Ravensnest; appearing to engross in his single person all the business of the settlement. He was magistrate, supervisor, deacon, according to the Congregational plan, or whatever he is called, miller, store-keeper, will-drawer, tavern-keeper by deputy, and adviser-general, for the entire region. Everything seemed to pass through his hands; or, it would be better to say, everything entered them, though little indeed came out again. This man was one of those moneyed gluttons, on a small scale, who live solely to accumulate; in my view, the most odious character on earth; the accumulations having none of the legitimate objects of proper industry and enterprise in view. So long as there was a man near him whom he supposed to be richer than himself, Mr. Newcome would have been unhappy; though

he did not know what to do with the property he had already acquired. One does not know whether to detest or to pity such characters the most; since, while they are and must be repugnant to every man of right feelings and generous mind, they carry in their own bosoms the worm that never dies, to devour their own vitals.

Mr. Newcome had taken his removal from the agency in seeming good part, affecting a wish to give it up from the moment he had reason to think it was to be taken from him. On this score, therefore, all was amicable, not a complaint being made on his side. On the contrary, he met Frank Malbone with the most seeming cordiality, and we proceeded to business with as much apparent good-will as had been manifested in any of the previous bargains. Mr. Newcome did nothing directly; a circuitous path being the one he had been accustomed to travel from childhood.

"You took the mill-lot and the use of five hundred acres of woodland from my grandfather for three lives; or failing these, for a full term of one-and-twenty years, I find, Mr. Newcome," I remarked, as soon as we were seated at business, "and for a nominal rent; the mills to be kept in repair, and to revert to the landlord at the termination of the lease."

"Yes, Major Littlepage, that *was* the bargain I will allow, though a hard one has it proved to me. The war come on" – this man was what was called liberally educated, but he habitually used bad grammar – "The war come on, and with it hard times, and I didn't know but the major would be willing to consider the

circumstances, if we make a new bargain."

"The war cannot have had much effect to your prejudice, as grain of all sorts bore a high price; and I should think the fact that large armies were near by, to consume everything you had to sell, and that at high prices, more than compensated for any disadvantage it might have induced. You had the benefits of two wars, Mr. Newcome; that of 1775, and a part of that of 1756."

My tenant made no answer to this, finding I had reflected on the subject, and was prepared to answer him. After a pause, he turned to more positive things.

"I suppose the major goes on the principle of supposing a legal right in an old tenant to enj'y a new lease? I'm told he has admitted this much in all his dealin's."

"Then you have been misinformed, sir. I am not weak enough to admit a right that the lease itself, which, in the nature of things, must and does form the tenant's only title, contradicts in terms. Your legal interest in the property ceases altogether in a few days from this time."

"Y-a-a-s – y-a-a-s – sir, I conclude it doose," said the 'squire, leaning back in his chair, until his body was at an angle of some sixty or seventy degrees with the floor – "I conclude it doose accordin' to the covenants; but between man and man, there ought to be suthin' more bindin'."

"I know of nothing more binding in a lease than its covenants, Mr. Newcome."

"Wa-a-l" – how that man would 'wa-a-a-l' when he wished to

circumvent a fellow-creature; and with what a Jesuitical accent did he pronounce the word! "Wa-a-a-l – that's accordin' to folk's idees. A covenant may be *hard*; and then, in my judgment, it ought to go for nothin'. I'm ag'in all hard covenants."

"Harkee, frient Jason," put in the Chainbearer, who was an old acquaintance of Mr. Newcome's, and appeared thoroughly to understand his character – "Harkee, frient Jason; do you gift back unexpected profits, ven it so happens t'at more are mate on your own pargains t'an were look for?"

"It's not of much use to convarse with you, Chainbearer, on such subjects, for we'll never think alike," answered the 'squire, leaning still farther back in his chair; "you're what I call a particular man, in your notions, and we should never agree."

"Still, there is good sense in the Chainbearer's question," I added. "Unless prepared to answer 'yes,' I do not see how you can apply your own principle with any justice. But let this pass as it will, why are covenants made, if they are not to be regarded?"

"Wa-a-l, now, accordin' to my notion, a covenant in a lease is pretty much like a water-course in a map; not a thing to be partic'lar at all about; but as water-courses look well on a map, so covenants read well in a lease. Landlords like to have 'em, and tenants a'n't particular."

"You can hardly be serious in either case, I should hope, Mr. Newcome, but are pleased to exercise your ingenuity on us for your own amusement. There is nothing so particular in the covenants of your lease as to require any case of conscience to

decide on its points."

"There's this in it, major, that you get the whull property back ag'in, if you choose to claim it."

"Claim it! the whole property has been mine, or my predecessors', ever since it was granted to us by the crown. *All* your rights come from your *lease*; and when that terminates, your rights terminate."

"Not accordin' to my judgment, major; not accordin' to my judgment. I built the mills at my own cost, you'll remember."

"I certainly know, sir, that you built the mills at what you call your own cost; that is, you availed yourself of a natural mill-seat, used our timber and other materials, and constructed the mills, such as they are, looking for your reward in their use for the term of a quarter of a century, for a mere nominal rent – having saw-logs at command as you wanted them, and otherwise enjoying privileges under one of the most liberal leases that was ever granted."

"Yes, sir, but that was in *the bargain* I made with your grand'ther. It was *agreed* between us, at the time I took the place, that I was to cut logs at will, and of course use the materials on the ground for buildin'. You see, major, your grand'ther wanted the mills built desperately; and so he gave them conditions accordin'ly. You'll find every syllable on't in the lease."

"No doubt, Mr. Newcome; and you will also find a covenant in the same lease, by which your interest in the property is to cease in a few days."

"Wa-a-l, now, I don't understand leases in that way. Surely it was never intended a man should erect mills, to lose all right in 'em at the end of five-and-twenty years."

"That will depend on the bargain made at the time. Some persons erect mills and houses that have no rights in them at all. They are paid for their work as they build."

"Yes, yes – carpenters and millwrights, you mean. But I'm speakin' of no such persons; I'm speakin' of honest, hard-workin', industrious folks, that give their labor and time to build up a settlement; and not of your mechanics who work for hire. Of course, they're to be paid for what they do, and there's an eend on't."

"I am not aware that all honest persons are hard-working, any more than that all hard-working persons are honest. I wish to be understood *that*, in the first place, Mr. Newcome, phrases will procure no concession from me. I agree with you, however, perfectly, in saying that when a man is paid for his work, there will be what you call 'an end of it.' Now twenty-three days from this moment, you will have been paid for all you have done on my property according to your own agreement; and by your own reasoning, there must be an end of your connection with that property."

"The major doesn't mean to rob me of all my hard earnin's!"

"Mr. Newcome, *rob* is a hard word, and one that I beg may not be again used between you and me. I have no intention to rob you, or to let you rob me. The pretence that you are not, and were

not acquainted with the conditions of this lease, comes rather late in the day, after a possession of a quarter of a century. You know very well that my grandfather would not sell, and that he would do no more than lease; if it were your wish to purchase, why did you not go elsewhere, and get land in fee? There were, and still are, thousands of acres to be sold, all around you. I have lands to sell, myself, at Mooseridge, as the agent of my father and Colonel Follock, within twenty miles of you, and they tell me capital mill-seats in the bargain."

"Yes, major, but not so much to my notion as this – I kind o' wanted this!"

"But, I kind o' want this, too; and, as it is mine, I think, in common equity, I have the best claim to enjoy it."

"It's on equity I want to put this very matter, major – I know the law is ag'in me – that is, some people say it is; but some think not, now we've had a revolution – but, let the law go as it may, there's such a thing as what I call *right* between man and man."

"Certainly; and law is an invention to enforce it. It is right I should do exactly what my grandfather agreed to do for me, five-and-twenty years ago, in relation to these mills; and it is right you should do what you agreed to do, for yourself."

"I *have* done so. I agreed to build the mills, in a sartain form and mode, and I done it. I'll defy mortal man to say otherwise. The saw-mill was smashing away at the logs within two months a'ter I got the lease, and we began to grind in four!"

"No doubt, sir, you were active and industrious – though, to be

frank with you, I will say that competent judges tell me neither mill is worth much now."

"That's on account of the lease" – cried Mr. Newcome, a little too hastily, possibly, for the credit of his discretion – "how did I know when it would run out? Your gran'ther granted it for three lives, and twenty-one years afterward, and I did all a man could to make it last as long as I should myself; but here I am, in the prime of life, and in danger of losing my property!"

I knew all the facts of the case perfectly, and had intended to deal liberally with Mr. Newcome from the first. In his greediness for gain he had placed his lives on three infants, although my grandfather had advised him to place at least one on himself; but, no – Mr. Newcome had fancied the life of an infant better than that of a man; and in three or four years after the signature of the lease, his twenty-one years had begun to run, and were now near expiring. Even under this certainly unlooked-for state of things, the lease had been a very advantageous one for the tenant; and, had one of his lives lasted a century, the landlord would have looked in vain for any concession on that account; landlords never asking for, or expecting favors of that sort; indeed most landlords would be ashamed to receive them; nevertheless, I was disposed to consider the circumstances, to overlook the fact that the mills and all the other buildings on the property were indifferently built, and to relet, for an additional term of twenty-one years, woodlands, farms, buildings, and other privileges, for about one-third of the money that Mr. Newcome himself would have been

apt to ask, had he the letting instead of myself. Unwilling to prolong a discussion with a man who, by his very nature, was unequal to seeing more than one side of a subject, I cut the matter short by telling him my terms without further delay.

Notwithstanding all his acting and false feeling, the 'squire was so rejoiced to learn my moderation that he could not but openly express his feelings; a thing he would not have done did he not possess the moral certainty I would not depart from my word. I felt it necessary, however, to explain myself.

"Before I give you this new lease, Mr. Newcome," I added, holding the instrument signed in my hand, "I wish to be understood. It is not granted under the notion that you have any right to ask it, beyond the allowance that is always made by a liberal landlord to a reasonably *good* tenant; which is simply a preference over others on the same terms. As for the early loss of your lives, it was your own fault. Had the infants you named, or had one of them, passed the state of childhood, it might have lived to be eighty, in which case my timber-land would have been stripped without any return to its true owner, but your children died, and the lease was brought within reasonable limits. Now the only inducement I have for offering the terms I do, is the liberality that is usual with landlords, what is conceded is conceded as no right, but as an act of liberality."

This was presenting to my tenant the most incomprehensible of all reasons for doing anything. A close and sordid calculator himself, he was not accustomed to give any man credit for

generosity; and, from the doubting, distrustful manner in which he received the paper, I suspected at the moment that he was afraid there was some project for taking him in. A rogue is always distrustful, and as often betrays his character to honest men by that as by any other failing. I was not to regulate my own conduct, however, by the weaknesses of Jason Newcome, and the lease was granted.

I could wish here to make one remark. There ought certainly to be the same principle of good fellowship existing between the relations of landlord and tenant that exist in the other relations of life, and which creates a moral tie between parties that have much connection in their ordinary interests, and that to a degree to produce preferences and various privileges of a similar character. This I am far from calling in question; and, on the whole, I think, of all that class of relations, the one in question is to be set down as among the most binding and sacred. Still, the mere moral rights of the tenant must depend on the rigid maintenance of all the rights of the landlord; the legal and moral united; and the man who calls in question either of the latter, surely violates every claim to have his own pretensions allowed, beyond those which the strict letter of the law will yield to him. *The landlord who will grant a new lease to the individual who is endeavoring to undermine his rights, by either direct or indirect means, commits the weakness of arming an enemy with the knife by which he is himself to be assaulted, in addition to the error of granting power to a man who, under the character of a spurious liberty,*

*is endeavoring to unsettle the only conditions on which civilized society can exist.* If landlords will exhibit the weakness, they must blame themselves for the consequences.

