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"My cloak flew open as I fell, and the force of the fall bursting its envelope, out, in all its hideous realities, rolled the infernal imp of darkness."—*Page 137.*

ODD LEAVES FROM THE NOTE BOOK
OF A
LOUISIANA SWAMP DOCTOR.



"She tuk off her shoe, and the way a No. 10 go-to-meetin' brogan commenced givin' a hoss particular Moses, were a caution to hoss-flesh."—Page 52.

PHILADELPHIA: A. HART.

1850.

Lewis, Henry Clay & University of Pittsburgh

ODD LEAVES

FROM

THE LIFE OF A

LOUISIANA "SWAMP DOCTOR."

Wife. "Send for the Doctor."

Patient. "Lord! Lord! lettest thou thy servant now depart in peace."

"THE WORLD AS IT IS," An Every-day Story,

MDVCCC. edition.

BY MADISON TENSAS, M.D., *pseud.*
Ex V. P. M. S. U. Ky.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY A. HART.
(LATE CAREY AND HART.)

1850.

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T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.

TO

WM. S. PARHAM, AND ALFRED J. LOWRY,
OF MADISON PARISH, LOUISIANA,
MY TRUE AND FAST FRIENDS,
THIS HUMBLE VOLUME IS INSCRIBED
BY THEIR FRIEND,
MADISON TENSAS, M. D.



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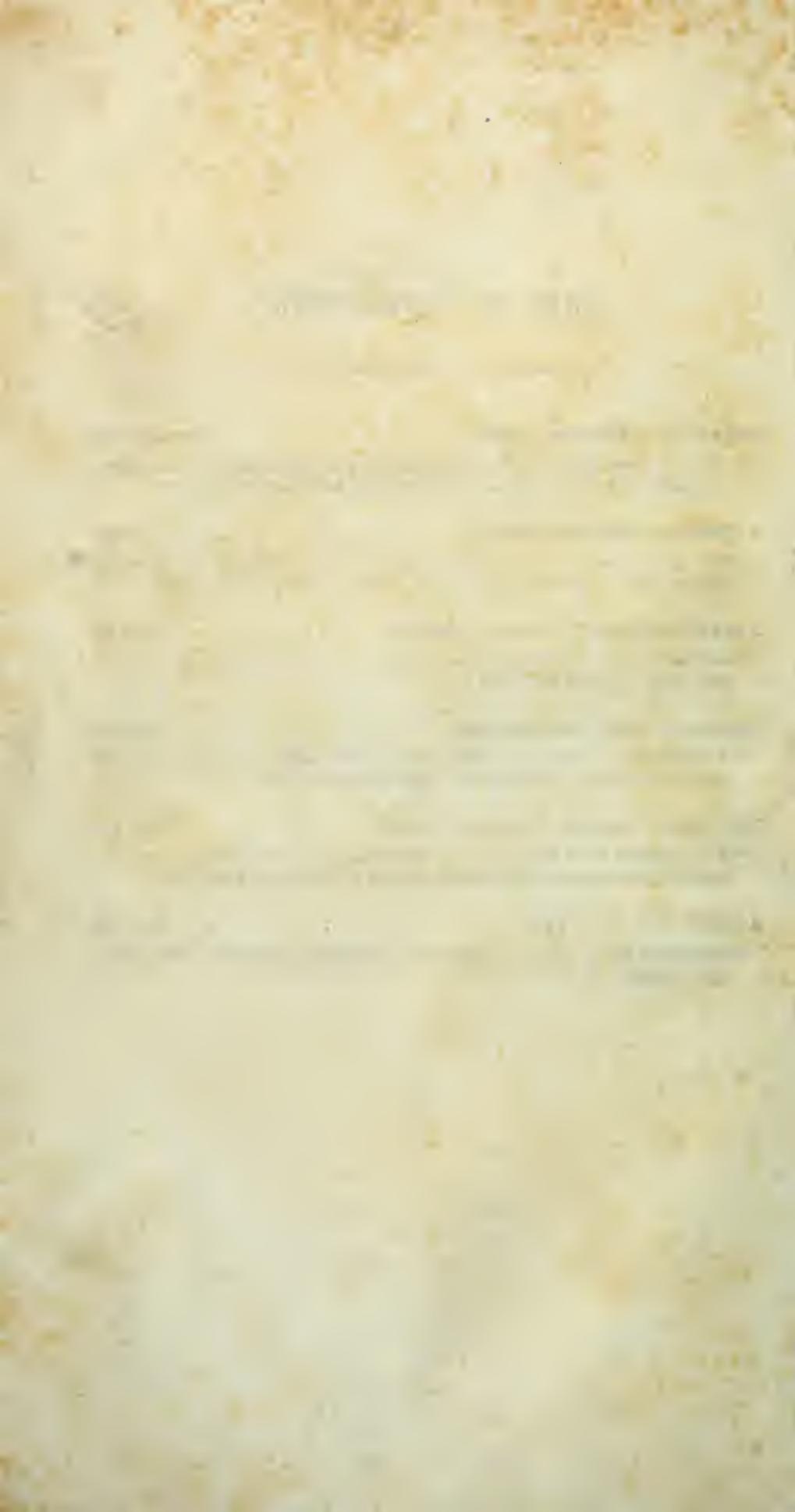
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THE CITY PHYSICIAN

versus

THE SWAMP DOCTOR.

THE city physician, or the country doctor of an old-settled locality, with all the appliances of cultivated and refined life around them ; possessing all the numberless conveniences and luxuries of the sick-room ; capable of controlling the many adverse circumstances that exert such a pernicious influence upon successful practice ; having at command the assistance, in critical and anomalous cases, of scientific and experienced coadjutors ; the facilities of good roads ; the advantages of comfortable dwellings, easy carriages, and the pleasures of commingling with a cultivated, mild, refined society, cannot fully realize and appreciate the condition of their less favoured, humble brethren, who, impelled by youthfulness, poverty, defective education, or the reckless spirit of adventure, have taken up their lot with society nearly in its primitive condition, and dispense the blessings of their profession to the inhabitants of a country, where the obscure bridle-path, the unbridged water-courses, the deadened forest trees, the ringing of the woodman's axe, the humble log cabin, the homespun dress, and all the many sober, hard realities of pioneer life, attest the youthfulness of the settlement.

The city physician may be of timidous nature and weak

and effeminate constitution : the “swamp doctor,” whose midnight ride is often saluted by the scream of the panther, must be of courageous nature, and in physical endurance as hardy as one of his own grand alluvial oaks, whose canopy of leaves is many a night his only shelter.

The city physician may be of fastidious taste, and exquisiteness of feeling ; the swamp doctor must have the unconcernedness of the dissecting-room, and be prepared to swallow his peck of dirt all at once.

 The city physician must be of polished manners and courtly language : the swamp doctor finds the only use he has for bows, is to escape some impending one that threatens him with Absalomic fate ; the only necessity for courtly expression, to induce some bellicose “squatter” to pay his bill in something besides hot curses and cold lead.

The city physician, fast anchored in the sublimity of scientific expression, requires a patient to “inflate his lungs to their utmost capacity ;” the swamp doctor tells his to “draw a long breath, or swell your d—dest :” one calls an individual’s physical peculiarities, “idiosyncrasy ;” the other terms it “a fellow’s nater.”

The city physician sends his prescriptions to the drug store, and gives himself no regard as to the purity of the medicine ; each swamp doctor is his own *pharmacien*, and carries his drug store at the saddle.

The city physician rides in an easy carriage over well paved streets, and pays toll at the bridge ; we mount a canoe, a pair of mud boots, sometimes a horse, and traverse, unmindful of exposure or danger, the sullen slough or angry river.

The city physician wears broadcloth, and looking in his hat reads, “Paris ;” we adorn the outer man with homespun, and gazing at our graceful castors remember

the identical hollow tree in which we caught the coon that forms its fair outline and symmetrical proportions.

The city physician goes to the opera or theatre, to relax, and while away a leisure evening. The swamp doctor resorts for the same purpose to a deer or bear hunt, a barbecue or bran dance, and generally ends by becoming perfectly hilarious, and evincing a determination to sit up in order that he can escort the young ladies home before breakfast.

The city physician, compelled to keep up appearances, deems a library of a hundred authors a moderate collection; the swamp doctor glories in the possession of "Gunn's Domestic Medicine," and the "Mother's Guide."

The city physician has a costly Parisian instrument for performing operations, and scorns to extract a tooth; the swamp doctor can rarely boast of a case of amputating instruments, and practises dentistry with a gum lancet and a pair of pullikens.

The city physician, with intellect refined, but feelings vitiated by the corruptings and heart-hardenings of modern polished society, views with utter indifference or affected sympathy the dissolution of body and soul in his patients: but think you, *we* can see depart unmoved those with whom we have endured privations, have been knit like brothers together by our mutual dangers; with whom we have hunted, fished, and shared the crust and lowly couch; with whom we have rejoiced and sorrowed; think you *we* can see them go down to the grave with tearless eyes, with unmoved soul? If we can, then blot out that expression so accordant with common sentiment, "God made the country, and man the town."

The city physician sends the poor to the hospital, and eventually to the dissecting-room; we tend and furnish

them gratuitously, and a proposal to dispose of them anatomically would, in all probability, put a knife into us.

One, with a sickly frame, anticipates old age; the other, with a vigorous constitution, knows that exposure and privation will cut him off ere his meridian be reached.

The city physician has soft hands, soft skin, and soft clothes: we have soft hearts but hard hands; we are rough in our phrases, but true in our natures; our words do not speak one language and our actions another; what we mean we say, what we say we mean; our characters, when not original, are impressed upon us by the people we practise among and associate with, for such is the character of the pioneers and pre-emptionists of the swamp.

To sum up the whole, the city physician lives at the top of the pot, the swamp doctor scarcely at the rim of the skillet: one is a delicate carpet, which none but the nicest kid can press; the other is a cypress floor, in which the hobnails of every clown can stamp their shape: one is the breast of a chicken, the other is a muscle-shell full of cat-fish: one is quinine, the other Peruvian bark: and so on in the scale of proportions.

I have contrasted the two through the busy, moving scenes of life; let me keep the curtain from descending awhile, till I draw the last and awful contrast.

Stand by the death-bed of the two, in that last and solemn hour, when disease has prescribed for the patient, and death, acting the *pharmacien*, is filling the R. In a close, suffocating room, horizontalized on a feather bed; if a bachelor, attended by a mercenary nurse; his departure eagerly desired by a host of expectant, envious competitors; with the noise of drays, the shouts of the busy multitude, and the many discordant cries of the city



ringing through his frame, the soul of the city physician leaves its mortal tenement and wings its way to heaven through several floors and thicknesses of mortar and brick, whilst the sobs of his few true friends float on the air strangely mingled with "Pies all hot!" "The last 'erald!" and "Five dollars reward, five dollars reward, for the lost child of a disconsolate family!"

The swamp doctor is gathered unto his fathers 'neath the greenwood tree, couched on the yielding grass, with the soft melody of birds, the melancholy cadence of the summer wind, the rippling of the stream, the sweet smell of flowers, and the blue sky above bending down as if to embrace him, to soothe his spirit, and give his parting soul a glance of that heaven which surely awaits him as a recompense for all the privations he has endured on earth; whilst the pressure on his palm of hard and manly hands, the tears of women attached to him like a brother by the past kind ministerings of his Godlike calling, the sobs of children, and the boisterous grief of the poor negroes, attest that not unregarded or unloved he hath dwelt on earth: a sunbeam steals through the leafy canopy and clothes his brow with a living halo, a sweet smile pervades his countenance, and amidst all that is beauteous in nature or commendable in man, the swamp doctor sinks in the blissful luxuries of death; no more to undergo privation and danger, disease or suffering. He hath given his last pill, had his last draught protested against; true to the instincts of his profession, he, no doubt, in the battling troop of the angels above, if feasible, will still continue to *charge*.