I got rid of Mr. Newcome by the grant of the lease, his whole manœuvring having been attempted solely to lower the rent; for *he* was much too shrewd to believe in the truth of his own doctrines on the subject of right and wrong. That same day my axe-men appeared at the 'Nest, having passed the intermediate time in looking at various tracts of land that were in the market, and which they had not found so eligible, in the way of situation, quality, or terms, as those I offered. By this time, the surveyed lots of Mooseridge were ready, and I offered to sell them to these emigrants. The price was only a dollar an acre, with a credit of ten years; the interest to be paid annually. One would have thought that the lowness of the price would have induced men to prefer lands in fee to lands on lease; but these persons, to a man, found it more to their interests to take farms on three-lives leases, being rent-free for the first five years, and at nominal rents for the remainder of the term, than to pay seven dollars a year of interest, and a hundred dollars in money, at the expiration of the credit.[11] This fact, of itself, goes to show how closely these men

---

[11] The fact here stated by Mr. Littlepage should never be forgotten; inasmuch as it colors the entire nature of the pretension now set up as to the exactions of leases. No man in New York need ever have *leased* a farm for the want of an opportunity of *purchasing*, there never having been a time when land for farms in fee has not been openly on sale within the bounds of the State; and land every way as eligible as that leased. In few cases have two adjoining estates been leased; and where such has been

calculated their means, and the effect their decisions might have on their interests. Nor were their decisions always wrong. Those who can remember the start the country took shortly after the peace of '83, the prices that the settlers on new lands obtained for their wheat, ashes, and pork; three dollars a bushel often for the first, three hundred dollars a ton for the second, and eight or ten dollars a hundred for the last, will at once understand that the occupant of new lands at that period obtained enormous wages for a laborer by means of the rich unexhausted lands he was thus permitted to occupy. No doubt he would have been in a better situation had he owned his farm in fee at the end of his lease; so would the merchant who builds a ship and clears her cost by her first freight, have been a richer man had he cleared the cost of two ships instead of one; but he has done well, notwithstanding; and it is not to be forgotten that the man who commences life with an axe and a little household furniture, is in the situation of a mere day-laborer. The addition to his means of the use of land is the very circumstance that enables him to rise above his humble position, and to profit by the cultivation of the soil. At the close of the last century, and at the commencement of the present, the country was so placed as to render every stroke of the axe directly profitable, the very labor that was expended in clearing away the trees meeting with a return so liberal by the

---

the fact, the husbandman might always have found a farm in fee, at the cost of half a day's travelling. The benefits to the landlord have usually been so remote on the estate leased, that by far the greater proportion of the proprietors have preferred selling at once, to waiting for the tardy operations of time. – Editor.

sale of the ashes manufactured, as to induce even speculators to engage in the occupation. It may one day be a subject of curious inquiry to ascertain how so much was done as is known to have been done at that period, toward converting the wilderness into a garden; and I will here record, for the benefit of posterity, a brief sketch of one of the processes of getting to be comfortable, if not rich, that was much used in that day.

It was a season's work for a skilful axe-man to chop, log, burn, clear, and sow ten acres of forest land. The ashes he manufactured. For the heavier portions of the work, such as the logging, he called on his neighbors for aid, rendering similar assistance by way of payment. One yoke of oxen frequently sufficed for two or three farms, and "logging-bees" have given rise to a familiar expression among us, that is known as legislative "log-rolling;" a process by which, as is well known, one set of members supports the project of another set, on the principle of reciprocity.

Now ten acres of land, cropped for the first time, might very well yield a hundred and fifty bushels of merchantable wheat, which would bring three hundred dollars in the Albany market. They would also make a ton of pot-ashes, which would sell for at least two hundred dollars. This is giving five hundred dollars for a single year's work. Allowing for all the drawbacks of buildings, tools, chains, transportation, provisions, etc., and one-half of this money might very fairly be set down as clear profit; very large returns to one who, before he got his farm, was in the situation

of a mere day-laborer, content to toil for eight or nine dollars the month.

That such was the history, in its outlines, of the rise of thousands of the yeomen who now dwell in New York, is undeniable; and it goes to show that if the settler in a new country has to encounter toil and privations, they are not always without their quick rewards. In these later times, men go on the open prairies, and apply the plough to an ancient sward; but I question if they would not rather encounter the virgin forests of 1790, with the prices of that day, than run over the present park-like fields, in order to raise wheat for 37-1/2 cents per bushel, have no ashes at any price, and sell their pork at two dollars the hundred!

# CHAPTER XIV

"Intent to blend her with his lot,
Fate formed her all that he was not;
And, as by mere unlikeness thought,
Associate we see,
Their hearts, from very difference, caught
A perfect sympathy."

– *Pinckney.*

All this time I saw Ursula Malbone daily, and at all hours of the day. Inmates of the same dwelling, we met constantly, and many were the interviews and conversations which took place between us. Had Dus been the most finished coquette in existence, her practised ingenuity could not have devised more happy expedients to awaken interest in me than those which were really put in use by this singular girl, without the slightest intention of bringing about any such result. Indeed, it was the nature, the total absence of art, that formed one of the brightest attractions of her character, and gave so keen a zest to her cleverness and beauty. In that day, females, while busied in the affairs of their household, appeared in "short gown and petticoat," as it was termed, a species of livery that even ladies often assumed of a morning. The *toilette* was of far wider range in 1784 than it is now, the distinctions between morning and

evening dress being much broader then than at present. As soon as she was placed really at the head of her brother's house, Ursula Malbone set about the duties of her new station quietly and without the slightest fuss, but actively and with interest. She seemed to me to possess, in a high degree, that particular merit of carrying on the details of her office in a silent, unobtrusive manner, while they were performed most effectually, and entirely to the comfort of those for whose benefit her care was exercised. I am not one of those domestic canters who fancy a woman, in order to make a good wife, needs be a drudge, and possess the knowledge of a cook or a laundress; but it is certainly of great importance that she have the faculty of presiding over her family with intelligence, and an attention that is suited to her means of expenditure. Most of all it is important that she know how to govern without being seen or heard.

The wife of an educated man should be an educated woman: one fit to be his associate, qualified to mingle her tastes with his own, to exchange ideas, and otherwise to be his companion, in an intellectual sense. These are the higher requisites; a gentleman accepting the minor qualifications as so many extra advantages, if kept within their proper limits; but as positive disadvantages if they interfere with, or in any manner mar the manners, temper, or mental improvement of the woman whom he has chosen as his wife, and not as his domestic. Some sacrifices may be necessary in those cases in which cultivation exists without a sufficiency of means; but even then, it is seldom indeed that a woman of the

proper qualities may not be prevented from sinking to the level of a menial. As for the cant of the newspapers on such subjects, it usually comes from those whose homes are mere places for "board and lodging."

The address with which Dus discharged all the functions of her new station, while she avoided those that were unseemly and out of place, charmed me almost as much as her spirit, character, and beauty. The negroes removed all necessity for her descending to absolute toil; and with what pretty, feminine dexterity did she perform the duties that properly belonged to her station! Always cheerful, frequently singing, not in a noisy, milkmaid mood, but at those moments when she might fancy herself unheard, and in sweet, plaintive songs that seemed to recall the scenes of other days. Always cheerful, however, is saying a little too much; for occasionally, Dus was sad. I found her in tears three or four times, but did not dare inquire into their cause. There was scarce, time, indeed; for the instant I appeared, she dried her eyes, and received me with smiles.

It is scarcely necessary to say that to me the time passed pleasantly, and amazingly fast. Chainbearer remained at the 'Nest by my orders, for he would not yield to requests; and I do not remember a more delightful month than that proved to be. I made a very general acquaintance with my tenants, and found many of them as straightforward, honest, hard-working yeomen as one could wish to meet. My brother major, in particular, was a hearty old fellow, and often came to see me, living on the farm that

adjoined my own. He growled a little about the sect that had got possession of the "meetin'-us," but did it in a way to show there was not much gall in his own temperament.

"I don't rightly understand these majority matters," said the old fellow, one day that we were talking the matter over, "though I very well know Newcome always manages to get one, let the folks think as they will. I've known the 'squire contrive to cut a majority out of about a fourth of all present, and he does it in a way that is desp'ret ingen'ous, I will allow, though I'm afeard it's neither law nor gospel."

"He certainly managed, in the affair of the denomination, to make a plurality of one appear in the end to be a very handsome majority over all."

"Ay, there's twists and turns in these things that's beyond my l'arnin', though I s'pose all's right. It don't matter much in the long run, a'ter all, where a man worships, provided he worships; or who preaches, so that he listens."

I think this liberality – if that be the proper word – in religious matters, is fast increasing among us; though liberality may be but another term for indifference. As for us Episcopalians, I wonder there are any left in the country, though we are largely on the increase. There we were, a church that insisted on Episcopal ministrations – on confirmation in particular – left for a century without a bishop, and unable to conform to practices that it was insisted on were essential, and this solely because it did not suit the policy of the mother country to grant us prelates of our own,

or to send us, occasionally even, one of hers! How miserable do human expedients often appear when they are tried by the tests of common sense! A church of God, insisting on certain spiritual essentials that it denies to a portion of its people, in order to conciliate worldly interests! It is not the Church of England, however, nor the Government of England, that is justly obnoxious to such an accusation; something equally bad and just as inconsistent, attaching itself to the ecclesiastical influence of every other system in Christendom under which the state is tied to religion by means of human provisions. The mistake is in connecting the things of the world with the things that are of God.

Alas! alas! When you sever that pernicious tie, is the matter much benefited? How is it among ourselves? Are not sects, and shades of sects, springing up among us on every side, until the struggle between parsons is getting to be not who shall aid in making most Christians, but who shall gather into his fold most sectarians? As for the people themselves, instead of regarding churches, even after they have established them, and that too very much on their own authority, they first consider their own tastes, enmities, and predilections, respecting the priest far more than the altar, and set themselves up as a sort of religious constituencies, who are to be *represented* directly in the government of Christ's followers on earth. Half of a parish will fly off in a passion to another denomination if they happen to fall into a minority. Truly, a large portion of our people is beginning

to act in this matter as if they had a sense of "giving their support" to the Deity, patronizing him in this temple or the other, as may suit the feeling or the interest of the moment.[12]

But I am not writing homilies, and will return to the 'Nest and my friends. A day or two after Mr. Newcome received his new lease, Chainbearer, Frank, Dus and I were in the little arbor that overlooked the meadows, when we saw Sureflint, moving at an Indian's pace, along a path that came out of the forest, and which was known to lead toward Mooseridge. The Onondago carried his rifle as usual, and bore on his back a large bunch of something that we supposed to be game, though the distance prevented our discerning its precise character. In half a minute he disappeared behind a projection of the cliffs, trotting toward the buildings.

"My friend the Trackless has been absent from us now a longer time than usual," Ursula remarked, as she turned her head from following the Indian's movements, as long as he remained in sight; "but he reappears loaded with something for our benefit."

"He has passed most of his time of late with your uncle, I believe," I answered, following Dus's fine eyes with my own, the pleasantest pursuit I could discover in that remote quarter of the world. "I have written this to my father, who will be glad to hear

---

[12] If Mr. Littlepage wrote thus, thirty or forty years since, how would he have written to-day, when we have had loud protestations flourishing around us in the public journals, that this or that sectarian polity was most in unison with a republican form of government? What renders this assumption as absurd as it is presuming, is the well-known fact that it comes from those who have ever been loudest in their declamations of a union between church and state!

tidings of his old friend."

"He is much with my uncle as you say, being greatly attached to him. Ah! here he comes, with such a load on his shoulders as an Indian does not love to bear; though even a chief will condescend to carry game."

As Dus ceased speaking, Sureflint threw a large bunch of pigeons, some two or three dozen birds, at her feet, turning away quietly, like one who had done his part of the work, and who left the remainder to be managed by the squaws.

"Thank you, Trackless," said the pretty housekeeper – "thank'ee kindly. Those are beautiful birds, and as fat as butter. We shall have them cleaned, and cooked in all manner of ways."

"All squab – just go to fly – take him ebbery one in nest," answered the Indian.

"Nests must be plenty, then, and I should like to visit them," I cried, remembering to have heard strange marvels of the multitudes of pigeons that were frequently found in their "roosts," as the encampments they made in the woods were often termed in the parlance of the country. "Can we not go in a body and visit this roost?"

"It might pe tone," answered the Chainbearer; "it might pe tone, and it is time we wast moving in t'eir tirection, if more lant is to pe surveyet, ant t'ese pirts came from t'e hill I suppose t'ey do. Mooseridge promiset to have plenty of pigeons t'is season."

"Just so," answered Sureflint. "Million, t'ousan', hundred – more too. Nebber see more; nebber see so many. Great Spirit

don't forget poor Injin; sometime give him deer – sometime salmon – sometime pigeon – plenty for ebberybody; only t'ink so."

"Ay, Sureflint; only t'ink so, inteet, and t'ere is enough for us all, and plenty to spare. Got is pountiful to us, put we ton't often know how to use his pounty," answered Chainbearer, who had been examining the birds. "Finer squaps arn't often met wit'; and I too shoult like amazingly to see one more roost pefore I go to roost myself."

"As for the visit to the roost," cried I, "that is settled for to-morrow. But a man who has just come out of a war like the last, into peaceable times, has no occasion to speak of his end, Chainbearer. Your are old in years, but young in mind, as well as body."

"Bot' nearly wore out – bot' nearly wore out! It is well to tell an olt fool t'e contrary, put I know petter. T'ree-score and ten is man's time, and I haf fillet up t'e numper of my tays. Got knows pest, when it wilt pe his own pleasure to call me away; put, let it come when it will, I shall now tie happy, comparet wit' what I shoult haf tone a mont' ago."

"You surprise me, my dear friend! What has happened to make this difference in your feelings? It cannot be that you are changed in any essential."

"T'e tifference is in Dus's prospects. Now Frank has a goot place, my gal will not pe forsaken."

"Forsaken! Dus – Ursula – Miss Malbone forsaken! *That*

could never happen, Andries, Frank or no Frank."

"I hope not – I hope not, lat – put t'e gal pegins to weep, and we'll talk no more apout it. Harkee, Susquesus; my olt frient, can you guite us to t'is roost?"

"Why no do it, eh? Path wide – open whole way. Plain as river."

"Well, t'en, we wilt all pe off for t'e place in t'e morning. My new assistant is near, and it is high time Frank and I hat gone into t'e woots ag'in."

I heard this arrangement made, though my eyes were following Dus, who had started from her seat, and rushed into the house, endeavoring to hide emotions that were not to be hushed. A minute later I saw her at the window of her own room, smiling, though the cloud had not yet entirely dispersed.

Next morning early our whole party left the 'Nest for the hut at Mooseride, and the pigeon-roosts. Dus and the black female servant travelled on horseback, there being no want of cattle at the 'Nest, where, as I now learned, my grandfather had left a quarter of a century before, among a variety of other articles, several side-saddles. The rest of us proceeded on foot, though we had no less than three sumpter beasts to carry our food, instruments, clothes, etc. Each man was armed, almost as a matter of course in that day, though I carried a double-barrelled fowling-piece, instead of a rifle. Susquesus acted as our guide.

We were quite an hour before we reached the limits of the settled farms on my own property; after which, we entered

the virgin forest. In consequence of the late war, which had brought everything like the settlement of the country to a dead stand, a new district had then little of the straggling, suburb-like clearings, which are apt now to encircle the older portions of a region that is in the state of transition. On the contrary, the last well-fenced and reasonably well-cultivated farm passed, we plunged into the boundless woods, and took a complete leave of nearly every vestige of civilized life, as one enters the fields on quitting a town in France. There was a path, it is true, following the line of blazed trees; but it was scarcely beaten, and was almost as illegible as a bad hand. Still, one accustomed to the forest had little difficulty in following it; and Susquesus would have had none in finding his way, had there been no path at all. As for the Chainbearer, he moved forward too, with the utmost precision and confidence, the habit of running straight lines amid trees having given his eye an accuracy that almost equalled the species of instinct that was manifested by the Trackless himself, on such subjects.

This was a pleasant little journey, the depths of the forest rendering the heats of the season as agreeable as was possible. We were four hours in reaching the foot of the little mountain on which the birds had built their nests, where we halted to take some refreshments.

Little time is lost at meals in the forest, and we were soon ready to ascend the hill. The horses were left with the blacks, Dus accompanying us on foot. As we left the spring where we had

halted, I offered her an arm to aid in the ascent; but she declined it, apparently much amused that it should have been offered.

"What I, a chainbearess!" she cried, laughing – "I, who have fairly wearied out Frank, and even made my uncle *feel* tired, though he would never *own* it – I accept an arm to help me up a hill! You forget, Major Littlepage, that the first ten years of my life were passed in a forest, and that a year's practice has brought back all my old habits, and made me a girl of the woods again."

"I scarce know what to make of you, for you seem fitted for any situation in which you may happen to be thrown." I answered, profiting by the circumstance that we were out of the hearing of our companions, who had all moved ahead, to utter more than I otherwise might venture to say – "at one time I fancy you the daughter of one of my own tenants, at another, the heiress of some ancient patroon."

Dus laughed again; then she blushed; and for the remainder of the short ascent, she remained silent. Short the ascent was, and we were soon on the summit of the hill. So far from needing my assistance, Dus actually left me behind, exerting herself in a way that brought her up at the side of the Trackless, who led our van. Whether this was done in order to prove how completely she was a forest girl, or whether my words had aroused those feelings that are apt to render a female impulsive, is more than I can say even now; though I suspected at the time that the latter sensations had quite as much to do with this extraordinary activity as the former. I was not far behind, however, and when our party came

fairly upon the roost, the Trackless, Dus, and myself were all close together.

I scarce know how to describe that remarkable scene. As we drew near to the summit of the hill, pigeons began to be seen fluttering among the branches over our heads, as individuals are met along the roads that lead into the suburbs of a large town. We had probably seen a thousand birds glancing around among the trees, before we came in view of the roost itself. The numbers increased as we drew nearer, and presently the forest was alive with them. The fluttering was incessant, and often startling as we passed ahead, our march producing a movement in the living crowd that really became confounding. Every tree was literally covered with nests, many having at least a thousand of these frail tenements on their branches, and shaded by the leaves. They often touched each other, a wonderful degree of order prevailing among the hundreds of thousands of families that were here assembled. The place had the odor of a fowl-house, and squabs just fledged sufficiently to trust themselves in short flights, were fluttering around us in all directions in tens of thousands. To these were to be added the parents of the young race endeavoring to protect them, and guide them in a way to escape harm. Although the birds rose as we approached, and the woods just around us seemed fairly alive with pigeons, our presence produced no general commotion; every one of the feathered throng appearing to be so much occupied with its own concerns, as to take little heed of the visit of a party of strangers,

though of a race usually so formidable to their own. The masses moved before us precisely as a crowd of human beings yields to a pressure or a danger on any given point; the vacuum created by its passage filling in its rear, as the water of the ocean flows into the track of the keel.

The effect on most of us was confounding, and I can only compare the sensation produced on myself by the extraordinary tumult to that a man experiences at finding himself suddenly placed in the midst of an excited throng of human beings. The unnatural disregard of our persons manifested by the birds greatly heightened the effect, and caused me to feel as if some unearthly influence reigned in the place. It was strange, indeed, to be in a mob of the feathered race that scarce exhibited a consciousness of one's presence. The pigeons seemed a world of themselves, and too much occupied with their own concerns to take heed of matters that lay beyond them.

Not one of our party spoke for several minutes. Astonishment seemed to hold us all tongue-tied, and we moved slowly forward into the fluttering throng, silent, absorbed, and full of admiration of the works of the Creator. It was not easy to hear each others' voices when we did speak, the incessant fluttering of wings filling the air. Nor were the birds silent in other respects. The pigeon is not a noisy creature, but a million crowded together on the summit of one hill, occupying a space of less than a mile square, did not leave the forest in its ordinary impressive stillness. As we advanced, I offered my arm, almost unconsciously, again

to Dus, and she took it with the same abstracted manner as that in which it had been held forth for her acceptance. In this relation to each other we continued to follow the grave-looking Onondago as he moved, still deeper and deeper, into the midst of the fluttering tumult.

At this instant there occurred an interruption that, I am ready enough to confess, caused the blood to rush toward my own heart in a flood. As for Dus, she clung to me, as woman will cling to man, when he possesses her confidence, and she feels that she is insufficient for her own support. Both hands were on my arm, and I felt that, unconsciously, her form was pressing closer to mine, in a manner she would have carefully avoided in a moment of perfect self-possession. Nevertheless, I cannot say that Dus was afraid. Her color was heightened, her charming eyes were filled with a wonder that was not unmixed with curiosity, but her air was spirited in spite of a scene that might try the nerves of the boldest man. Sureflint and Chainbearer were alone totally unmoved; for they had been at pigeons' roosts before, and knew what to expect. To them the wonders of the woods were no longer novel. Each stood leaning on his rifle and smiling at our evident astonishment. I am wrong; the Indian did not even smile: for that would have been an unusual indication of feeling for him to manifest; but he *did* betray a sort of covert consciousness that the scene must be astounding to us. But I will endeavor to explain what it was that so largely increased the first effect of our visit.

While standing wondering at the extraordinary scene around

us, a noise was heard rising above that of the incessant fluttering, which I can only liken to that of the trampling of thousands of horses on a beaten road. This noise at first sounded distant, but it increased rapidly in proximity and power, until it came rolling in upon us, among the tree-tops, like a crash of thunder. The air was suddenly darkened, and the place where we stood as sombre as a dusky twilight. At the same instant, all the pigeons near us, that had been on their nests, appeared to fall out of them, and the space immediately above our heads was at once filled with birds. Chaos itself could hardly have represented greater confusion, or a greater uproar. As for the birds, they now seemed to disregard our presence entirely; possibly they could not see us on account of their own numbers; for they fluttered in between Dus and myself, hitting us with their wings, and at times appearing as if about to bury us in avalanches of pigeons. Each of us caught one at least in our hands, while Chainbearer and the Indian took them in some numbers, letting one prisoner go as another was taken. In a word, we seemed to be in a world of pigeons. This part of the scene may have lasted a minute, when the space around us was suddenly cleared, the birds glancing upward among the branches of the trees, disappearing among the foliage. All this was the effect produced by the return of the female birds, which had been off at a distance, some twenty miles at least, to feed on beechnuts, and which now assumed the places of the males on the nests; the latter taking a flight to get their meal in their turn.

I have since had the curiosity to make a sort of an estimate

of the number of the birds that must have come in upon the roost, in that, to us, memorable minute. Such a calculation, as a matter of course, must be very vague, though one may get certain principles by estimating the size of a flock by the known rapidity of the flight, and other similar means; and I remember that Frank Malbone and myself supposed that a million of birds must have come in on that return, and as many departed! As the pigeon is a very voracious bird, the question is apt to present itself, where food is obtained for so many mouths; but, when we remember the vast extent of the American forests, this difficulty is at once met. Admitting that the colony we visited contained many millions of birds, and, counting old and young, I have no doubt it did, there was probably a fruit-bearing tree for each, within an hour's flight from that very spot!