MY EARLY LIFE.

UPON what slender hinges the gate of a man's life turns, and what trifling things change the tenor of his being, and determine in a moment the direction of a lifetime! Who inhales his modicum of azote and oxygen, that cannot verify in his own person that we are the creatures of circumstances, and that there is a hidden divinity that shapes our ends, despite the endeavours of the pedagogue, man, to paddle them out of shape?

Some writer of celebrity has averred, and satisfactorily proven to all of his way of thinking, by a chain of logical deductions, that the war of 1812, the victory of New Orleans, the elevation of Jackson to the presidency, the annexation of Texas, General Taylor's not possessing the proportions of Hercules, and a sad accident that occurred to one of the best of families very recently, all was the inevitable effect of a quiet unobtrusive citizen in Maryland being charged some many years ago with hog stealing.

Were I writing a library instead of a volume, I would take up, for the satisfaction of my readers, link by link, the chain of consequences, from the mighty to the insignificant; also, if time and eternity permitted, trace the genealogy of the memorable porker (upon whose forcible seizure all these events depended), back to the time when Adam was not required to show a tailor's bill unpaid, as a portent of gentility, or Eve thought it a wife's duty to henpeck her husband.

As I cannot do this, I will, by an analogous example,

show that equally—to me at least—important consequences have been deduced from as unimportant and remote causes; and that the writing of this volume, my being a swamp doctor in 1848, and having been steamboat cook, cabin-boy, gentleman of leisure, plough-boy, cotton-picker, and almost a printer, depended when I was ten years old on a young lady wearing “No. 2” shoes, when common sense and the size of her foot whispered “fives.” And now to show the connexion between these remote facts.

The death of my mother when I was very young breaking up our family circle, I became an inmate of the family of a married brother, whose wife, to an imperious temper, had, sadly for me, united the companionship of several younger brothers, whose associates I became when I entered her husband’s door. Living in a free state, and his straitened circumstances permitting him but one hired servant, much of the family drudgery fell upon his wife, who up to my going there devolved a portion upon her brothers, but which all fell to my share as soon as I became domiciliated. I complained to my brother; but it was a younger brother arraigning a loved wife, and we all know how such a suit would be decided. Those only who have lived in similar circumstances can appreciate my situation; censured for errors and never praised for my industry, the scapegoat of the family and general errand-boy of the concern, waiting upon her brothers when I would fain have been at study or play, mine was anything but an enviable life. This condition of things continued until I had passed my tenth year, when, grown old by drudgery and wounded feelings, I determined to put into effect a long-cherished plan, to run away and seek my fortune wheresoever chance might lead or destiny determine.



By day and by night for several years this thought had been upon me; it had grown with my growth, and acquired strength from each day's developement of fresh indignities, filling me with so much resolution, that the boy of ten had the mental strength of twenty to effect such a purpose. I occupied my few leisure hours in building airy castles of future fortune and distinction, and in marking out the preparatory road to make Providence my guide, and have the world before me, where to choose.

One evening, just at sunset, I was seated on the lintel of the street-door, nursing one of my nephews, and affecting to still his cries, the consequence of a spiteful pinch I had given him, to repay some indignity offered me by his mother, when my attention was attracted to a young lady, who, apparently in much suffering, was tottering along, endeavouring to support herself by her parasol, which she used as a cane. To look at me now with my single bed, buttonless shirts, premature wigdom, and haggard old-bachelor looks, you would scarcely think I am or was ever an admirer of the sex. But against appearances I have always been one; and boy as I was then, the sight of that young woman tottering painfully along, awoke all my sensibilities, and made the fountain of sympathy gush out as freely as a child swallowing lozenges. Overcoming my boyish diffidence, as she got opposite the door, I addressed her, "Miss, will you not stop and rest? I will get you a chair, and you can stay in the porch, if you will not come in the house." "Thank you, my little man," she gasped out, and attempted to seat herself in the chair I had brought, but striking her foot against the step the pain was so great, that she shrieked out, and fell dead, as I thought, on the floor.

Frightened terribly to think I had brought dead folks home, I joined my yell to her scream, as a prolongation,

which outcry brought my sister-in-law to the scene. The woman prevailing, she carried her in the house, and shutting the door to keep out curious eyes, which began to gather round, she set to restoring her uninvited guest, which she soon accomplished. As soon as she could speak, she gasped out, "Take them off, they are killing me!"—pointing to her feet. This, with difficulty, was effected, and their blood-stained condition showed how great must have been her torment. She announced herself as the daughter of a well-known merchant of the city, and begged permission to send me to her father's store, to request him to send a carriage for her. Assent being given, she gave me the necessary directions to find it, and off I started. It was near the river.

On my way to the place, as I reached the river, I overtook a gentleman apparently laden down with baggage. On seeing me he said, "My lad, I will give you a quarter if you will carry one of these bundles down to that steam-boat," pointing to one that was ringing her last bell previous to starting to New Orleans. This was a world of money to me then, and I readily agreed. Increasing our pace, we reached just in time the steamer, between which and the place he had accosted me, I had determined, as the present opportunity was a good one, to put in execution my long-cherished plan, and run away from my home then. Its accomplishment was easy. Following my employer on board, I received my quarter; but instead of going on shore, I secreted myself on board, until the continued puff of the steamer and the merry chant of the firemen assured me we were fairly under way, that I was fast leaving my late home and becoming a fugitive upon the face of the waters, dependent upon my childish exertions for my daily bread, without money, save the solitary quarter, without a change of clothes; no friend

to counsel me save the monitor within, a heart made aged and iron by contumely and youthful suffering.

Emerging from my concealment, I timidly sought the lower deck and sat me down upon the edge of the boat, and singling out some spark as it rose from the chimney, strove childishly to draw some augury of my future fate from its long continuance or speedy extinction.

The city was fast fading in the distance. I watched its receding houses, for, while they lasted, I felt as if I was not altogether without a home. A turn of the river hid it from sight, and my tears fell fast, for I was also leaving the churchyard which held my mother, and I then had not grown old enough to read life's bitterest page, to separate dream from reality, and know we could meet no more on earth ; for oftentimes in the quiet calm of sleep, in the lonely hours of night, I had seen her bending over my tear-wet pillow, and praying for me the same sweet prayer that she prayed for me when I was her sinless youngest born, and I thought in leaving her grave I should never see her more, for how, when she should rise again at night, would she be able to find me, rambler as I was ?

With this huge sorrow to dampen my joy at acquiring my liberty, chilled with the night air I was sinking into sleep in my dangerous seat, when the cook of the boat discovered me, and shaking me by the arm until I awoke, took me into the caboose, and giving me my supper, asked me, " What I was doing there, where I would be certain to fall overboard if I went to sleep ? " I made up a fictitious tale, and finishing my story, asked him if he could assist me in getting some work on the boat to pay my passage, hinting I was not without experience in his department, in washing dishes, cleaning knives, &c. This was just to his hand ; promising me employment and



protection, he gave me a place to sleep in, which, fatigued as I was, I did not suffer long to remain unoccupied.

The morrow beheld me regularly installed as third cook or scullion, at eight dollars a month. This, to be sure, was climbing the world's ladder to fame and fortune at a snail's pace; but I was not proud, and willing to bide my time in hope of the better day a-coming. My leisure hours, which were not few, were employed in studying my books, of which I had a good supply, bought with money loaned me by my kind friend the cook.

I improved rapidly in my profession, till one day my ambition was gratified by being allowed to make the corn bread for the first cabin table. This I executed in capital style, with the exception of forgetting in my elation to sift the meal, thereby kicking up considerable of a stir when it came to be eaten, and causing my receiving a hearty curse for my carelessness, and a threat of a rope's end, the exercise of which I crushed by seizing a butcher knife in very determined style, and the affair passed over.

I remained on board until I had ascended as high as second cook, when I got disgusted with the kitchen and aspired to the cabin. I had heard of many cabin-boys becoming captain of their own vessels, but never of one cook,—except Captain Cook, and he became one from name, not by nature or profession. There being no vacancy on board, I received my wages and hired at V—— as cabin boy on a small steamboat running as packet to a small town, situated on one of the tributaries of the Mississippi.

On my first trip up I recollect that I had a brother living in the identical town to which the steamer was destined, who had been in the south for several years,

and, when I last heard from him, was doing well in the world's ways.

I thought that as I would be landing every few days at his town, it would be only right that I should call and see him.

He was merchandising on a large scale, I was informed by a gentleman on board, a planter in one of the middle counties of Mississippi, who, seeing me reading in the cabin after I had finished my labour of the day, opened a conversation with me, and, extracting my history by his mild persuasiveness, offered to take me home with him, and send me to school until my education for a profession was completed. But my independence spurned the idea of being indebted to such an extent to a stranger; perhaps I was too enamoured of my wild roving life. I refused his offer, thanking him gratefully for the kind interest he seemed to take in me. He made me promise, that if I changed my mind soon, I would write to him, and gave me his direction, which I soon lost, and his name has passed from my recollection.

On reaching M—, I strolled up in town and inquired the way of a negro to Mr. Tensas' store. He pointed it out to me, and I entered. On inquiry for him, I found he was over at his dwelling-house, which I sought. It was a very pretty residence, I thought, for a bachelor; the walks were nicely gravelled, and shrubbery appropriately decorated the grounds.

I knocked at the door boldly; after a short delay it was opened by quite a handsome young finely dressed lady. Thinking I was mistaken in the house, I inquired if my brother resided there? She replied, "that he did;" and invited me to wait, as he would soon be home. Walking in, after a short interval my brother came. Not remarking me at first, he gave the young lady a hearty

kiss, which she returned with interest. I concluded she must be his housekeeper. Perceiving me, he recognised me in a moment, and gave me an affectionate welcome, bidding me go and kiss my sister-in law, which, not waiting for me to do, she performed herself.

My brother was very much shocked when he heard of my menial occupation, and used such arguments and persuasives to induce me to forsake my boat-cabin for his house, that I at length yielded.

He intended sending me the next year to college, when the monetary crash came over the South, and the millionaire of to-day awoke the penniless bankrupt of the morrow. My brother strove manfully to resist the impending ruin, but fell like the rest, and I saw all my dreams of a collegiate education vanishing into thin smoke.

Why recount the scenes of the next five years? it is but the thrice-told tale, of a younger brother dependent upon an elder, himself dependent upon others for employment and a subsistence for his family; his circumstances would improve—I would be sent to school—fortune would again lower, and I, together with my sister-in-law, would perform the menial offices of the family.

My sixteenth birthday was passed in the cotton-field, at the tail of a plough, in the midst of my fellow-labourers, between whom and myself but slight difference existed. I was discontented and unhappy. Something within kept asking me, as it had for years, if it was to become a toiler in the cotton-fields of the South, the companion of negroes, that I had stolen from my boyhood's home? was this the consummation of all my golden dreams?

My prospects were gloomy enough to daunt a much older heart. Poverty shut out all hopes of a collegiate education and a profession. Reflection had disgusted me with a steamboat. I determined to learn a trade. My

taste for reading naturally inclined me to one in which I could indulge it freely : it was a printer's.

Satisfactory arrangements were soon made with a neighbouring printer and editor of a country newspaper. The day was fixed when he would certainly expect me ; if I did not come by that time he was to conclude that I had altered my determination, and he would be free to procure another apprentice.

A wedding was to come off in the family for which I worked, in a short time, and they persuaded me to delay my departure a week, and attend it. I remained, thinking my brother would inform the printer of the cause of my detention. The wedding passed off, and the next morning, bright and early, I bid adieu, without a pang of regret, to my late home, and started for my new master's, but who was destined never to become such ; for on reaching the office I learnt that my brother had failed to inform him why I delayed, and he had procured another apprentice only the day before. So that wedding gave one subject less to the fraternity of typos, and made an indifferent swamp doctor of matter for a good printer.

I returned home on foot, wallet on my back, and resumed my cotton-picking, feeling but little disappointed. I had shaken hands too often with poverty's gifts to let this additional grip give me much uneasiness.

The season was nearly over, and the negroes were striving to get the cotton out by Christmas, when one night at the supper table—the only meal I partook of with the family—my brother inquired,

“ How would you like to become a doctor, Madison ? ”

I thought he was jesting, and answered merely with a laugh. Become a doctor, a professional man, when I was too poor to go to a common school, was it not ludicrous ?

"I am in earnest. Suppose a chance offered for you to become a student of medicine, would you accept it?" he said.

It was not the profession I would have selected had wealth given me a choice, but still it was a means of acquiring an education, a door through which I might possibly emerge to distinction, and I answered, "Show me the way, and I will accept without hesitation."

He was not jesting. One of the first physicians in the state, taking a fancy to me, had offered to board me, clothe me, educate me in his profession, and become as a father to me, if I were willing to accept the kind offices at his hands.

I could scarcely realize the verity of what I had heard, yet 'twas true, and the ensuing new-year beheld me an inmate of the office of my benefactor.

He is now in his grave. Stricken down a soldier of humanity at his post, ere the meridian of life was reached. Living, he was called the widow's and orphan's friend, and the tears of all attested, at his death, that the proud distinction was undenied. I am not much, yet what I am he made me; and when my heart fails to thrill in gratitude at the silent breathing of his name, may it be cold to the loudest tones of life.

Behold me, then, a student of medicine, but yesterday a cotton-picker, illustrating within my own person, in the course of a few years, the versatility of American pursuits and character.

I was scarcely sixteen, yet I was a student of medicine, and had been, almost a printer, a cotton-picker, plough-boy, gin-driver, gentleman of leisure, cabin-boy, cook, scullion, and runaway, all distinctly referable to the young lady before-mentioned wearing "No. 2's," when her foot required "fives."



GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE MEDICINES.

“Now, Mr. Tensas,” said my kind preceptor, a few days after I had got regularly installed in the office, “your first duty must be to get acquainted with the different medicines. This is a Dispensatory—as you read of a drug you will find the majority mentioned on the shelves, take it down and digest”—here, unfortunately for the peace of mind and general welfare of a loafing Indian, who hung continually around the office, seeking what he might devour, or rather steal, the doctor was called away in a great hurry, and did not have time to finish his sentence, so “take it down and digest,” were the last words that remained in my mind. “Take it down and digest.” By the father of physic, thought I, this study of medicine is not the pleasant task I anticipated—rather arduous in the long run for the stomach, I should judge, to swallow and digest all the medicines, from Abracadabra to Zinzibar. Why, some of them are vomits, and I’d like to know how they are to be kept down long enough to be digested. Now, as for tamarinds, or liquorice, or white sugar, I might go them, but aloes, and rhubarb, and castor-oil, and running your finger down your throat, are rather disagreeable any way you can take them. I’m in for it, though ; I suppose it’s the way all doctors are made, and I have no claims to be exempted ; and now for the big book with the long name.

I opened it upon a list of the metals. Leading them in the order that alphabetical arrangement entitled it to, was,



“Arsenic: *deadly poison*. Best preparation, Fowler’s Solution. Symptoms from an overdose, burning in the stomach, great thirst, excessive vomiting,” &c., &c. With eyes distended to their utmost capacity, I read the dread enumeration of its properties. What! take this infernal medicament down, digest it, and run the chances of its not being an overdose? Can’t think of it a moment. I’ll go back to my plough first; but then the doctor knew all the dangers when he gave his directions, and he was so precise and particular, there cannot be any mistake. I’ll take a look at it anyhow, and I hunted it up. As the Dispensatory preferred Fowler’s Solution, I selected that. Expecting to find but a small quantity, I was somewhat surprised when I discovered it in a four-gallon bottle, nearly full. I took out the stopper, and applied it cautiously to my nose. Had it not been for the label, bearing, in addition to the name, the fearful word “Poison,” and the ominous skull and cross-bones, I would have sworn it was good old Bourbon whiskey. Old Tubba, the Indian, was sitting in the office door, watching my proceedings with a great deal of interest. Catching the spirituous odour of the arsenical solution, he rose up and approached me eagerly, saying, “Ugh; Injun want whiskey; give Tubba whiskey; bring wild duck, so many,” holding up two of his fingers. The temptation was strong, I must confess. The medicines had to be tested, and I felt very much disinclined to depart this life just then, when the pin feathers of science had just commenced displacing the soft down of ducklingdom; but this Indian, he is of no earthly account or use to any one; no one would miss him, even were he to take an overdose; science often has demanded sacrifices, and he would be a willing one; but—it may kill him; I can’t do it; to kill a man before I get my diploma will be murder; a jury might not so pronounce it, but conscience

would ; I can't swallow it, and Tubba must not. These were the thoughts that flashed through my mind before I replied to the Indian's request. "Indian can't have whiskey. Tubba drink whiskey—Tubba do so." Here I endeavoured to go through the pantomime of dying, as I was not master of sufficient Choctaw to explain myself. I lifted a glass to my mouth and pretended to empty it, then gave a short yell, clapping my hands over my stomach, staggering, jerking my hands and feet about, as I fell on the floor, repeating the yells, then turned on my face and lay still as though I was dead. But to my chagrin, all this did not seem to affect the Indian with that horror that I intended, but on the contrary, he grunted out a series of ughs, expressive of his satisfaction, saying, "Ugh; Tubba want get drunk too."

The dinner hour arriving, I dismissed old Tubba, and arranging my toilet, walked up to the dwelling-house, near half a mile distant, where I was detained several hours by the presence of company, to whom I was forced to do the honours, the doctor not having returned.

At length I got released, and returned to the office, resolving to suspend my studies until I could have a talk with my preceptor ; for, even on my ignorant mind, the shadow of a doubt was falling as to whether there might not be some mistake in my understanding of his language.

Entering the office, my eyes involuntarily sought the Solution of Arsenic. Father of purges and pukes, it was gone ! "Tubba, you're a gone case. I ought to have hidden it. I might have known he would steal it after smelling the whiskey ; poor fellow ! it's no use to try and find him, he's struck a straight line for the swamp ; poor fellow ! it's all my fault." Thus upbraiding myself for my carelessness, I walked back into my bedroom. And my

astonishment may be imagined, when I discovered the filthy Indian tucked in nicely between my clean sheets.

To all appearances he was in a desperate condition, the fatal bottle lying hugged closely in his embrace, nearly empty. He must be suffering awfully, thought I, when humanity had triumphed over the indignation I felt at the liberties he had taken, but Indian-like, he bears it without a groan. Well has his race been called "the stoics of the wood, the men without a tear." But I must not let him die without an effort to save him. I don't know what to do myself, so I'll call in Dr. B., and away I posted; but Dr. B. was absent; so was Dr. L.; and in fact every physician of the town. Each office, however, contained one or more students; and as half a loaf is better than no bread, I speedily informed them of the condition of affairs, and quickly, like a flock of young vultures, we were thronging around the poisoned Indian, to what we would soon have rendered the harvest of death.

"Stomach pump eo instanti!" said one; "Sulphas Zinci cum Decoction Tabacum!" said another; "Venesection!" suggested a third. "Puke of Lobelia!" suggested a young disciple of Thompson, who self-invited had joined the conclave, "Lobelia. Number six, pepper tea, yaller powders, I say!" "Turn him out! Turn him out! What right has young Roots in a mineral consultation? Turn him out!"—and heels over head, out of the room, through the middle door, and down the office steps, went "young Roots," impelled by the whole body of the enraged "regulars"—save myself, who, determined amidst the array of medical lore not to appear ignorant, wisely held my tongue and rubbed the patient's feet with a greased rag. Again arose the jargon of voices.

"Sulphas Zinci—Stomach, Arteri, pump, otomy-must—legs—hot-toddy—to bleed him—lectricity—hot blister—

flat-irons—open his—windpipe ;” but still I said never a word, but rubbed his feet, wondering whether I would ever acquire as much knowledge as my fellow students showed the possession of. By the by, I was the only one that was doing anything for the patient, the others being too busy discussing the case to attend to the administration of any one of the remedies proposed.

“I say stimulate, the system is sinking,” screamed a tall, stout-looking student, as the Indian slid down towards the foot of the bed.

 “Bleeding is manifestly and clearly indicated,” retorted a bitter rival in love as well as medicine, “his muscular action is too excessive,” as Tubba made an ineffectual effort to throw his body up to the top of the mosquito bar.

“Bleeding would be as good as murder,” said Number 1.

“Better cut his throat than stimulate him,” said Number 2.

“Pshaw!”

“Fudge!”

“Sir!”

“Fellow!”

“Fool!”

“Liar!”

Vim! Vim! and stomach-pump and brandy bottle flashed like meteors.

“Fight! fight! form a ring! fair play!”

“You’re holding my friend.”

“You lie! You rascal!”

Vim! Vim! from a new brace of combatants.

“He’s gouging my brother! I must help! foul play!”

“Let go my hair!” Vim! Vim! and a triplet went at it.

I stopped rubbing, and looked on with amazement. "Gentlemen, this is unprofessional! 'tis undignified! 'tis disgraceful! stop, I command you!" I yelled, but no one regarded me; some one struck me, and away I pitched into the whole lot promiscuously, having no partner, the patient dying on the bed whilst we were studying out his case.

"Fight! fight!" I heard yelled in the street, as I had finished giving a lick all round, and could hardly keep pitching into the mirror to whip my reflection, I wanted a fight so bad.

"Fight! fight! in D——'s back office!" and here came the whole town to see the fun.

"I command the peace!" yelled Dick Locks; "I'm the mayor."

"And I'm the hoss for you!" screamed I, doubling him up with a lick in the stomach, which he replied to by laying me on my back, feeling very faint, in the opposite corner of the room.

"I command the peace!" continued Dick, flinging one of the combatants out of the window, another out of the door, and so on alternately, until the peace was preserved by nearly breaking its infringers to pieces.

"What in the devil, Mr. Tensas, does this mean?" said my preceptor, who at that moment came in; "what does all this fighting, and that drunken Indian lying in your bed, mean? have you all been drunk?"

"He has poisoned himself, sir, in my absence, with the solution of arsenic, which he took for whiskey; and as all the doctors were out of town, I called in the students, and they got to fighting over him whilst consulting;" I replied, very indignantly, enraged at the insinuation that we had been drinking.

"Poisoned with solution of arsenic, ha! ha! oh! lord!

ha !” and my preceptor, throwing his burly form on the floor, rolled over and over, making the office ring with his laughter—“poisoned, ha ! ha !”

“Get out of this, you drunken rascal !” said he to the dying patient, applying his horse-whip to him vigorously. It acted like a charm : giving a loud yell of defiance, the old Choctaw sprang into the middle of the floor.

“Whoop ! whiskey lour ! Injun big man, drunk heap. Whoop ! Tubba big Injun heap !” making tracks for the door, and thence to the swamp.

The truth must out. The boys had got into the habit of making too free with my preceptor’s whiskey ; and to keep off all but the knowing one, he had labelled it, “Solution of Arsenic.”