Such is the scale on which nature labors in the wilderness! I have seen insects fluttering in the air at particular seasons, and at particular places, until they formed little clouds; a sight every one must have witnessed on many occasions; and as those insects appear, on their diminished scale, so did the pigeons appear to us at the roost of Mooseridge. We passed an hour in the town of birds, finding our tongues and our other faculties, as we became accustomed to our situation. In a short time, even Dus grew as composed as at all comported with the excitement natural to one in such a place; and we studied the habits of the pretty animals with a zest that I found so much the greater for studying them in her company. At the end of the hour we left the hill, our departure

producing no more sensation in that countless tribe of pigeons than our arrival.

"It is a proof that numbers can change our natures," said Dus, as we descended the little mountain. "Here have we been almost in contact with pigeons which would not have suffered us to come within a hundred feet of them, had they been in ordinary flocks, or as single birds. Is it that numbers give them courage?"

"Confidence, rather. It is just so with men; who will exhibit an indifference in crowds that they rarely possess when alone. The sights, interruptions, and even dangers that will draw all our attention when with a few, often seem indifferent to us when in the tumult of a throng of fellow-creatures."

"What is meant by a panic in an army, then?"

"It is following the same law, making man subject to the impulses of those around him. If the impulse be onward, onward we go; if for retreat, we run like sheep. If occupied with ourselves as a body, we disregard trifling interruptions, as these pigeons have just done in our own case. Large bodies of animals, whether human or not, seem to become subject to certain general laws that increase the power of the whole over the acts and feelings of any one or any few of their number."

"According to that rule, our new republican form of government ought to be a very strong one; though I have heard many express their fears it will be no government at all."

"Unless a miracle be wrought in our behalf, it will be the strongest government in the world for certain purposes, and the

weakest for others. It professes a principle of self-preservation that is not enjoyed by other systems, since the people must revolt against themselves to overturn it; but, on the other hand, it will want the active living principle of steady, consistent justice, since there will be no independent power whose duty and whose interest it will be to see it administered. The wisest man I ever knew has prophesied to me that this is the point on which our system will break down; rendering the character, the person, and the property of the citizen insecure, and consequently the institutions odious to those who once have loved them."

"I trust there is no danger of that!" said Dus, quickly.

"There is danger from everything that man controls. We have those among us who preach the possible perfection of the human race, maintaining the gross delusion that men are what they are known to be, merely because they have been ill-governed; and a more dangerous theory, in my poor judgment, cannot be broached."

"You think, then, that the theory is false?"

"Beyond a question; governments are oftener spoiled by men, than men by governments; though the last certainly have a marked influence on character. The best government of which we know anything is that of the universe; and it is so, merely because it proceeds from a single will, that will being without blemish."

"Your despotic governments are said to be the very worst in the world."

"They are good or bad as they happen to be administered. The necessity of maintaining such governments by force renders them often oppressive; but a government of numbers may become more despotic than that of an individual; since the people will, in some mode or other, always sustain the oppressed as against the despot, but rarely, or never, as against themselves. You saw that those pigeons lost their instinct, under the impulse given them by numbers. God forever protect me against the tyranny of numbers."

"But everybody says our system is admirable, and the best in the world; and even a despot's government is the government of a man."

"It is one of the effects of numbers that men shrink from speaking the truth, when they find themselves opposed to large majorities. As respects self-rule, the colonies were ever freer than the mother country; and we are, as yet, merely pursuing our ancient practices, substituting allegiance to the confederation for allegiance to the king. The difference is not sufficiently material to produce early changes. We are to wait until that which there is of new principles in our present system shall have time to work radical changes, when we shall begin to ascertain how much better we really are than our neighbors."[13]

---

[13] At the time of which Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage is here speaking, it was far less the fashion to extol the institutions than it is to-day. Men then openly wrote and spoke against them, while few dare, at the present time, point out faults that every person of intelligence knows and feels to be defects. A few years since, when Jackson was placed in the White House, it was the fashion of Europe to predict that we had elevated

Dus and I continued to converse on this subject until she got again into the saddle. I was delighted with her good sense and intelligence, which were made apparent more in the pertinacity of her questions than by any positive knowledge she had on such subjects, which usually have very few attractions for young women. Nevertheless, Dus had an activity of mind and a readiness of perception that supplied many of the deficiencies of education on these points; and I do not remember to have ever been engaged in a political discussion from which I derived so much satisfaction. I must own, however, it is possible that the golden hair flying about a face that was just as ruddy as comported with the delicacy of the sex, the rich mouth, the brilliant teeth, and the spirited and yet tender blue eyes, may have increased a wisdom that I found so remarkable.

---

a soldier to power, and that the government of the bayonet was at hand. This every intelligent American knew to be rank nonsense. The approach of the government of the bayonet among us, if it is ever to come, may be foreseen by the magnitude of popular abuses, against which force is the only remedy. Every well-wisher of the freedom this country has hitherto enjoyed, should now look upon the popular tendencies with distrust, as, whenever it is taken away, it will go as their direct consequence; it being an inherent principle in the corrupt nature of man to misuse all his privileges; even those connected with religion itself. If history proves anything, it proves this. – Editor.

# CHAPTER XV

"Fie, fie, fond love, thou art so full of fear,
As one with treasure laden, hemmed with thieves,
Trifles, unwitnessed with eye or ear,
Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves."

*– Venus and Adonis.*

The hut, or huts of Chainbearer, had far more comfort in and around them, than I was prepared to find. They were three in number, one having been erected as a kitchen, and a place to contain the male slaves; another for the special accommodation of Ursula and the female black; and the third to receive men. The eating-room was attached to the kitchen; and all these buildings, which had now stood the entire year, were constructed of logs, and were covered with bark. They were roughly made, as usual; but that appropriated to Dus was so much superior to the others in its arrangements, internal and external, as at once to denote the presence and the influence of woman. It may have some interest with the reader briefly to describe the place.

Quite as a matter of course, a spring had been found, as the first consideration in "locating," as it is called by that portion of our people who get upon their conversational stilts. The spring burst out of the side of a declivity, the land stretching away for more than a mile from its foot, in an inclined plane that was

densely covered with some of the noblest elms, beeches, maples, and black birches, I have ever seen. This spot, the Chainbearer early assured me, was the most valuable of all the lands of Mooseridge. He had selected it because it was central, and particularly clear from underbrush; besides having no stagnant water near it. In other respects, it was like any other point in that vast forest; being dark, shaded, and surrounded by the magnificence of a bountiful vegetation.

Here Chainbearer had erected his hut, a low, solid structure of pine logs, that were picturesque in appearance, and not without their rude comforts, in their several ways. These buildings were irregularly placed, though the spring was in their control. The kitchen and eating-room were nearest the water; at no great distance from these was the habitation of the men; while the smaller structure, which Frank Malbone laughingly termed the "harem," stood a little apart, on a slight spur of land, but within fifty yards of Andries's own lodgings. Boards had been cut by hand, for the floors and doors of these huts, though no building but the "harem" had any window that was glazed. This last had two such windows, and Frank had even taken care to provide for his sister's dwelling rude but strong window shutters.

As for defences against an enemy, they were no longer thought of within the limits of New York. Block-houses, and otherwise fortified dwellings, had been necessary so long as the French possessed Canada; but after the capture of that colony, few had deemed any such precautions called for, until the war of the

revolution brought a savage foe once more among the frontier settlements; frontier, as to civilization, if not as to territory. With the termination of that war had ceased this, the latest demand for provisions of that nature; and the Chainbearer had not thought of using any care to meet the emergencies of violence, in "making his pitch."

Nevertheless, each hut would have been a reasonably strong post, on an emergency; the logs being bullet-proof, and still remaining undecayed and compact. Palisades were not thought of now, nor was there any covered means of communicating between one hut and another. In a word, whatever there might be in the way of security in these structures, was the result of the solidity of their material, and of the fashion of building that was then, and is still customary everywhere in the forest. As against wild beasts there was entire protection, and other enemies were no longer dreaded. Around the huts there were no enclosures of any sort, nor any other cleared land, than a spot of about half an acre in extent, off of which had been cut the small pines that furnished the logs of which they were built. A few vegetables had been put into the ground at the most open point; but a fence being unnecessary, none had been built. As for the huts, they stood completely shaded by the forest, the pines having been cut on an eminence a hundred yards distant. This spot, however, small as it was, brought enough of the commoner sort of plants to furnish a frugal table.

Such was the spot that was then known in all that region

by the name of the "Chainbearer's Huts." This name has been retained and the huts are still standing, circumstances having rendered them memorable in my personal history, and caused me to direct their preservation, at least as long as I shall live. As the place had been inhabited a considerable time that spring and summer, it bore some of the other signs of the presence of man; but on the whole, its character as a residence was that of deep forest seclusion. In point of fact, it stood buried in the woods, distant fully fifteen miles from the nearest known habitation, and in so much removed from the comfort, succor, and outward communications of civilized life. These isolated abodes, however, are by no means uncommon in the State, even at the present hour; and it is probable that some of them will be found during the whole of this century. It is true, that the western, middle, southern, southwestern, northwestern and northeastern counties of New York, all of which were wild, or nearly so, at the time of which I am writing, are already well settled, or are fast filling up, but there is a high mountainous region, in middle-northern New York, which will remain virtually a wilderness, I should think, for quite a century, if not longer. I have travelled through this district of wilderness very lately, and have found it picturesque and well suited for the sportsman, abounding in deer, fish and forest birds, but not so much suited to the commoner wants of man, as to bring it very soon into demand for the ordinary purposes of the husbandman. If this quarter of the country do not fall into the hands of lawless squatters and

plunderers of one sort and another, of which there is always some danger in a country of so great extent, it will become a very pleasant resort of the sportsman, who is likely soon to lose his haunts in the other quarters of the State.

Jaap had brought over some horses of mine from the 'Nest as sumpter-beasts, and these being sent back for want of provender, the negro himself remained at the "Huts" as a general assistant, and as a sort of hunter. A Westchester negro is pretty certain to be a shot, especially if he happen to belong to the proprietor of a Neck; for there is no jealousy of trusting arms in the hands of our New York slaves. But Jaap having served, in a manner, was entitled to burn as much gunpowder as he pleased. By means of one of his warlike exploits, the old fellow had become possessed of a very capital fowling-piece, plunder obtained from some slain English officer, I always supposed; and this arm he invariably kept near his person, as a trophy of his own success. The shooting of Westchester, however and that of the forest, were very different branches of the same art. Jaap belonged to the school of the former, in which the pointer and the setter were used. The game was "put up," and "marked down," and the bird was invariably shot on the wing. My attention was early called to this distinction, by overhearing a conversation between the negro and the Indian, that took place within a few minutes after our arrival, and a portion of which I shall now proceed to relate.

Jaap and Sureflint were, in point of fact, very old acquaintances, and fast friends. They had been actors in certain

memorable scenes, on those very lands of Mooseridge, some time before my birth, and had often met and served as comrades during the last war. The known antipathy between the races of the red and black man did not exist as between them, though the negro regarded the Indian with some of that self-sufficiency which the domestic servant would be apt to entertain for a savage roamer of the forest; while the Onondago could not but look on my fellow as one of the freest of the free would naturally feel disposed to look on one who was content to live in bondage. These feelings were rather mitigated than extinguished by their friendship, and often made themselves manifest in the course of their daily communion with each other.