A TIGHT RACE CONSIDERIN’.

DURING my medical studies, passed in a small village in Mississippi, I became acquainted with a family named Hibbs (a *nom de plume* of course), residing a few miles in the country. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Hibbs and son. They were plain, unlettered people, honest in intent and deed, but overflowing with that which amply made up for all their deficiencies of education, namely, warm-hearted hospitality, the distinguishing trait of southern character. They were originally from Virginia, from whence they had emigrated in quest of a clime more genial, and a soil more productive than that in which their fathers toiled. Their search had been rewarded, their expectations realized, and now,

in their old age, though not wealthy in the "Astorian" sense, still they had sufficient to keep the "wolf from the door," and drop something more substantial than condolence and tears in the hat that poverty hands round for the kind offerings of humanity.

The old man was like the generality of old planters, men whose ambition is embraced by the family or social circle, and whose thoughts turn more on the relative value of "Sea Island" and "Mastodon," and the improvement of their plantations, than the "glorious victories of Whiggery in Kentucky," or the "triumphs of democracy in Arkansas."

The old lady was a shrewd, active dame, kind-hearted and long-tongued, benevolent and impartial, making her coffee as strong for the poor pedestrian, with his all upon his back, as the broadcloth sojourner, with his "up-country pacer." She was a member of the church, as well as the daughter of a man who had once owned a race-horse : and these circumstances gave her an indisputable right, she thought, to "let on all she knew," when religion or horse-flesh was the theme. At one moment she would be heard discussing whether the new "circus rider," (as she always called him,) was as affecting in Timothy as the old one was pathetic in Paul, and anon (not anonymous, for the old lady did everything above board, except rubbing her corns at supper), protecting dad's horse from the invidious comparisons of some visiter, who, having heard, perhaps, that such horses as Fashion and Boston existed, thought himself qualified to doubt the old lady's assertion that her father's horse "Shumach" had run a mile on one particular occasion. "Don't tell me," was her never failing reply to their doubts, "Don't tell me 'bout Fashun or Bosting, or any other beating 'Shumach' a fair race, for the thing was unfesible ; did'nt he run a mile a minute

by Squire Dim's watch, which always stopt 'zactly at twelve, and did'nt he start a minute afore, and git out, jes as the long hand war givin' its last quiver on ketchin' the short leg of the watch? And didn't he beat everything in Virginny 'cept once? Dad and the folks said he'd beat then, if young Mr. Spotswood hadn't give 'old Swaga,' Shumach's rider, some of that 'Croton water,' (that them Yorkers is makin' sich a fuss over as bein' so good, when gracious knows, nothin' but what the doctors call interconception could git me to take a dose) and jis 'fore the race Swage or Shumach, I don't 'stinctly 'member which, but one of them had to '*let down*,' and so dad's hoss got beat."

The son I will describe in few words. Imbibing his parents' contempt for letters, he was very illiterate, and as he had not enjoyed the equivalent of travel, was extremely ignorant on all matters not relating to hunting or plantation duties. He was a stout, active fellow, with a merry twinkling of the eye, indicative of humour, and partiality for practical joking. We had become very intimate, he instructing me in "forest lore," and I, in return, giving amusing stories, or, what was as much to his liking, occasional introductions to my hunting-flask.

Now that I have introduced the "Dramatis Personæ," I will proceed with my story. By way of relaxation, and to relieve the tedium incident more or less to a student's life, I would take my gun, walk out to old Hibbs's, spend a day or two, and return refreshed to my books.

One fine afternoon I started upon such an excursion, and as I had upon a previous occasion missed killing a fine buck, owing to my having nothing but squirrel shot, I determined to go this time for the "antlered monarch," by loading one barrel with fifteen "blue whistlers," reserving the other for small game.

At the near end of the plantation was a fine spring, and adjacent, a small cave, the entrance artfully or naturally concealed, save to one acquainted with its locality. The cave was nothing but one of those subterraneous washes so common in the west and south, and called "sink holes." It was known only to young H. and myself, and we, for peculiar reasons, kept secret, having put it in requisition as the depository of a jug of "old Bourbon," which we favoured, and as the old folks abominated drinking, we had found convenient to keep there, whither we would repair to get our drinks, and return to the house to hear them descant on the evils of drinking, and "vow no 'drap,' 'cept in doctor's truck, should ever come on their plantation."

Feeling very thirsty, I took my way by the spring that evening. As I descended the hill o'ertopping it, I beheld the hind parts of a bear slowly being drawn into the cave. My heart bounded at the idea of killing a bear, and my plans were formed in a second. I had no dogs—the house was distant—and the bear becoming "small by degrees, and beautifully less." Every hunter knows, if you shoot a squirrel in the head when it's sticking out of a hole, ten to one he'll jump out; and I reasoned that if this were true regarding squirrels, might not the operation of the same principle extract a bear, applying it low down in the back.

Quick as thought I levelled my gun and fired, intending to give him the buckshot when his body appeared; but what was my surprise and horror, when, instead of a bear rolling out, the parts were jerked nervously in, and the well-known voice of young H. reached my ears.

"Murder! Hingins! h—l and kuckle-burs! Oh! Lordy! 'nuff!—'nuff!—take him off! Jis let me off this wunst, dad, and I'll never run mam's colt again! Oh!



Lordy! Lordy! *all my brains blowed clean out!* Snakes! snakes!" yelled he, in a shriller tone, if possible, " H—I on the outside and snakes in the sink-hole! I'll die a Christian, anyhow, and if I die before I wake," and out scrambled poor H., pursued by a large black-snake.

If my life had depended on it, I could not have restrained my laughter. Down fell the gun, and down dropped I shrieking convulsively. The hill was steep, and over and over I went, until my head striking against a stump at the bottom, stopped me, half senseless. On recovering somewhat from the stunning blow, I found Hibbs upon me, taking satisfaction from me for having blowed out his brains. A contest ensued, and H. finally relinquished his hold, but I saw from the knitting of his brows, that the bear-storm, instead of being over, was just brewing. "Mr. Tensas," he said with awful dignity, "I'm sorry I put into you 'fore you cum to, but you're at yourself now, and as you've tuck a shot at me, it's no more than far I should have a chance 'fore the hunt's up."



It was with the greatest difficulty I could get H. to bear with me until I explained the mistake; but as soon as he learned it, he broke out in a huge laugh. "Oh, Dod busted! that's 'nuff; you has my pardon. I ought to know'd you didn't 'tend it; 'sides, you jis scraped the skin. I war wus skeered than hurt, and if you'll go to the house and beg me off from the old folks, I'll never let on you cudden't tell copperas breeches from bar-skin."

Promising that I would use my influence, I proposed taking a drink, and that he should tell me how he had incurred his parent's anger. He assented, and after we had inspected the cave, and seen that it held no other serpent than the one we craved, we entered its cool recess, and H. commenced.

" You see, Doc, I'd heered so much from mam 'bout her dad's Shumach and his nigger Swage, and the mile a minute, and the Croton water what was gin him, and how she bleved that if it warn't forbettin', and the cussin' and fightin', running race-hosses warn't the sin folks said it war; and if they war anything to make her 'gret gettin' religion and jinin' the church, it war cos she couldn't 'tend races, and have a race-colt of her own to comfort her 'clinin' years, sich as her daddy had afore her, till she got me; so I couldn't rest for wantin' to see a hoss-race, and go shares, p'raps, in the colt she war wishin' for. And then I'd think what sort of a hoss I'd want him to be — a quarter nag, a mile critter, or a hoss wot could run (fur all mam says it can't be did) a whole four mile at a stretch. Sometimes I think I'd rather own a quarter nag, for the suspense wouldn't long be hung, and then we could run up the road to old Nick Bamer's cow-pen, and Sally is almost allers out thar in the cool of the evenin'; and in course we wouldn't be so cruel as to run the poor critter in the heat of the day. But then agin, I'd think I'd rather have a miler,—for the 'citemet would be greater, and we could run down the road to old Wither's orchard, an' his gal Miry is frightfully fond of sunnin' herself thar, when she 'specte me 'long, and she'd hear of the race, certain; but then thar war the four miler for my thinkin', and I'd knew'd in such case the 'citemet would be greatest of all, and you know, too, from dad's stable to the grocery is jist four miles, an' in case of any 'spite, all hands would be willin' to run over, even if it had to be tried a dozen times. So I never could 'cide on which sort of a colt to wish for. It was fust one, then t'others, till I was nearly 'stracted, and when mam, makin' me religious, told me one night to say grace, I jes shut my eyes, looked pious, and yelled out, 'D—n it,

go?' and in 'bout five minutes arter, came near kickin' dad's stumak off, under the table, thinkin' I war spurrin' my critter in a tight place. So I found the best way was to get the hoss fust, and then 'termine whether it should be Sally Bamers, and the cow-pen ; Miry Withers, and the peach orchard ; or Spillman's grocery, with the bald face.

" You've seed my black colt, that one that dad's father gin me in his will when he died, and I 'spect the reason he wrote that will war, that he might have wun then, for it's more then he had when he was alive, for granma war a monstrus overbearin' woman. The colt would cum up in my mind, every time I'd think whar I was to git a hoss. ' Git out!' said I at fust—*he* never could run, and 'sides if he could, mam rides him now, an he's too old for anything, 'cept totin her and bein' called mine ; for you see, though he war named Colt, yet for the old lady to call him old, would bin like the bar 'fecting contempt for the rabbit, on account of the shortness of his tail.

" Well, thought I, it does look sorter unpromisin', but its colt or none ; so I 'termined to put him in trainin' the fust chance. Last Saturday, who should cum ridin' up but the new cirkut preacher, a long-legged, weakly, sickly, never-contented-unless-the-best-on-the-plantation-war-cooked-fur-him sort of a man ; but I didn't look at him twice, his hoss was the critter that took my eye ; for the minute I looked at him, I knew him to be the same hoss as Sam Spooner used to win all his splurgin' dimes with, the folks said, and wot he used to ride past our house so fine on. The hoss war a heap the wuss for age and change of masters ; for preachers, though they're mity 'ticular 'bout thar own comfort, seldom tends to thar hosses ; for one is privit property and 'tother generally

borried. I seed from the way the preacher rid, that he didn't know the animal he war straddlin'; but I did, and I 'termined I wouldn't lose sich a chance of trainin' Colt by the side of a hoss wot had run real races. So that night, arter prayers and the folks was abed, I and Nigger Bill tuck the hosses and carried them down to the pastur'. It war a forty-aker lot, and consequently jist a quarter across—for I thought it best to promote Colt, by degrees, to a four-miler. When we got thar, the preacher's hoss showed he war willin'; but Colt, dang him! commenced nibblin' a fodder-stack over the fence. I nearly cried for vexment, but an idea struck me; I hitched the critter, and told Bill to get on Colt and stick tight wen I giv' the word. Bill got ready, and unbeknownst to him I pulled up a bunch of nettles, and, as I clapped them under Colt's tail, yelled, 'Go!' Down shut his graceful like a steel-trap, and away he shot so quick an' fast that he jumpt clean out from under Bill, and got nearly to the end of the quarter 'fore the nigger toch the ground: he lit on his head, and in course warn't hurt—so we cotched Colt, an' I mounted him.

"The next time I said 'go' he showed that age hadn't spiled his legs or memory. Bill 'an me 'greed we could run him now, so Bill mounted Preacher and we got ready. Thar war a narrer part of the track 'tween two oaks, but as it war near the end of the quarter, I 'spected to pass Preacher 'fore we got thar, so I warn't afraid of barkin' my shins.

"We tuck a fair start, and off we went like a peeled ingun, an' I soon 'scoved that it warn't such an easy matter to pass Preacher, though Colt dun delightful; we got nigh the trees, and Preacher warn't past yet, an' I 'gan to get skeered, for it warn't more than wide enuf for a horse and a half; so I hollered to Bill to hold up, but

the imperdent nigger turned his ugly pictur, and said, 'he'd be cussed if he warn't goin' to play his han' out.' I gin him to understand he'd better fix for a foot-race when we stopt, and tried to hold up Colt, but he wouldn't stop. We reached the oaks, Colt tried to pass Preacher, Preacher tried to pass Colt, and cowollop, crosh, cochunk! we all cum down like 'simmons arter frost. Colt got up and won the race; Preacher tried hard to rise, but one hind leg had got threw the stirrup, an' tother in the head stall, an' he had to lay still, doubled up like a long nigger in a short bed. I lit on my feet, but Nigger Bill war gone entire. I looked up in the fork of one of the oaks, and thar he war sittin', lookin' very composed on surroundin' nature. I couldn't git him down till I promised not to hurt him for disobeyin' orders, when he slid down. We'd 'nuff racin' for that night, so we put up the hosses and went to bed.

" Next morning the folks got ready for church, when it was diskivered that the hosses had got out. I an' Bill started off to look for them; we found them cleer off in the field, tryin' to git in the pastur' to run the last night's race over, old Blaze, the reverlushunary mule, bein' along to act as judge.

" By the time we got to the house it war nigh on to meetin' hour; and dad had started to the preachin', to tell the folks to sing on, as preacher and mam would be 'long bimeby. As the passun war in a hurry, and had been complainin' that his creetur war dull, I 'suaded him to put on uncle Jim's spurs what he fotch from Mexico. I saddled the passun's hoss, takin' 'ticular pains to let the saddle-blanket come down low in the flank. By the time these fixins war threw, mam war 'head nigh on to a quarter. 'We must ride on, passun,' I said, 'or the folks 'll think we is lost.' So I whipt up the mule I rid,

the passun chirrupt and chuct to make his crittur gallop, but the animal didn't mind him a pic. I 'gan to snicker, an' the passun 'gan to git vext; sudden he thought of his spurs, so he ris up, an' drove them *vim* in his hoss's flanx, till they went through his saddle-blanket, and like to bored his nag to the holler. By gosh! but it war a quickener—the hoss kickt till the passun had to hug him round the neck to keep from pitchin' him over his head. He next jump't up 'bout as high as a rail fence, passun holdin' on and tryin' to git his spurs—but they war lockt—his breeches split plum across with the strain, and the piece of wearin' truck wot's next the skin made a monstrous putty flag as the old hoss, like drunkards to a barbecue, streakt it up the road.

“Mam war ridin' slowly along, thinkin' how sorry she was, cos Chary Dolin, who always led her off, had sich a bad cold, an' wouldn't be able to 'sist her singin' to-day. She war practisin' the hymns, and had got as far as whar it says, ‘I have a race to run,’ when the passun huv in sight, an' in 'bout the dodgin' of a diedapper, she found thar war truth in the words, for the colt, hearin' the hoss eumin' up behind, began to show symptoms of runnin’; but when he heard the passun holler ‘wo! wo!’ to his hoss, he thought it war me shoutin’ ‘go!’ and sure 'nuff off they started jis as the passun got up even; so it war a fair race. Whoop! git out, but it war egsitin’—the dust flew, and the rail-fence appeered strate as a rifle. Thar war the passun, his legs fast to the critter's flanx, arms lockt round his neck, face as pale as a rabbit's belly, and the white flag streemin' far behind—and thar war Mam, fust on one side, then on t'other, her new caliker swelled up round her like a bear with the dropsy, the old lady so much surprized she cuddent ride steddy, an' tryin' to stop her colt, but he war too well trained to stop while he heard

‘go?’ Mam got ‘sited at last, and her eyes ‘gan to glimmer like she seen her daddy’s ghost axin’ ‘if he ever trained up a child or a race-hoss to be ‘fraid of a small brush on a Sunday,’ she commenced ridin’ beautiful; she braced herself up in the saddle, and began to make calkerlations how she war to win the race, for it war nose and nose, and she saw the passun spurrin’ his critter every jump. She tuk off her shoe, and the way a number ten go-to-meetin’ brogan commenced givin’ a hoss particular Moses, were a caution to hoss-flesh—but still it kept nose and nose. She found she war carryin’ too much weight for Colt, so she ‘gan to throw off plunder, till nuthin’ was left but her saddle and close, and the spurs kept tellin’ still. The old woman commenced strippin’ to lighten, till it wouldn’t bin the clean thing for her to have taken off one dud more; an’ then when she found it war no use while the spurs lasted, she got cantankerous. ‘Passun,’ said she, ‘I’ll be cust if it’s fair or gentlemanly for you, a preacher of the gospel, to take advantage of an old woman this way, usin’ spurs when you know *she* can’t wear ‘em—’taint Christian-like nuther,’ and she burst into cryin’. ‘Wo! Miss Hibbs! Wo! Stop! Madam! Wo! Your son!’—he attempted to say, when the old woman tuck him on the back of the head, and fillin’ his mouth with right smart of a saddle-horn, and stoppin’ the talk, as far as his share went for the present.

“By this time they’d got nigh on to the meetin’-house, and the folks were harkin’ away on ‘Old Hundred,’ and wonderin’ what could have become of the passun and mam Hibbs. One sister in a long beard axt another brethren in church, if she’d heered anything ‘bout that New York preecher runnin’ way with a woman old enough to be his muther. The brethrens gin a long sigh an’ groaned ‘it ain’t possible! marciful heavens! you don’t

'spicion?' wen the sound of the hosses comin', roused them up like a touch of the agur, an' broke off their serpent-talk. Dad run out to see what was to pay, but when he seed the hosses so close together, the passun spurrin', and mam ridin' like close war skase whar she cum, he knew her fix in a second, and 'tarminded to help her; so clinchin' a sapplin', he hid 'hind a stump 'bout ten steps off, and held on for the hosses. On they went in beautiful style, the passun's spurs tellin' terrible, and mam's shoe operatin' 'no small pile of punkins,'—passun stretched out the length of two hosses, while mam sat as stiff and strate as a bull yearling in his fust fight, hittin' her nag, fust on one side, next on t'other, and the third for the passun, who had chawed the horn till little of the saddle, and less of his teeth war left, and his voice sounded as holler as a jackass-nicker in an old saw-mill.

"The hosses war nose and nose, jam up together so close that mam's last kiverin' and passun's flag had got lockt, an' 'tween bleached domestic and striped linsey made a beautiful banner for the pious racers.

"On they went like a small arthquake, an' it seemed like it war goin' to be a draun race; but dad, when they got to him, let down with all his might on colt, scarin' him so bad that he jump clean ahead of passun, beatin' him by a neck, buttin' his own head agin the meetin'-house, an' pitchin' mam, like a lam for the sacryfise, plum through the winder 'mongst the mourners, leavin' her only garment flutterin' on a nail in the sash. The men shot their eyes and scrambled outen the house, an' the women gin mam so much of their close that they like to put themselves in the same fix.

"The passun quit the circuit, and I haven't been home yet."

TAKING GOOD ADVICE.

"Poor fellow! if he had only listened to me! but he wouldn't take good advice," is the trite exclamation of the worldling when he hears that some friend has cut his throat, impelled by despair, or has become bankrupt, or employed a famous physician, or is about to get married, or has applied for a divorce, or paid his honest debts, or committed any deprecated act, or become the victim of what the world calls misfortune; "poor fellow, but he wouldn't take good advice." Take good advice! yes, if I had obeyed what is called good advice, I would be now in my grave; as it is, I am still on a tailor's books, the best evidence of a man's being alive.

When I was a boy my friends were continually chiding me for my half bent position in sitting or walking, and since I have become a man the cry is still the same, "Why don't you walk straight, Madison? hold up your head."

Had I obeyed them, a tree-top that fell upon me whilst visiting a patient lately, crushing my shoulder and bruising my back, would have fallen directly upon my head, and shown, in all probability, the emptiness of earthly things. This is one instance showing that good advice is not always best to be taken; but I have another, illustrating my position still more strongly.

Whilst a medical student, I was travelling on one of the proverbially fine and accommodating steamers that ply between Vicksburg and New Orleans. Before my departure, the anxious affection of a female friend made her

exact a promise from me not to play cards; but the peculiarity of the required pledge gave me an opportunity of fulfilling it to the letter, but breaking it as to the spirit. "You've promised me, Madison, not to play cards whilst you're on *earth*: see that you keep it." I assured her I would do so, as it applied only to shore, and when the boat was on a sand-bar. It was more her friendly solicitude than any real necessity in my habits, that made her require the promise, as I never played except on steam-boats, and then only at night, when the beautiful scenery that skirts the river cannot be seen or admired.

It was a boisterous night above in the heavens, making the air too cool for southern dress or nerves, so the cabin and social hall were densely crowded, not a small proportion engaged in the mysteries of that science which requires four knaves to play or practise it. I had not yet sat down, but showed strong premonitory symptoms of being about to do so, when my arm was gently taken by an old friend, who requested me to walk with him into our state-room. "Madison," said the old gentleman, "I want to give you some good advice. I see you are about to play cards for money; you are a young man, and consequently have but little knowledge of its pernicious effects. I speak from experience; and apart from the criminality of gambling, I assure you, you will have but little chance of winning in the crowd you intend playing with: in fact, you are certain to lose. Now promise me you won't play, and I shall go to bed with the satisfaction that I have saved you from harm." The charm was laid too skilfully upon me; I would not promise, for what was I to do in the long nights of present and future travel? so my old friend gave me up in despair, and retired to rest, whilst I sought the card-table.

Young and inexperienced as I was, an unusual strain

of good luck attended me ; and when the game broke up at daylight, I was considerably ahead of the hounds.

I retired to my state-room to regain my lost sleep, and soon was oblivious of everything. How long I slept I do not know : my dreams ran upon the past game ; and just as I held "four aces," and had seen my opponent's two hundred and went him four hundred dollars better, I was aroused from my slumbers by the confused cries of "Fire ! Back her ! Stop her ! She'll blow up when she strikes !" and a thousand-and-one undistinguishable sounds, but all indicative of intense excitement and alarm.

Stopping for nothing, I made one spring from my berth into the middle of the cabin, alighting on the deserted breakfast-table, amidst the crash of broken crockery ; three jumps more were taken, which landed me up on the hurricane-deck, where I found nearly all the passengers, male and female, assembled in a fearful state of alarm, preventing by their outcry the necessary orders, for the preservation of the boat, from being heard. I took in the whole scene at a glance. I forgot to mention, when I retired to rest, the wind was blowing to such a degree that every gust threatened to overset the boat. The captain, who was a prudent, sensible man, had tied his boat to the shore, waiting for the storm to subside. After the lapse of a few hours, a calm having ensued, he cast loose, intending to proceed on his way ; but scarcely had he done so, when the wind, suddenly increasing, caught the boat, and, in despite of six boilers and the helm hard down, was carrying her directly across the Mississippi, towards the opposite shore, where a formidable array of old "poke-stalks" and low, bluff banks were eagerly awaiting to impale us upon the one hand, or knock us into a cocked hat upon the other. At this time I arrived upon



the scene—the boat was nearly at the shore, the waters boiling beneath her bows like an infernal cauldron.