A bag filled with squabs had been brought from the roost, and Jaap had emptied it of its contents on the ground near the kitchen, to commence the necessary operations of picking and cleaning, preparatory to handing the birds over to the cook. As for the Onondago, he took his seat near by on a log very coolly, a spectator of his companion's labors, but disdaining to enter in person on such woman's work, now that he was neither on a message nor on a war-path. Necessity alone could induce him to submit to any menial labor, nor do I believe he would have offered to assist, had he seen the fair hand of Dus herself plucking these pigeons. To him it would have been perfectly suitable that a "squaw" should do the work of a "squaw," while a warrior maintained his dignified idleness. Systematic and intelligent industry are the attendants of civilization, the wants

created by which can only be supplied by the unremitted care of those who live by their existence.

"Dere, old Sus," exclaimed the negro, shaking the last of the dead birds from the bag – "dere, now, Injin; I s'pose you t'inks 'em ere's game!"

"What *you* call him, eh?" demanded the Onondago, eyeing the negro sharply.

"I doesn't call 'em game a bit, redskin. Dem's not varmint, n'oder; but den, dem isn't game. Game's game, I s'pose you does know, Sus?"

"Game, game – good. T'at true – who say no?"

"Yes, it's easy enough to *say* a t'ing, but it not so berry easy to understan'. Can any Injin in York State, now, tell me why pigeon isn't game?"

"Pigeon game – good game, too. Eat sweet – many time want more."

"Now, I do s'pose, Trackless" – Jaap loved to run through the whole vocabulary of the Onondago's names – "Now, I do s'pose, Trackless, you t'ink *tame* pigeon just as good as wild?"

"Don't know – nebber eat tame – s'pose him good, too."

"Well, den, you s'poses berry wrong. Tame pigeons poor stuff; but no pigeon be game. Nuttin' game, Sureflint, dat a dog won't p'int, or set. Masser Mordaunt h'an't got no dog at de Bush or de Toe, and he keeps dogs enough at bot', dat would p'int a pigeon."

"P'int deer, eh?"

"Well, I doesn't know. P'raps he will, p'raps he won't. Dere

isn't no deer in Westchester for us to try de dogs on, so a body can't tell. You remem'er 'e day, Sus, when we fit your redskins out here, 'long time ago, wit' Masser Corny and Masser Ten Eyck, and ole Masser Herman Mordaunt, and Miss Anneke, and Miss Mary, an' your frin' Jumper? You remem'er *dat*, ha! Onondago?"

"Sartain – no forget – Injin nebber forget. Don't forget friend – don't forget enemy."

Here Jaap raised one of his shouting negro laughs, in which all the joyousness of his nature seemed to enter with as much zest as if he were subjected to a sort of mental tickling; then he let the character of his merriment be seen by his answer.

"Sartain 'nough – you remem'er dat feller, Muss, Trackless? He get heself in a muss by habbing too much mem'ry. Good to hab mem'ry when you told to do work; but sometime mem'ry bad 'nough. Berry bad to hab so much mem'ry dat he can't forget small floggin'."

"No true," answered the Onondago, a little sternly, though a *very* little; for, while he and Jaap disputed daily, they never quarrelled. "No true, so. Flog bad for back."

"Well, dat because you redskin – a color' man don't mind him as much as dis squab. Get use to him in little while; den he nuttin' to speak of."

Sureflint made no answer, but he looked as if he pitied the ignorance, humility, and condition of his friend.

"What you t'ink of dis worl', Susquesus?" suddenly demanded the negro, tossing a squab that he had cleaned into a pail, and

taking another. "How you t'ink white man come? – how you t'ink red man come? – how you t'ink color' gentl'em come, eh?"

"Great Spirit say so – t'en all come. Fill Injin full of blood – t'at make him red – fill nigger wit' ink – t'at make him black – pale-face pale 'cause he live in sun, and color dry out."

Here Jaap laughed so loud that he drew all three of Chainbearer's blacks to the door, who joined in the fun out of pure sympathy, though they could not have known its cause. Those blacks! They may be very miserable as slaves; but it is certain no other class in America laugh so often, or so easily, or one-half as heartily.

"Harkee, Injin," resumed Jaap, as soon as he had laughed as much as he wished to do at that particular moment – "Harkee, Injin – you t'ink 'arth round, or 'arth flat?"

"How do you mean – 'arth up and down – no round – no flat."

"Dat not what I mean. Bot' up and down in one sens', but no up and down in 'noder. Masser Mordaunt, now, and Masser Corny too, bot' say 'arth round like an apple, and dat he'd stand one way in day-time, an' 'noder way in night-time. Now, what you t'ink of dat, Injin?"

The Trackless listened gravely, but he expressed neither assent or dissent. I knew he had a respect for both my father and myself; but it was asking a great deal of him to credit that the world was round; nor did he understand how one could be turned over in the manner Jaap pretended.

"S'pose it so," he remarked, after a pause of reflection –

"S'pose it so, den man stand upside down? Man stand on foot; no stand on head."

"Worl' turn round, Injin; dat a reason why you stand on he head one time; on he foot 'noder."

"Who tell t'at tradition, Jaap? Nebber heard him afore."

"Masser Corny tell me dat, long time ago; when I war' little boy. Ask Masser Mordaunt one day, and he tell you a same story. Ebberybody say *dat* but Masser Dirck Follock; and he say to me, one time, 'it true, Jaap, t'e book do say so – and your Masser Corny believe him; but I want to *see* t'e worl' turn round, afore I b'lieve it.' Dat what Colonel Follock say, Trackless; you know he berry honest."

"Good – honest man, colonel – brave warrior – true friend – b'lieve all he tell, when he *know*; but don't know ebberyt'ing. Gen'ral know more – major young, but know more."

Perhaps my modesty ought to cause me to hesitate about recording that which the partiality of so good a friend as Susquesus might induce him to say; but it is my wish to be particular, and to relate all that passed on this occasion. Jaap could not object to the Indian's proposition, for he had too much love and attachment for his two masters not to admit at once that they knew more than Colonel Follock; no very extravagant assumption, by the way.

"Yes, he good 'nough," answered the black, "but he don't know half as much as Masser Corny, or Masser Mordaunt. He say worl' isn't round; now, I t'ink he look round."

"What Chainbearer say?" asked the Indian, suddenly, as if he had determined that his own opinion should be governed by that of a man whom he so well loved. "Chainbearer nebber lie."

"Nor do Masser Corny, nor Masser Mordaunt?" exclaimed Jaap, a little indignantly. "You t'ink, Trackless, e'der of *my* massers lie!"

That was an accusation that Susquesus never intended to make; though his greater intimacy with, and greater reliance on old Andries had, naturally enough, induced him to ask the question he had put.

"No say eeder lie," answered the Onondago; "but many forked tongue about, and maybe hear so, and t'ink so. Chainbearer stop ear; nebber listen to crooked tongue."

"Well, here come Chainbearer he self, Sus; so, jist for graterfercashun, you shall hear what 'e ole man say. It berry true, Chainbearer honest man, and I like to know he opinion myself, sin' it isn't easy, Trackless, to understan' how a mortal being *can* stan' up, head down!"

"What 'mortal being' mean, eh?"

"Why, it mean mortality, Injin – you, mortality – I, mortality – Masser Corny, mortality – Masser Mordaunt, mortality – Miss Anneke, mortality – ebberybody, mortality; but ebberybody not 'e same sort of mortality! – Understan' now, Sus?"

The Indian shook his head, and looked perplexed; but the Chainbearer coming up at that moment, that branch of the matter in discussion was pursued no farther. After exchanging a few

remarks about the pigeons, Jaap did not scruple to redeem the pledge he had given his red friend, by plunging at once into the main subject with the Chainbearer.

"You know how it be wid Injin, Masser Chainbearer," said Jaap – "'Ey is always poor missedercated creatur's, and knows nuttin' but what come by chance – now here be Sureflint, he can no way t'ink dis worl' round; and dat it *turn* round, too; and so he want me to ask what you got to say about *dat* matter?"

Chainbearer was no scholar. Whatever may be said of Leyden, and of the many, very many learned Dutchmen it had sent forth into the world, few of them ever reached America. Our brethren of the eastern colonies, now states, had long been remarkable, as a whole, for that "dangerous thing," a "little learning;" but I cannot say that the Dutch of New York, also viewed as a whole, incurred any of those risks. To own the truth, it was not a very easy matter to be more profoundly ignorant, on all things connected with science, than were the mass of the uneducated Dutch of New York, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four. It made little difference as to condition in life, unless one rose as high as the old colonial aristocracy of that stock, and an occasional exception in favor of a family that intended to rear, or had reared in its bosom a minister of the gospel. Such was the strength of the prejudice among these people, that they distrusted the English schools, and few permitted their children to enter them; while those they possessed of their own were ordinarily of a very low character.

These feelings were giving way before the influence of time, it is true; but it was very slowly; and it was pretty safe to infer that every man of low Dutch extraction in the colony was virtually uneducated, with the exception of here and there an individual of the higher social castes, or one that had been especially favored by association and circumstances. As for that flippant knowledge, of which our eastern neighbors possessed so large an amount, the New York Dutch appeared to view it with peculiar dislike, disdaining to know anything, if it were not of the very best quality. Still, there were a few to whom this quality was by no means a stranger. In these isolated cases, the unwearied application, painstaking industry, cautious appreciation of facts, and solid judgment of the parties, had produced a few men who only required a theatre for its exhibition, in order to cause their information to command the profound respect of the learned, let them live where they might. What they did acquire was thoroughly got, though seldom paraded for the purposes of mere show.

Old Andries, however, was not of the class just named. He belonged to the rule, and not to its exception. Beyond a question, he had heard all the more familiar truths of science alluded to in discourse, or had seen them in the pages of books; but they entered into no part of his real opinions; for he was not sufficiently familiar with the different subjects to feel their truths in a way to incorporate them with his mind.

"You know t'is sait, Jaap," Chainbearer answered, "t'at bot'

are true. Eferypoty wilt tell you so; and all t'e folks I haf seen holt t'e same opinions."

"T'ink him true, Chainbearer?" the Onondago somewhat abruptly demanded.

"I s'pose I *must*, Sureflint, since all say it. T'e pale-faces, you know, reat a great many pooks, and get to pe much wiser t'an ret men."

"How you make man stand on head, eh?"

Chainbearer now looked over one shoulder, then over the other; and fancying no one was near but the two in his front, he was probably a little more communicative than might otherwise have been the case. Drawing a little nearer, like one who is about to deal with a secret, the honest old man made his reply.

"To pe frank wit' you, Sureflint," he answered, "t'at ist a question not easily answered. Eferypoty says 'tis so, ant, t'erefore, I s'pose it *must* pe so; put I have often asked myself if t'is worlt pe truly turned upsite town at night, how is it, old Chainpearer, t'at you ton't roll out of pet? T'ere's t'ings in natur' t'at are incomprehensiple, Trackless; quite incomprehensiple!"

The Indian listened gravely, and it seemed to satisfy his longings on the subject, to know that there were things in nature that are incomprehensible. As for the Chainbearer, I thought that he changed the discourse a little suddenly on account of these very incomprehensible things in nature; for it is certain he broke off on another theme, in a way to alter all the ideas of his companions, let them be on their heads or their heels.

"Is it not true, Jaap, t'at you ant t'e Onondago, here, wast pot' present at t'e Injin massacre t'at took place in t'ese parts, pefore t'e revolution, in t'e olt French war? I mean t'e time when one Traverse, a surveyor, ant a fery *goot* surveyor he was, was kil't, wit'all his chainpearers ant axe-men?"

"True as gospel, Masser Andries," returned the negro, looking up seriously, and shaking his head – "I was here, and so was Sus. Dat was de fuss time we smell gunpowder togedder. De French Injins was out in droves, and dey cut off Masser Traverse and all his party, no leaving half a scalp on a single head. Yes, sah; I remembers *dat*, as if t'was last night."