Great as was the danger, there were still some so reckless as to make remarks upon my unique appearance, and turn the minds of many from that condition of religious revery and mental casting up and balancing of accounts, which the near proximity to death so imminently required ; and certainly I did look queer—no boots, no coat, no drawers—but, lady reader, don't think my bosom was false, and I had no subucus on. “I didn’t have anything else” on—more truth than poetry, I ween. Sixteen young ladies, unmindful of danger, ran shrieking away ; fourteen married ones walked leisurely to the stern of the boat, where the captain had been vainly before trying to drive them ; whilst two old maids stood and looked at me in unconscious astonishment, wonderful amazement, and inexpressible surprise.

“Look out!” rang the shrill voice of the captain ; and, with a dull, heavy thump, the boat struck the bank, jarring the marrow of every one on board, save myself—for, just before she struck, I calculated the distance, made my jump, landed safely, and was snugly ensconced behind a large log, hallooing for some one to bring me my clothes.

No damage of consequence, contrary to expectations, was done our craft ; and after digging her out of the bank, we proceeded on our way, a heavy rain having succeeded the storm.

I was lying in my state-room, ruminating sadly over the pleasureableness of being the laughing-stock of the whole boat, when my old adviser of the night previous entered the room, with too much laughter on his face to make his coming moral deduction of much force.

“ You see now, Madison, the result of not having fol-



lowed my advice. Had you been governed by me, the disagreeable event of the morning would never have occurred; you would have been in bed at the proper hour, slept during the proper hours, been ready dressed as a consequence at the breakfast hour, and not been the cause of such a mortal shock to the delicacy of so many delicate females, besides making a d—d unanimous fool of yourself."

I said but little in reply, but thought a great deal. I kept my room the balance of the trip, sickness being my plea.

I transacted my business in the city, and chance made my old adviser and myself fellow-passengers and room-mates again, on our upward trip. Night saw me regularly at the card-table, and my old friend at nine o'clock as constantly in bed.

It was after his bed-hour when we reached Grand Gulf, where several lady-passengers intended leaving. They were congregated in the middle of the gentlemen's cabin, bringing out baggage and preparing to leave as soon as the boat landed.

At the landing a large broad-horn was lazily sleeping, squatted on the muddy waters like a Dutch beauty over a warming-pan. Her steering-oar—the broad-horn's, not the beauty's—instead of projecting, as custom and the law requires, straight out behind, had swung round, and stood capitally for raking a boat coming up along side. The engines had stopped, but the boat had not lost the impetus of the steam, but was slowly approaching the broad-horn, when a crash was heard—a state-room door was burst open, and out popped my ancient comrade, followed up closely by a sharp stick, in the shape of the greasy handle of the steering-oar. It passed directly



through my berth, and would undeniably have killed me, had I been in it.

It was my turn to exult now. I pulled "Old Advice" out from under the table, and, as I congratulated him on his escape, maliciously added, " You see, now, that playing cards is not totally unattended with good effects. Had I, agreeably to your advice, been in bed, I would now be a mangled corpse, and you enjoying the satisfaction that it was your counsel that had killed me; whilst, on the other hand, had you been playing, you would have escaped your fright, and the young ladies from Nankin in all probability would never have known you slept in a red bandana." I made a convert of him to my side ; we sat down to a quiet game, and before twelve that night he broke me flat.



THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

EVERY one is acquainted with the horror that the presence of the small-pox, or the rumour—which is as bad—of its being in the neighbourhood, excites. A planter living some thirty or forty miles from where I was studying, had returned from New Orleans, where he had contracted, as it afterwards turned out, the measles, but which, on their first appearance, had been pronounced by a young, inexperienced physician, who was first in attendance, an undoubted case of small-pox. The patient was a nervous, excitable man, and consequently very much alarmed ; wishing further advice, he posted a boy after my preceptor,



who, desirous of giving me an opportunity of seeing the disease, took me with him.

The planter lived near a small town in the interior, now no more, but which, in the minds of its projectors — judging from its lithographed map — was destined to rival the first cities of the land. The nature of the disease was apparent in a moment to my preceptor's experienced eye; but the excitability and fear of the patient had aggravated the otherwise simple disease, so that it presented some really alarming symptoms.

A liberal administration of the brandy bottle soon reassured the patient and moderated the disease, so that my preceptor, whose presence was urgently demanded at home, could intrust him to my care, giving me directions how to treat the case. He left for home, and I strutted about, proud in the consciousness of being attending physician. It being my first appearance in that capacity, you may imagine that the patient did not suffer for want of attention. I wore the enamel nearly off his teeth by the friction produced by requiring the protrusion of his tongue for examination, and examined his abdomen so often to detect hidden inflammation, that I almost produced, by my pommelling, what I was endeavouring to discover in the first place. In despite of the disease and doctor, the case continued to improve, and I intended leaving in the morning for home, when the alarm of the small-pox being in the settlement having spread, I was put in requisition to vaccinate the good people. Charging a dollar for each operation, children half price, I was reaping a harvest of small change, when the virus gave out, and plenty of calls still on hand. Knowing that there was no small-pox in the first instance, and apprehensive that the fears of the good folks, unless they imagined themselves protected, might produce bad effects, I committed a pious

fraud, and found on the back of my horse, which fortunately had been galled lately, an ample supply of virus. My labours at length terminated, and I prepared to depart, taking the small town before-mentioned in my way; I dismounted at the tavern, to get a drink and have my horse watered. On entering, I found several acquaintances whom I did not expect to meet in that section of the country. Mutually rejoiced at the meeting, it did not take us long to get on the threshold of one of those wild carouses, which the convivial disposition of the Southerner—either by birth or adoption—so unfortunately disposes him to. The Bacchanalian temple was soon entered, and not a secret recess of its grand proportions but what was explored. Night closed upon the scene, and found us prepared for any wild freak or mad adventure.

It was the southern autumn, when the dark-eyed night has just sufficient compassion on old winter's wooing to allow him the privilege of the shadow of a kiss,—just cool enough, in other words, they were, to reconcile us to a single blanket upon the bed, and draw from the meditative minds of poverty-stricken students a melancholy sigh, when the empty pocket reflects upon the almost equally naked back, and curses it for needing winter clothes at all at all.

As yet, however, there had been no frost, and the forests still remained decked in their holiday suits, the gorgeous apparel of a southern clime.

With those who have a soul that the shoemaker cannot save, this is the great season of camp-meetings, love-feasts, protracted preaching, and other religious festivals. At this particular time the religious world, and many who were not of that stamp, were on the lookout for the end of the world, and the day of judgment, which some theo-

logical calculator had figured up for this year, and no postponement on account of the weather, sure!

The prediction had produced great excitement amongst all with whom the prophet had any credit; and where his credit stopped other commenced—for some of the knowing ones, who firmly believed the prophecy, purchased any amount of goods at exorbitant prices, at twelve months' credit, thinking they would be in “Kingdom Come” before the notes fell due.

Camp-meetings were being held in all parts of the country, and prayers of all kinds, from the unpremeditated effusion of the conscience-stricken negro to the elaborate supplications of the regularly initiated circuit-rider, arose, making the welkin ring with the name of Jehovah. A large meeting was in full operation not far from the place where we were passing the night in less commendable pursuits; and, judging from the fervency of the prayers, declamations, singing, screamings, and glorifications, salvation was being obtained in a very satisfactory manner. The location of the camp was in the verge of the Loosa Chitta swamp, at the termination of a long lane, which extended from where we were.

The night was waning away, but still the zeal of the camp-meeting continued unabated, and bid fair to hail the morning. We had also reached our wildest state of excitement, and were consequently ready for any foolish scheme or reckless undertaking. The proposal of one of the most imaginative of the number, that we should personify the fiery consummation which revelation tells us shall terminate this world, met with unanimous and wild approval.

Each man furnishing himself with a flowing robe of white, half the number—nearly thirty—carrying horns, and the remainder large turpentine torches, we prepared to

make our descent upon the camp-meeting in the character of the “Day of Judgment.” There was a large stray mule in the stable yard of the tavern, and we cruelly impressed him as a chief actor. By this time the religionists, exhausted by their long-continued exertions, had sunk into repose.

Saturating the mule’s hide—which was long and shaggy—well with turpentine and tar, all but his head and neck, which we wrapped in a wet sheet, we led him to the mouth of the lane and applied a torch.

Quicker than lightning the fire spread over the body of the devoted animal. With a scream of terror and anguish it darted off up the lane in the direction of the camp, whilst we mounted, with our long mantles floating behind us, yelling like incarnate fiends, sounding our horns, and, our many torches flashing like meteors through the night, pressed on after it in hot and close pursuit.

On! on! rushed the mule, the flames swelling tumultuously on every side, eddying above the trees, and lighting the darkness with a vivid, lurid gleam; fiercer and faster than the dread tempest, carrying death in its track, sped he on under the terrible infliction.

We had nearly reached the camp-ground, when, as we approached the plantation of the widow H., which lay adjacent, we were discovered by an old negro, who, seated on the flat roof of his cabin, had gone fast asleep, watching through the long hours of the night, for fear that the end of the world, and the day of judgment, might slip upon him unawares.

Waking at the critical time our hellish cortege approached, he gazed a moment, with eyes stretched to their utmost capacity, upon the rapidly nearing volume of fire; then springing from the roof, he ran shrieking his dolesome summons to the camp: “White folks riz! De

Laud be marsyful! De end of de warld an' de day of judgmen' hab pass, and here cum hell rite up de lane! Whoop! I love my Jesus! Master, cum!"

The meeting, awakened from their slumbers by his turmoil, rushed out, and when they too saw the approaching fire-breathing mass, they believed with the negro, that the day of judgment had passed, and Pandemonium—hot at that—was coming with its awful torments.

Supplications for mercy, screams of anguish, prayers and blasphemies, horror-stricken moans of the converts, the maniacal shouts of the conscience-stricken sinners, and the calm collected songs of the really righteous, swelled on the wind; mingled with the roaring of the flames, our piercing yells, discordant horns, and the horrible cries of the consuming animal.

The thousand echoes of the swamp took up the sound, and the wild-wood, if filled with screaming devils, could not have given back a more hideous outcry.

On! on! sped the victim—we in his train—in his haste to reach the waters of the “Loosa Chitta” and allay his sufferings. The stream was nearly reached; with ecstasy the poor brute beheld the glistening waters; he sped on with accelerated steps—one more spring, and he would find surcease of anguish ‘neath their cooling waves. But he was destined never to reach them; he fell exhausted on the brink, vainly endeavouring, with extended neck, to allay his fiery thirst; as the flame, now bereft of fuel, sent up its last flickering ray, the poor mule, with a low reproachful moan, expired.

A RATTLESNAKE ON A STEAMBOAT.

SHORTLY before the usual time for wending my way North to the medical lectures, an opportunity was afforded me by an ingenious negro, who had caught the reptile asleep, of exchanging a well-worn blanket coat and two dimes,—principally in cash—for as fine a specimen of the Rattlesnake as ever delighted the eye or ear of a naturalist; nine inches across the small of the back, six feet seven-eighths of an inch in length, eyes like globular lightning, colours as gaudy as an Arkansas gal's apron, twenty-three rattles and a button, and a great propensity to make them heard, were the strong points of my purchase.

Designing him as a propitiatory offering to one of the professors, my next care was to furnish him with a fitting habitation. Nothing better presenting itself, I made him one out of a pine box, originally designed for shoes, by nailing thin slats transversely, so as neither to exclude air or vision, but sufficiently close, I thought, to prevent him from escaping. The day for my departure arrived, and I had his snakeship carried on board the boat destined to bear me to V—, where I would take an Ohio steamer.

Unfortunately for the quietude of my pet, on the Yazoo boat was a young cockney lady, who, hearing that there was a live rattlesnake on board, allowed her curiosity to overcome her maiden diffidence sufficiently to prefer a request that the young doctor “would make ‘is hanimal oller?” a process which the proverbial abstemiousness

when in confinement of the “hanimal” was accomplishing rapidly without any intervention on my part. Politeness would not allow me to refuse, and as it was considerable of a novelty to the passengers, his snakeship was kept constantly stirred up, and his rattles had very little rest that trip.

The steamer at length swung alongside the wharf boat at V——, and transferring my baggage, I lounged about until the arrival of a boat would give me an opportunity of proceeding. The contents of the box were quickly discovered; and the snake had to undergo the same inflictions as the day previous—until, thoroughly vexed, I made them desist, and resolved thenceforth I would conceal his presence and allow him to travel as common baggage.

“The shades of night were falling fast,” as the steamer Congress came booming along, and, after a detention of a few minutes for passengers, proceeded on her way, obtaining none however except myself. The snake-box was placed with the other baggage on the cabin deck in front of the “social hall,” jam up, as luck would have it, against one of the chimneys, making the location unpleasantly warm. It was one of those clear, luminous nights in autumn, when not a cloud dims the azure, and the heavens so “beautifully blue,” (Alas! poor Neal,) are gleaming with their myriad stars, when the laughing breeze lifts the hair off the brow and presses the cheek with as soft a touch as the pulpy lips of a maiden in her first essay at kissing. The clear, croupy cough of the steamer was echoed back in prolonged asthmatic strains from the dark woods lining the river, like an army of cowled gigantic monks come from their cells to see a steamboat. Supper was over, and the beauty of the night had enticed the majority of the passengers from the cabin to the open deck.

A goodly number, myself amongst the rest, were seated in front of the social hall, smoking our cigars, and swapping yarns of all climes, sizes, nations, and colours.

Sitting a few yards from me, the most prominent personage of the group, smoking a chiboque, and regaling the crowd with the manner in which he choked a "Cobra de Capello" to death that crawled into his hammock in India, was an old English sailor, who, from his own account, had sailed over all the world, and through some parts of it.

Weighing the words down with a heavy ballast of oaths, he said he "wasn't afraid of anything in the snake line, from the sea serpent down to the original snake that tempted Eve." I asked him if he had ever met the rattle-snake since he had been in America, thinking I would put his courage to the test on the morrow.

"Seen a rattlesnake? Yes, enough to sink a seventy-four? Went to Georgia on purpose to kill them. Pshaw! To think a man that had killed a boa constrictor, fair fight, should be afraid of a little noisy flirt of a snake that never grew bigger round than a marlin spike!"

At this moment the boat was running a bend near in shore, and the glare of a huge fire at a wood-yard was thrown directly under the chair of the braggart, when, to my utter amazement I saw there, snugly coiled up, the huge proportions of my *snake*!

I was so astonished and horrified that I could neither speak nor move. I had left him securely fastened in his cage, and yet there he was at liberty, in his deadly coil, his eyes gleaming like living coals. The light was intercepted, and the foot of the sailor moving closer to the reptile it commenced its warning rattle, but slowly and irregularly, showing it was not fully aroused.

"What is that?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

The foot being withdrawn, the rattling ceased before its nature or source could be clearly traced.

"'Twas the steam escaping," said one.

"A goose hissing," said another.

"The wind."

"A trick to scare the sailor," thought a good many; but *I knew it was a rattlesnake in his deadly coil!*

The horror of that moment I shall not attempt to describe; every second I expected to hear the shriek of the sailor as the deadly fangs would penetrate his flesh, and I knew if a vein were stricken no power on earth could avail him, and I powerless to warn him of his danger.

"It sounded monstrous like a rattlesnake!" observed a passenger, "but there are no doctors or fool students on board, and nobody but cusses like them would be taking snakes 'bout.

"I was gwine up the Massassip wunst when a rattlesnake belonging to a medercal student on board, got out and bit one of the passengers; the poor crittur didn't live ten minutes, and the sawbone's 'prentice not much longer I reckon."

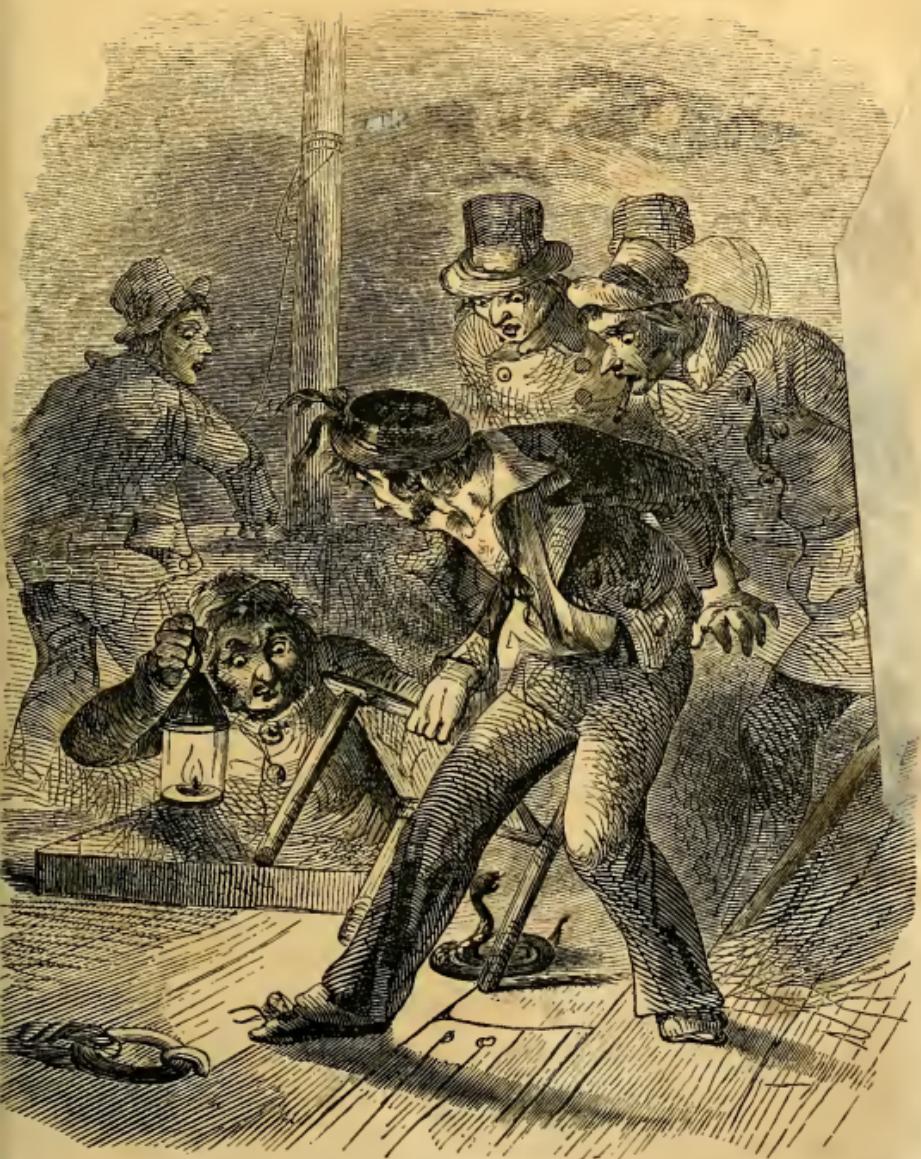
My hair stood on end, for there was an earnestness about the man that told me he was not joking.

"You did'nt kill him, surely?" asked some one.

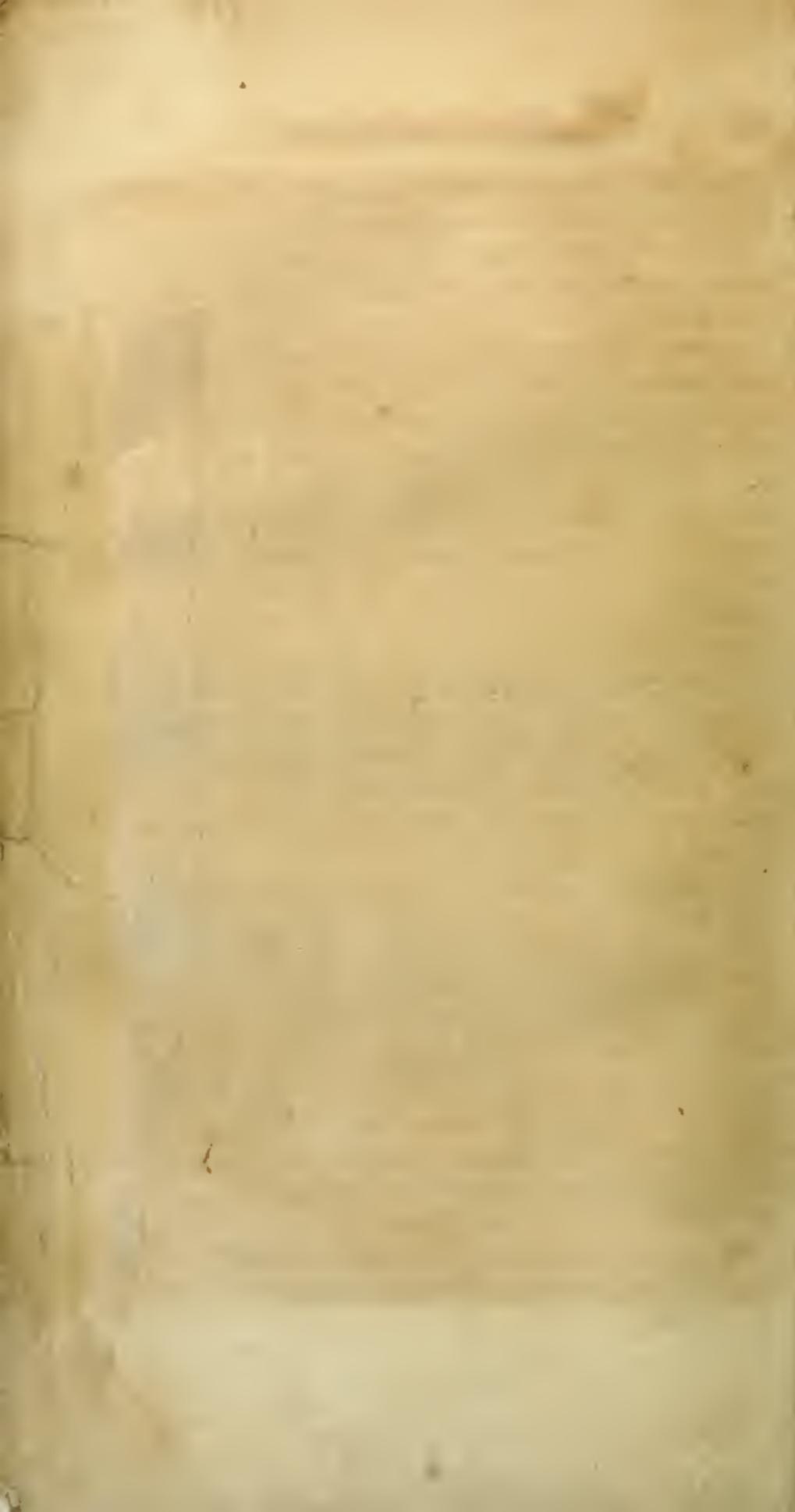
"Oh, no! we did'nt 'zactly kill him, sich as cuttin' his throat, or puttin' lead in his holler cimblin, for that would have been takin' the law inter our own hands; but we guv him five hundred lashes, treated him to a coat of tar and feathers, made a clean crop of one ear, and a swallow-forked-slit-under-bit-and-half-crop of the other, an' put him out on a little island up to his mouth in water an' the river risin' a plum foot an hour!"