"Ant what was tone wit' t'e poties? You puriet t'e poties, surely?"

"Sartain – Pete, Masser Ten Eyck's man, was put into a hole, near Masser Corny's hut, which must be out here, four or five miles off; while masser surveyor and his men were buried by a spring, somewhere off yonder. Am I right, Injin?"

The Onondago shook his head; then he pointed to the true direction to each spot that had been mentioned, showing that Jaap was very much out of the way. I had heard of certain adventures in which my father had been concerned when a young man, and in which, indeed, my mother had been in a degree an actor, but I did not know enough of the events fully to comprehend the discourse which succeeded. It seemed that the Chainbearer knew the occurrences by report only, not having been present at the scenes connected with them; but he felt a strong desire to visit

the graves of the sufferers. As yet, he had not even visited the hut of Mr. Traverse, the surveyor who had been killed; for, the work on which he had been employed being one of detail, or that of subdividing the great lots laid down before the revolution, into smaller lots, for present sale, it had not taken him as yet from the central point where it had commenced. His new assistant chainbearer was not expected to join us for a day or two; and, after talking the matter over with his two companions for a few minutes, he announced a determination to go in quest of all the graves the succeeding morning, with the intention of having suitable memorials of their existence placed over them.

The evening of that day was calm and delightful. As the sun was setting I paid Dus a visit, and found her alone in what she playfully called the drawing-room of her "harem." Luckily there were no mutes to prevent my entrance, the usual black guardian, of whom there *was* one, being still in her kitchen at work. I was received without embarrassment, and taking a seat on the threshold of the door, I sat conversing, while the mistress of the place plied her needle on a low chair within. For a time we talked of the pigeons and of our little journey in the woods; after which the conversation insensibly took a direction toward our present situation, the past, and the future. I had adverted to the Chainbearer's resolution to search for the graves; and, at this point, I shall begin to record what was said, *as* it was said.

"I have heard allusions to those melancholy events, rather than their history," I added. "For some cause, neither of my parents

like to speak of them; though I know not the reason."

"Their history is well known at Ravensnest," answered Dus; "and it is often related there; at least, as marvels are usually related in country settlements. I suppose there is a grain of truth mixed up with a pound of error."

"I see no reason for misrepresenting in an affair of that sort."

"There is no other than the universal love of the marvellous, which causes most people to insist on having it introduced into a story, if it do not happen to come in legitimately. Your true country gossip is never satisfied with fact. He (or *she* would be the better word) insists on exercising a dull imagination at invention. In this case, however, from all that I can learn, more fact and less invention has been used than common."

We then spoke of the outlines of the story each had heard, and we found that, in the main, our tales agreed. In making the comparison, however, I found that I was disposed to dwell most on the horrible features of the incidents, while Dus, gently and almost insensibly, yet infallibly, inclined to those that were gentler, and which had more connection with the affections.

"Your account is much as mine, and both must be true in the main, as you got yours from the principal actors," she said; "but *our* gossips relate certain points connected with love and marriage, about which you have been silent."

"Let me hear them, then," I cried; "for I never was in a better mood to converse of love and *marriage*," laying a strong emphasis on the last word, "than at this moment!"

The girl started, blushed, compressed her lips, and continued silent for half a minute. I could see that her hand trembled, but she was too much accustomed to extraordinary situations easily to lose her self-command. It was nearly dusk, too, and the obscurity in which she sat within the hut, which was itself beneath the shade of tall trees, most probably aided her efforts to seem unconscious. Yet, I had spoken warmly, and as I soon saw, in a manner that demanded explanation, though at the moment quite without plan, and scarcely with the consciousness of what I was doing. I decided not to retreat, but to go on, in doing which I should merely obey an impulse that was getting to be too strong for much further restraint; that was not the precise moment, nevertheless, in which I was resolved to speak, but I waited rather for the natural course of things. In the mean time, after the short silence mentioned, the discourse continued.

"All I meant," resumed Dus, "was the tradition which is related among your tenants, that your parents were united in consequence of the manner in which your father defended Herman Mordaunt's dwelling, his daughter included – though Herman Mordaunt himself preferred some English lord for his son-in-law, and – but I ought to repeat no more of this silly tale."

"Let me hear it all, though it be the loves of my own parents."

"I dare say it is not true; for what vulgar report of private feelings and private acts ever *is* so? My tradition added that Miss Mordaunt was, at first, captivated by the brilliant qualities of the young lord, though she much preferred General Littlepage in the

end; and that her marriage has been most happy."

"Your tradition, then, has not done my mother justice, but is faulty in many things. Your young lord was merely a baronet's heir; and I know from my dear grandmother that my mother's attachment to my father commenced when she was a mere child, and was the consequence of his resenting an insult she received at the time from some other boy."

"I am glad of that!" exclaimed Dus, with an emphasis so marked that I was surprised at the earnestness of her manner. "Second attachments in woman to me always seem misplaced. There was another vein to my tradition, which tells of a lady who lost her betrothed the night the 'Nest was assailed, and who has ever since lived unmarried, true to his memory. That is a part of the story I have ever loved."

"Was her name Wallace?" I asked, eagerly.

"It was; Mary Wallace – and I have honored the name ever since I heard the circumstances. In my eyes, Mr. Littlepage, there can be no picture more respectable than that of a female remaining true to her first attachments, under *all* circumstances; in *death* as well as in *life*."

"Or in mine, beloved Ursula!" I cried – but I will not make a fool of myself by attempting to record what I said next. The fact was, that Dus had been winding herself round my heart for the last few weeks in a way that would have defied any attempts of mine to extricate it from the net into which it had fallen, had I the wish to do so. But I had considered the matter, and

saw no reason to desire freedom from the dominion of Ursula Malbone. To me she appeared all that man could wish, and I saw no impediment to a union in the circumstance of her poverty. Her family and education were quite equal to my own; and these very important considerations admitted, I had fortune enough for both. It was material that we should have the habits, opinions, prejudices if you will, of the same social caste; but beyond this, worldly considerations, in my view of the matter, ought to have no influence.

Under such notions, therefore, and guided by the strong impulse of a generous and manly passion, I poured out my whole soul to Dus. I dare say I spoke a quarter of an hour without once being interrupted. I did not wish to hear my companion's voice; for I had the humility which is said to be the inseparable attendant of a true love, and was fearful that the answer might not be such as I could wish to hear. I could perceive, spite of the increasing obscurity, that Dus was strongly agitated; and will confess a lively hope was created within me by this circumstance. Thus encouraged, it was natural to lose my fears in the wish to be more assured; and I now pressed for a reply. After a brief pause, I obtained it in the following words, which were uttered with a tremor and sensibility that gave them tenfold weight.

"For this unexpected, and I believe *sincere* declaration, Mr. Littlepage, I thank you from the bottom of my heart," the precious creature commenced. "There are a frankness, an honorable sincerity and a noble generosity in such a declaration,

coming from *you* to *me*, that can never be forgotten. But, I am not my own mistress – my faith is plighted to another – my affections are with my faith; and I cannot accept offers which, so truly generous, so truly noble, demand the most explicit reply – "

I heard no more; for, springing from the floor, and an attitude that was very nearly that of being on my knees, I rushed from the hut and plunged into the forest.

# CHAPTER XVI

> Dans. "Ye boys who pluck the flowers, and spoil the spring,
> Beware the secret snake that shoots a sting."
>
> – *Dryden's Eclogues.*

For the first half hour after I left Ursula Malbone's hut, I was literally unconscious of whither I was going, or of what I was about. I can recollect nothing but having passed quite near to the Onondago, who appeared desirous of speaking to me, but whom I avoided by a species of instinct rather than with any design. In fact, fatigue first brought me fairly to my senses. I had wandered miles and miles, plunging deeper and deeper into the wilds of the forest, and this without any aim, or any knowledge of even the direction in which I was going. Night soon came to cast its shadows on the earth, and my uncertain course was held amid the gloom of the hour, united to those of the woods. I had wearied myself by rapid walking over the uneven surface of the forest, and finally threw myself on the trunk of a fallen tree, willing to take some repose.

At first, I thought of nothing, felt for nothing but the unwelcome circumstance that the faith of Dus was plighted to another. Had I fallen in love with Priscilla Bayard, such an announcement could not have occasioned the same surprise; for

*she* lived in the world, met with men of suitable educations, conditions, and opinions, and might be supposed to have been brought within the influence of the attentions and sympathies that are wont to awaken tenderness in the female breast. With Dus, it had been very different; she had gone from the forest to the school, and returned from the school to the forest. It was true, that her brother, while a soldier, might have had some friend who admired Ursula, and whose admiration awakened her youthful sympathies, but this was only a remote probability, and I was left burdened with a load of doubt as respected even the character and position of my rival.

"At any rate, he must be poor," I said to myself, the moment I was capable of reflecting coolly on the subject, "or he would never have left Dus in that hut, to pass her youth amid chainbearers and the other rude beings of a frontier. If I cannot obtain her love, I may at least contribute to her happiness by using those means which a kind Providence has bestowed, and enabling her to marry at once." For a little while I fancied my own misery would be lessened, could I only see Dus married and happy. This feeling did not last long, however; though I trust the desire to see her happy remained after I became keenly conscious it would require much time to enable me to look on such a spectacle with composure. Nevertheless, the first tranquil moment, the first relieving sensation I experienced, was from the conviction I felt that Providence had placed it in my power to cause Ursula and the man of her choice to be united. This recollection gave me

even a positive pleasure for a little while, and I ruminated on the means of effecting it, literally for hours. I was still thinking of it, indeed, when I threw myself on the fallen tree, where weariness caused me to fall into a troubled sleep, that lasted, with more or less of forgetfulness, several hours. The place I had chosen on the tree was among its branches, on which the leaves were still hanging, and it was not without its conveniences.

When I awoke, it was daylight; or, such a daylight as penetrates the forest ere the sun has risen. At first I felt stiff and sore from the hardness of my bed; but, on changing my attitude and sitting up, these sensations soon wore off, leaving me refreshed and calm. To my great surprise, however, I found that a small, light blanket, such as woodmen use in summer, had been thrown over me, to the genial warmth of which I was probably indebted more than I then knew myself. This circumstance alarmed me at first, since it was obvious the blanket could not have come there without hands; though a moment's reflection satisfied me that the throwing it over me, under the circumstances, must have been the act of a friend. I arose, however, to my feet, walked along the trunk of the tree until clear of its branches, and looked about me with a lively desire to ascertain who this secret friend might be.

The place was like any other in the solitude of the forest. There was the usual array of the trunks of stately trees, the leafy canopy, the dark shadows, the long vistas, the brown and broken surface of the earth, and the damp coolness of the boundless woods. A fine spring broke out of a hill-side quite near me, and looking

further, with the intention to approach and use its water, the mystery of the blanket was at once explained. I saw the form of the Onondago, motionless as one of the trees which grew around him, leaning on his rifle, and seemingly gazing at some object that lay at his feet. In a minute I was at his side, when I discovered that he was standing over a human skeleton! This was a strange and startling object to meet in the depth of the woods! Man was of so little account, was so seldom seen in the virgin wilds of America, that one naturally felt more shocked at finding such a memorial of his presence in a place like that, than would have been the case had he stumbled on it amid peopled districts. As for the Indian, he gazed at the bones so intently that he either did not hear, or he totally disregarded my approach. I touched him with a finger before he even looked up. Glad of any excuse to avoid explanation of my own conduct, I eagerly seized the occasion offered by a sight so unusual, to speak of other things.

"This has been a violent death, Sureflint," I said; "else the body would not have been left unburied. The man has been killed in some quarrel of the red warriors."

"*Was* bury," answered the Indian, without manifesting the least surprise at my touch, or at the sound of my voice. "Dere, see grave? 'Arth wash away, and bones come out. Nuttin' else. *Know* he bury, for help bury, myself."

"Do you, then, know anything of this unhappy man, and of the cause of his death?"

"Sartain; know all 'bout him. Kill in ole French war. Fader

here; and Colonel Follock; Jaap, too. Huron kill 'em all; afterward we flog Huron. Yes, dat ole story now!"

"I have heard something of this! This must have been the spot, then, where one Traverse, a surveyor, was set upon by the enemy, and was slain, with his chainbearers and axe-men. My father and his friends *did* find the bodies and bury them, after a fashion."

"Sartain; just so; poor bury, d'ough, else he nebber come out of groun'. Dese bones of surveyor; know 'em well: hab one leg broke, once. Dere; you see mark."

"Shall we dig a new grave, Susquesus, and bury the remains again?"

"Best not, now, Chainbearer mean do dat. Be here by-'m-bye. Got somet'ing else t'ink of now. You own all land 'bout here, so no need be in hurry."

"I suppose that my father and Colonel Follock do. These men were slain on the estate, while running out its great lots. I think I have heard they had not near finished their work in this quarter of the patent, which was abandoned on account of the troubles of that day."

"Just so; who own mill, here, den?"

"There is no mill near us, Susquesus; *can* be no mill, as not an acre of the Ridge property has ever been sold or leased."

"May be so – mill d'ough – not far off, needer. Know mill when hear him. Saw talk loud."

"You surely do not hear the saw of a mill now, my friend. I can hear nothing like one."

"No hear, now; dat true. But hear him in night. Ear good in night – hear great way off."

"You are right enough there, Susquesus. And you fancied you heard the stroke of a saw, from this place, during the quiet and heavy air of the past night?"

"Sartain – know well; hear him plain enough. Isn't mile off. Out here; find him dere."

This was still more startling than the discovery of the skeleton. I had a rough, general map of the patent in my pocket; and on examination, I found a mill-stream *was* laid down on it, quite near the spot where we stood. The appearance of the woods, and the formation of the land, moreover, favored the idea of the proximity of a mill. Pine was plenty, and the hills were beginning to swell into something resembling mountains.

Fasting, and the exercise I had taken, had given me a keen appetite; and in one sense at least, I was not sorry to believe that human habitations were near. Did any persons dwell in that forest, they were squatters, but I did not feel much personal apprehension in encountering such men; especially when my only present object was to ask for food. The erecting of a mill denoted a decided demonstration, it is true, and a little reflection might have told me that its occupants would not be delighted by a sudden visit from the representative of the owners of the soil. On the other hand, however, the huts were long miles away, and neither Sureflint nor I had the smallest article of food about us. Both were hungry, though the Onondago professed indifference

to the feeling, an unconcern I could not share with him, owing to habits of greater self-indulgence. Then I had a strong wish to solve this mystery of the mill, in addition to a feverish desire to awaken within me some new excitement, as a counterpoise to that I still keenly felt in behalf of my disappointed love.

Did I not so well understand the character of my companion, and the great accuracy of Indian senses, I might have hesitated about going on what seemed to be a fool's errand. But circumstances, that were then of recent origin, existed to give some countenance to the conjecture of Sureflint, if conjecture his precise knowledge could be called. Originally, New York claimed the Connecticut for a part of its eastern boundary, but large bodies of settlers had crossed that stream coming mainly from the adjacent colony of New Hampshire, and these persons had become formidable by their positions and numbers, some time anterior to the revolution. During that struggle, these hardy mountaineers had manifested a spirit favorable to the colonies, in the main, though every indication of an intention to settle their claims was met by a disposition to declare themselves neutral. In a word, they were sufficiently patriotic, if left to do as they pleased in the matter of their possessions, but not sufficiently so to submit to the regular administration of the law. About the close of the war, the leaders of this self-created colony were more than suspected of coquetting with the English authorities; not that they preferred the government of the crown, or any other control, to their own, but because the times were favorable to

playing off their neutrality, in this manner, as a means of securing themselves in the possession of lands to which their titles, in the ordinary way, admitted of a good deal of dispute, to say the least. The difficulty was by no means disposed of by the peace of '83; but the counties that were then equally known by the name of Vermont and that of the Hampshire Grants, were existing, in one sense, as a people apart, not yet acknowledging the power of the confederacy; nor did they come into the Union, under the constitution of 1789, until all around them had done so, and the last spark of opposition to the new system had been extinguished.

It is a principle of moral, as well as of physical nature, that like should produce like. The right ever vindicates itself, in the process of events, and the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generations, in their melancholy consequences. It was impossible that an example of such a wrong could be successfully exhibited on a large scale, without producing its deluded imitators, on another that was better suited to the rapacity of individual longings. It is probable Vermont has sent out, among us, two squatters, and otherwise lawless intruders on our vacant lands, to one of any other of the adjoining States, counting all in proportion to their whole numbers. I knew that the county of Charlotte, as Washington was then called, was peculiarly exposed to inroads of this nature; and did not feel much surprise at this prospect of meeting with some of the fruits of the seed that had been so profusely scattered along the sides of the Green Mountains. Come what would, however,

I was determined to ascertain the facts, as soon as possible, with the double purpose of satisfying both hunger and curiosity. As for the Indian, he was passive, yielding to my decision altogether as a matter of course.

"Since you think there is a mill, out here, west of us, Sureflint," I observed, after turning the matter over in my mind, "I will go and search for it, if you will bear me company. You think you can find it, I trust, knowing the direction in which it stands?"

"Sartain – find him easy 'nough. Find stream first – den find *mill*. Got ear – got eye – no hard to find him. Hear saw 'fore great while."

I acquiesced, and made a sign for my companion to proceed. Susquesus was a man of action, and not of words; and, in a minute he was leading the way toward a spot in the woods that looked as if it might contain the bed of the stream that was known to exist somewhere near by, since it was laid down on the map.

The sort of instinct possessed by the Trackless, enabled him soon to find this little river. It was full of water, and had a gentle current; a fact that the Indian immediately interpreted into a sign that the mill must be above us, since the dam would have checked the course of the water, had we been above *that*. Turning up stream, then, my companion moved on, with the same silent industry as he would have trotted along the path that led to his own wigwam, had he been near it.

We had not been on the banks of the stream five minutes,

before the Trackless came to a dead halt; like one who had met an unexpected obstacle. I was soon at his side, curious to know the motive of this delay.

"Soon see mill, now," Susquesus said, in answer to an inquiry of mine. "Board plenty – come down stream fast as want him."

Sure enough, boards *were* coming down, in the current of the river, much faster than one who was interested in the property would be apt to wish; unless, indeed, he felt certain of obtaining his share of the amount of sales. These boards were neither in rafts, nor in cribs; but they came singly, or two or three laid together, as if some arrangement had been made to arrest them below, before they should reach any shoals, falls, or rapids. All this looked surprisingly like a regular manufacturer of lumber, with a view to sales in the markets of the towns on the Hudson. The little stream we were on was a tributary of that noble river, and, once in the latter, there would be no very material physical obstacle to conveying the product of our hills over the habitable globe.

"This really looks like trade, Sureflint," I said, as soon as certain that my eyes did not deceive me. "Where there are boards made, men cannot be far off. Lumber, cut to order, does not *grow* in the wilderness, though the material of which it is made, may."

"Mill make him. Know'd mill, when hear him. Talk plain 'nough. Pale-face make mill, but red man got ear to hear wit'!"

This was all true enough; and it remained to ascertain what was to come of it. I will acknowledge that, when I saw those

tell-tale boards come floating down the winding little river, I felt a thrilling of the nerves, as if assured the sight would be succeeded by some occurrence of importance to myself. I knew that these lawless lumbermen bore a bad name in the land, and that they were generally regarded as a set of plunderers, who did not hesitate to defend themselves and their habits, by such acts of violence and fraud as they fancied their circumstances justified. It is one evil of crime, where it penetrates masses, that numbers are enabled to give it a gloss, and a seeming merit, that unsettle principles; rendering the false true, in the eyes of the ignorant, and generally placing evil before good. This is one of the modes in which justice vindicates itself, under the providence of God; the wrongs committed by communities reacting on themselves, in the shape of a demoralization that soon brings its own merited punishment.

There was little time for speculation or conjecture, however; for, resuming our march, the next bend in the river brought into view a reach of the stream in which half a dozen men and lads were at work in the water, placing the boards in piles of two or three, and setting them in the current, at points favorable to their floating downward. Booms, connected with chains, kept the confused pile in a sort of basin beneath some low cliffs, on the margin of which stood the expected saw-mill itself. Here, then, was ocular proof that squatters were systematically at work, plundering the forests of which I was in charge, of their most valuable trees, and setting everything like law and right

at defiance. The circumstances called for great decision, united with the utmost circumspection. I had gone so far, that pride would not suffer me to retreat, had not a sense of duty to my father and Colonel Follock, come to increase the determination to go on.

The reader may feel some desire to know how far Dus mingled with my thoughts, all this time. She was never absolutely out of them, though the repulse I had met in my affections gave an impetus to my feelings that rendered me more than usually disposed to enter on an adventure of hazard and wildness. If I were naught to Ursula Malbone, it mattered little what else became of me. This was the sentiment that was uppermost, and I have thought, ever since, that Susquesus had some insight into the condition of my feelings, and understood the cause of the sort of desperation with which I was about to rush on danger. We were, as yet, quite concealed, ourselves; and the Indian profited by the circumstance, to hold a council, before we trusted our persons in the hands of those who might feel it to be their interest to make away with us, in preference to permitting us ever to see our friends again. In doing this, however, Sureflint was in no degree influenced by concern for himself, but solely by a desire to act as became an experienced warrior, on a very difficult war-path.

"S'pose you know," said Sureflint. "'Em no good men – Varmount squatter —*you* t'ink own land —*dey* t'ink own land. Carry rifle and do as please. Best watch him."

"I believe I understand you, Susquesus, and I shall be on my

guard, accordingly. Did you ever see either of those men before?"

"T'ink have. Must meet all sort of men, when he go up and down in 'e wood. Despret squatter, dat ole man, out yonder. Call himself T'ousandacre – say he alway own t'ousand acre when he have mind to find him."

"The gentleman must be well provided with estates! A thousand acres will make a very pretty homestead for a wanderer, especially when he has the privilege of carrying it about with him, in his travels. You mean the man with gray hairs, I suppose – he who is half dressed in buckskin?"

"Sartain; dat ole T'ousandacre – nebber want land – take him where he find him. Born over by great salt lake, he say, and been travel toward setting sun since a boy. Alway help himself – Hampshire Grant man, *dat*. But, major, why he no got right, well as you?"

"Because our laws give him no right, while they give to the owner in fee, a perfect right. It is one of the conditions of the society in which we live, that men shall respect each other's property, and this is not his property, but mine – or rather, it is the property of my father and Colonel Follock."

"Best not say so, den. No need tell ebberyt'ing. No your land, say no your land. If he t'ink you spy, p'raps he shoot you, eh? Pale-face shoot spy; red man t'ink spy good feller!"

"Spies can be shot only in time of war; but, war or peace, you do not think these men will push matters to extremities? They will be afraid of the law."

"Law! What law to him? Nebber see law – don't go near law; don't know him."

"Well, I shall run the risk, for hunger is quite as active just now as curiosity and interest. There is no necessity, however, for your exposing yourself, Sureflint; do you stay behind, and wait for the result. If I am detained, you can carry the news to Chainbearer, who will know where to seek me. Stay you here, and let me go on alone – adieu."

Sureflint was not to be dropped in this manner. He *said* nothing, but the moment I began to move, he stepped quietly into his accustomed place, in advance, and led the way toward the party of squatters. There were four of these men at work in the river, in addition to two stout lads and the old leader, who, as I afterward ascertained, was very generally known by the *sobriquet* of Thousandacres. The last remained on dry land, doubtless imagining that his years, and his long services in the cause of lawlessness and social disorganization, entitled him to this small advantage. The evil one has his privileges, as well as the public.

The first intimation our hosts received of this unexpected visit, came from the cracking of a dried stick on which I had trodden. The Indian was not quicker to interpret and observe that well-known sound, than the old squatter, who turned his head like thought, and at once saw the Onondago within a rod of the spot where he himself was standing. I was close on the Indian's heels. At first, neither surprise nor uneasiness was apparent in

the countenance of Thousandacres. He knew the Trackless, as he called Susquesus, and, though this was the first visit of the Indian, at that particular "location," they had often met in a similar manner before, and invariably with as little preliminary notice. So far from anything unpleasant appearing in the countenance of the squatter, therefore, Susquesus was greeted with a smile, in which a certain leering expression of cunning was blended with that of welcome.

"So its only you, Trackless," exclaimed Thousand Acres, or Thousandacres, as I shall in future spell the name – "I didn't know but it might be a sheriff. Sitch critturs do get out into the woods, sometimes, you know; though they don't always get back ag'in. How come you to find us out, in this cunning spot, Onondago!"

"Hear mill, in night. Saw got loud tongue. Hungry; so come get somet'ing to eat."

"Waal, you've done wisely, in that partic'lar, for we never have been better off for vi't'als. Pigeons is as plenty as land, and the law hasn't got to that pass yet, as to forbid a body from taking pigeons, even though it be in another man's stubble. I must keep that saw better greased, nights; though, I s'p'ose, a'ter all, 't was the cut of the teeth you heard, and not the rubbing of the plate?"

"Hear him all – saw got loud voice, tell you."

"Yes, there's natur' in that. Come, we'll take this path, up to the house, and see what Miss Thousandacres can do for you. Breakfast must be ready, by this time; and you, and your fri'nd, behind you, there, is wilcome to what we have, sitch as it is.

Now, as we go along," continued the squatter, leading the way up the path he had mentioned – "now, as we go along, you can tell me the news, Trackless. This is a desp'rate quiet spot; and all the tidings we get is brought back by the b'ys, when they come up stream, from floating boards down into the river. A desp'rate sight have we got on hand, and I hope to hear that matters be going on so well, in Albany, that boards will bring suthin', soon. It's high time honest labor met with its reward."

"Don't know – nebber sell board," answered the Indian – "nebber buy him. Don't care for board. Powder cheap, now 'e war-path shut up. Dat good, s'pose you t'ink."

"Waal, Trackless, I kear more for boards than for powder, I must own; though powder's useful, too. Yes, yes; a useful thing is powder, in its way. Venison and bear's meat are both healthy, cheap, food: and I *have* eaten catamount. Powder can be used in many ways. Who is your fri'nd, Trackless?"

"*Ole* young frien' – know his fader. Live in wood now, like us this summer. Shoot deer like hunter."

"He's wilcome – he's heartily wilcome! All's wilcome to these parts, but the landlord. You know me, Trackless – you're well acquainted with old Thousandacres; and few words is best, among fri'nds of long standing. But, tell me, Onondago, have you seen anything of the Chainbearer, and his party of lawless surveyors, in the woods, this summer? The b'ys brought up an account of his being at work, somewhere near by, this season, and that he's at his old tricks, ag'in!"

"Sartain, see him. Ole frien', too, Chainbearer. Live wit' him, afore old French war —*like* to live with him, when can. Good man, Chainbearer, tell you, Thousandacres. What trick he do, eh?"

The Indian spoke a little sternly, for he loved Andries too well to hear him disrespectfully named, without feeling some sort of resentment. These men, however, were too much accustomed to plain dealing in their ordinary discourse, to take serious offence at trifles; and the amicable sunshine of the dialogue received no serious interruption from this passing cloud.

"What trick does Chainbearer do, Trackless," answered the squatter – "a mortal sight of tricks, with them plaguy chains of his'n! If there warn't no chains and chainbearers, there could be no surveyors; and, if there warn't no surveyors, there could be no boundaries to farms but the rifle; which is the best law-maker, too, that man ever invented. The Indians want no surveyors, Trackless?"

"S'pose he don't. It *be* bad to measure land, will own," answered the conscientious Susquesus, who would not deny his own principles, even while he despised and condemned the man who now asserted them. "Nebber see anyt'ing good in measurin' land."

"Ay, I know'd you was of the true Injin kidney!" exclaimed Thousandacres, exultingly, "and that's it which makes sich fri'nds of us squatters and you redskins. But Chainbearer is at work hard by, is he, Trackless?"

"Sartain. He measure General Littlepage farm out. Who *your* landlord, eh?"

"Waal, I do s'pose it's this same Littlepage, and a desp'rate rogue all agree in callin' him."

I started at hearing my honored and honorable father thus alluded to, and felt a strong disposition to resent the injury; though a glance from the Indian's eye cautioned me on the subject. I was then young, and had yet to learn that men were seldom wronged without being calumniated. I now know that this practice of circulating false reports of landlords, most especially in relation to their titles, is very general, taking its rise in the hostile positions that adventurers are constantly assuming on their estates, in a country as unsettled and migratory as our own, aided by the common and vulgar passion of envy. Let a man travel through New York, even at this day, and lend his ear to the language of the discontented tavern-brawlers, and he would hardly believe there was such a thing as a good title to an estate of any magnitude within its borders, or a bad one to the farm of any occupant in possession. There is among us a set of declaimers, who come from a state of society in which little distinction exists in either fortunes or social conditions, and who are incapable of even seeing, much less of appreciating the vast differences that are created by habits, opinions, and education, but who reduce all moral discrepancies to dollars and cents. These men invariably quarrel with all above them, and, with them, to quarrel is to caluminate. Leaguing with the disaffected, of whom there always

must be some, especially when men are compelled to pay their debts, one of their first acts is to assail the title of the landlord, when there happens to be one in their neighborhood, by lying and slandering. There seems to be no exception to the rule, the practice being resorted to against the oldest as well as against the most recently granted estates among us. The lie only varies in particulars; it is equally used against the titles of the old families of Van Rensselaer, Livingston, Beekman, Van Cortlandt, De Lancey, Schuyler, and others, as against the hundred new names that have sprung up in what is called the western counties, since the revolution. It is the lie of the Father of Lies, who varies it to suit circumstances and believers. "A desp'rate rogue," all agree in calling the man who owns land that they desire to possess themselves, without being put to the unpleasant trouble of purchasing and paying for it.

I so far commanded myself, however, as to make no retort for the injustice done my upright, beloved, and noble-minded father, but left his defence to the friendly feelings and sterling honesty of Sureflint.

"Not so," answered the Indian sternly. "Big lie – forked tongue tell *dat*– know gen'ral – sarve wid him —*know* him. Good warrior – honest man – dat *lie*. Tell him so to face."

"Waal – wa-a-l – I don't know," drawled out Mr. Thousandacres: how those rascals will "wa-a-l," and "I don't know," when they are cornered in one of their traducing tales, and are met face to face, as the Indian now met the squatter! "Wa-

a-l, wa-a-l, I don't know, and only repeat what I have heern say. But here we be at the cabin, Trackless; and I see by the smoke that old Prudence and her gals has been actyve this morning, and we shall get suthin' comfortable for the stomach."

Hereupon, Mr. Thousandacres stopped at a convenient place by the side of the stream, and commenced washing his face and hands; an operation that was now performed for the first time that day.

# CHAPTER XVII

"He stepped before the monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bowed nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said."

– *Marmion.*

While the squatter was thus occupied in arranging his toilet, previously to taking his morning meal, I had a moment of leisure to look about in. We had ascended to the level of the mill, where was an open, half-cleared space, of some sixty acres in extent, that was under a rude cultivation. Stubs and stumps abounded, and the fences were of logs, showing that the occupancy was still of recent date. In fact, as I afterward ascertained, Thousandacres, with his family of hopeful sons and daughters, numbering in all more than twenty souls, had squatted at that spot just four years before. The mill-seat was admirable, nature having done for it nearly all that was required, though the mill itself was as unartificial and makeshift as such a construction very well could be. Agriculture evidently occupied very little of the time of the family, which tilled just enough land "to make a live on't," while everything in the shape of lumber was "improved" to the utmost.

A vast number of noble pines had been felled, and boards and shingles were to be seen in profusion on every side. A few of the first were being sent to market, in order to meet the demands of the moment, in the way of groceries; but the intention was to wait for the rise of the little stream, after the fall rains, in order to send the bulk of the property into the common artery of the Hudson, and to reap the great reward of the toil of the summer and spring.

I saw, also, that there must be additions to this family, in the way of marriage, as they occupied no less than five cabins, all of which were of logs, freshly erected, and had an air of comfort and stability about them, that one would not have expected to meet where the title was so flimsy. All this, as I fancied, indicated a design not to remove very soon. It was probable that some of the oldest of the sons and daughters were married, and that the patriarch was already beholding a new generation of squatters springing up about him. A few of the young men were visible, lounging about the different cabins, and the mill was sending forth that peculiar, cutting, grating sound, that had so distinctly attracted the attention of Susquesus, even in the depth of the forest.

"Walk in, Trackless," cried Thousandacres, in a hearty, free manner, which proved that what came easily went as freely; "walk in, fri'nd; I don't know your name, but that's no great matter, where there's enough for all, and a wilcome in the bargain. Here's the old woman, ready and willing to sarve you,

and looking as smiling as a gal of fifteen."

The last part of the statement, however, was not precisely accurate. "Miss Thousandacres," as the squatter sometimes magnificently called his consort, or the dam of his young brood, was far from receiving us with either smiles or welcomes. A sharp-featured, keen, gray-eyed, old woman, her thoughts were chiefly bent on the cares of her brood; and her charities extended little beyond them. She had been the mother of fourteen children herself, twelve of which survived. All had been born amid the difficulties, privations and solitudes of stolen abodes in the wilderness. That woman had endured enough to break down the constitutions and to destroy the tempers of half a dozen of the ordinary beings of her sex; yet she survived, the same enduring, hard-working, self-denying, suffering creature she had been from the day of her bloom and beauty. These two last words might be supposed to be used in mockery, could one have seen old Prudence, sallow, attenuated, with sunken cheeks, hollow, lack-lustre eyes, and broken-mouthed, as I now saw her; but there were the remains of great beauty, notwithstanding, about the woman; and I afterward learned that she had once been among the fairest of the fair, in her native mountains. In all the intercourse I subsequently had with her family, the manner of this woman was anxious, distrustful, watchful, and bore a strong resemblance to that of the dam that is overseeing the welfare of her cubs. As to her welcome at the board, it was neither hearty nor otherwise; it being so much a matter of course for the

American to share his meal with the stranger, that little is said or thought of the boon.

Notwithstanding the size of the family of Thousandacres, the cabin in which he dwelt was not crowded. The younger children of the settlement, ranging between the ages of four and twelve, appeared to be distributed among all the habitations indifferently, putting into the dishes wherever there was an opening, much as pigs thrust themselves in at any opening at a trough. The business of eating commenced simultaneously throughout the whole settlement, Prudence having blown a blast upon a conch-shell, as the signal. I was too hungry to lose any time in discourse, and set to, with the most hearty good-will, upon the coarse fare, the moment there was an opportunity. My example was imitated by all around our own particular board, it being the refined and intellectual only, who habitually converse at their meals. The animal had too great a preponderance among the squatters, to leave them an exception to the rule.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.