Not knowing but a similar fate might soon be mine, in agony, with the cold sweat streaming over me, I listened





"But hardly had he reached the deck, when he discovered the monster—his head drawn back ready for striking."—*Page 69.*



to this infernal recital of an instance of the summary punishment termed "Lynch Law," to which the unavailability of the statute law so often drove the early settlers, and which, unfortunately for the fair character of the South and West, is not yet entirely abolished.

The sailor must again have moved his foot closer than agreeable to the snake, for his infernal rattling recommenced, and *this time* clear, loud, and continuous to the tutored ear, indicating great danger, the prelude to a fatal spring.

I shook off my lethargy, and shrieked out, "Don't move for your life! a light! for God's sake bring a light! Quick! quick!" None moved—thinking I was jesting.

"Mister," spoke the sailor, "if it's a trick to scare me, you'll miss the figure with your child's rattle. Jes bring one of your real rattlesnakes along, and I'll show you whether he can frighten an English sailor or not."

Hearing me calling so loudly for a light, the mate, a stalwart Irishman, came running up with a large torch, but hardly had he reached the deck, when he discovered the monster—his head drawn back ready for striking.

"Snake! snake!" yelled he, punching at him with his glaring torch.

"Whereabouts, you lubber?" said the sailor, still suspecting a trick.

"Under your feet."

The sailor looked down, and beheld the hideous reptile directly under his chair. With a loud yell, he made but one spring over the guards into the river.

"Rattlesnake!"

"Man overboard!"

"Stop her!"

"Out with the yawl!"

"Fire!"



“ Snake !”
“ She’s sinking !”
“ Shoot him !”
“ Snake !”
“ Whose is it ?”
“ Lynch the rascal !”

“ Kill the scoundrel !” swelled on the air, mingled with the crashing of broken doors and chairs, the oaths and rushing of terrified men, and the screaming of still more terrified women, who knew not what to fear, while clear and distinct above the infernal mêlée arose the piercing rattle of the snake, who, writhing his huge proportions about, and striking at everything near him, seemed to glory in the confusion he had created.

A shot was heard, and then the coil collapsed, and the rattling slowly ceased. The snake was dead.

“ Who brought him on board ?”
“ Let’s lynch the scoundrel !”
“ Are there any more of them ?”
“ Here’s the box he got out of !”
My name was on it in large capitals.

“ Throw it overboard !”
“ Throw it overboard !” I yelled out, “ it may have more in it, throw it overboard.”

No sooner said than done, and as the only evidence of my participation floated over the wave, no one was louder in his denunciation, no one wanted to be shown—in order that he might be lynched—the rascal that brought it on board, more than I did, except, perhaps, it was the sailor, who, now thoroughly humbled, stood shivering in his wet clothes by the furnace, ready to acknowledge that the “ little, noisy flirt of an American snake, no larger than a marlin’ spike,” was “ some snakes” certain.

FRANK AND THE PROFESSOR.



It wanted but a few days of the commencement of the lectures. Having procured a boarding-house, and furnished myself with the necessary books and tickets, I was sauntering over the city, amusing myself with the many strange sights which pass unnoticed by the denizens, yet have such an attraction for the grave rat just emerged from the country, when I was hailed by a Southern acquaintance—a rattling, red-headed fellow, of Irish descent; the proof of which, the tip of his tongue always presented.

“How are you, Tensas—when did you arrive—slayed many the past summer? I brought them to their senses in my section, certain; for the grand jury found a true bill against me in thirteen cases for manslaughter. Let’s take a drink. Ha! ha! I want to tell you of an occurrence that happened to old —. Bless his sugar-loaf head! if he’d only let me left when I first wanted, I’d always hereafter write his name without the first letter. You see, Ten, I had letters of introduction for the old chap; and I thought I’d deliver them early, and get on his good side before the winter’s course of sprees commenced. I suppose you know, as he’s a widower, and writing a book, and deeply in debt—to his Maker—that he lives up in the college, and cooks his own victuals, and has quite a retired life of it, as my uncle the postmaster remarked about his own situation, when the department gave him his walking-papers. Well, I went up

to his room when everything was quiet about the college, thinking what a nice scientific disquisition we could have, if the old gentleman, knowing I was a hunter, was to ask me why the rings on a coon's tail didn't grow parallel to the axis of its long diameter, instead of the short; or, to which fowl did a young duck owe the most filial love—to the duck that laid the egg, or the hen that hatched it? And such like questions, worthy of being lucubrated upon by great minds only.

“I found the old gentleman very complacent and easy, standing up in his night-shirt and making whiskey-toddy in a teapot, whilst he gave the last touch to an introductory oration for the P. T. S.

“‘Prof. ——, I presume?’ said I, knocking at the door after I had opened it—thinking, that as I had forgotten it at first, it would be an imputation on Southern manners to neglect it entirely.

“‘The same,’ said he, with the most perfect composure, knocking his oration into the stove, upsetting his punch, and leaving half of his subucus on a nail as he jumped into the next room; whilst I, pulling off my boots, and finishing what little punch had not run out, told him not to distress himself putting on his best clothes, or preparing much dinner, as I had lunched very heartily.

“In a few moments he returned, and seemed to be in the best humour imaginable at the perfect homeability I was surrounding myself with.

“Thinking him a queer one, I resolved on making myself as agreeable as possible, as I saw from the way his face was screwed up he had the toothache badly and needed comfort; so I asked him how long his wife had been dead, and whether there was any truth in the report that he was courting a widow on Fifth Street; also, if he bought his

Irish whiskey by the gallon or cask ; he apparently did not hear these kind inquiries, but asked if I had not a letter of introduction.

“ ‘ True for you, I have, and there it is,’ handing him a fifty dollar bill ; it belongs to me, and I’m Frank Mc—— ; take the price of your winter’s jaw out of it, and we’ll see what’s in town with the balance.’

“ He got well of his toothache in a moment. ‘ Happy to make your acquaintance ; you’re from the southern swamps, plenty of chill and fever there ; permit me to read for your critical attention a few pages I have written in my book on the subject.’

“ ‘ With the greatest pleasure in the world,’ I replied ; ‘ allow me to subscribe to your work ; deduct it out of the fifty.’ He commenced reading a description of a Mississippi agur, and cuss me if it wasn’t so natural I shivered all over ; and the tears pop’t out of my eyes like young pigeons out of a loft, when I thought of the last shake I had in far distant Massassip, sitting on a muddy log fighting the mosquitoes, and waiting for a steamboat to bear me from her friendly bosom. You ought to have heard him when he described the awful effects it had upon our gals, developing their spleens, and bringing the punkin to their blessed faces ; there was a pathos in his language, a tremor in his voice, soft as the warbling of a he-dove before he pitches into a pea-patch.

“ ‘ Then it is,’ he read, ‘ when the deleterious emanations of the decomposing vegetation have penetrated the inmost recesses and mysterious intricacies of the corporeal constituents of the intellectual inhabitants, that humanity instigates the benevolent individual to mournfully and sadly deliberate over the probable effects, after a perpetuity of continuance of such morbific impressions.’

“ I was delighted at the grand simplicity of his expres-

sion, and was giving my approbation too much vent, when tap, tap, went something at the door.

“‘ And even beauteous woman,’ continued the professor, ‘ goes a—tap, tap—‘ whilst ever is heard’—tap, tap—‘ and nature assimilating’—tap, tap—‘ mournfully weeps over the silent’—bom, bom, went the outsider, growing impatient. ‘ Bless me! who’s there? come in,’—and an hour-glass, the sand nearly out, was substituted for the punch-bowl—‘ Come in;’ the door opened, and gave admittance to what would have been a handsome young woman, had the care in her heart not written ‘at home’ so legibly on her cheek. ‘ Take a seat, ma’am.’

“‘ I will call again, professor,’ said I, rising.

“‘ No, no, sir, sit down, sir. Madam, how can I serve you?’

“‘ I am in a great hurry, professor,’ I said again, seizing my hat.

“‘ No, sir, I insist you must not leave. Madam, what do you want?’ and the poor professor jumped from his seat to the door, and from the door to his seat, asking, almost sternly, ‘ Madam, what do you want?’

“‘ I’m a poor widow, with a large family of children, and hearing that you were a very charitable gentleman, and—’

“‘ Professor, I cannot stand this pitiable narrative. Madam, there is some money for you. You must indeed excuse me. I shall not be able to restrain my tears.’

“‘ No, sir, stay, I command you, I insist. Woman, what do you want? in the name of virtue, what do you want?’ The widow commenced her piteous appeal again, when, quite overcome, I rushed from the room, followed by the voice of the ruined professor, who feared that his reputation was for ever gone. ‘ Woman, in the name of Jehovah, what *do you want?*’

Poor Frank! Death’s dark garniture hath clothed his

piercing eye ; friendship and sorrow no more thrill his heart, and the noisome worm revels in the home of high and noble daring. He died ! not on the sick-bed, with mourning friends gathered around, but on the battle-field, fighting for his country, on the victor soldier's bed—the body of his foe. And of all the warm leal hearts that were stilled, of all the true spirits that floated up to God, from thy glorious but bloody field, Buena Vista ! silence fell not on a nobler breast—not a truer soul went up than rose from thy bosom, Frank—true friend of my early manhood !

THE CURIOUS WIDOW.

DURING my first course of lectures I became a boarder at the house of a widow lady, the happy mother of a brace and a half of daughters, the quartette possessing so much of the distinguishing characteristic of the softer sex, that I often caught myself wondering in what nook or corner of their diminutive skulls they kept the rest of the faculties.

Occupying the same room that I did, were two other students from the same section of country as myself, and possessing pretty much the same tastes and peculiarities. One thing certain we agreed in, and that was a detestation of all curiosity-stricken women ; for never were poor devils worse bothered by researches than we were. Not a pocket of any garment left in our rooms could remain unexamined, not a letter remain on our table unread, nor scarcely a word of conversation pass without a soft, subdued breathing at the key-hole telling us we were eaves-

dropped. Matters came at length to such a pass, and so thorough became the annoyance, that nothing but the difficulty of obtaining suitable accommodation elsewhere, prevented us from bidding a tender adieu to the widow, and promising to pay her our board bill as soon as our remittances arrived.

As the evil had to be endured for a while, at least, we soon invented and arranged a plan for breaking her of her insatiable curiosity, and making her, what she was in other respects, a good landlady.

The boarding-house was a large two-story frame, with a flight of steps on one side, extending from the street to the second story, so as to give admittance to the boarders without the necessity of opening the front door or disturbing the family when we came in late at night. It was very cold weather, and our mess were busily engaged every night until a late hour at the dissecting-rooms, and it was during this necessary absence that the widow made her researches and investigations. The *subject* that we were engaged upon was one of the most hideous specimens of humanity that ever horrified the sight. The wretch had saved his life from the hangman by dying the eve before the day of execution, and we, by some process or other, became the possessors of his body. Just emaciated sufficiently to remove the fatty tissue, and leave the muscles and blood-vessels finely developed, still he was so hideous that nothing but my devotion to anatomy, and the fineness of the subject, could reconcile me to the dissection; and even after working a week upon him, I never caught a glimpse of his countenance but what I had the nightmare in consequence. He was one of that peculiar class called Albinoes, or white negroes. Every feature was deformed and unnatural; a horrible hare-lip, the cleft extending half way up his nose externally, and

pair of tushes projecting from his upper jaw, completed his bill of horrors. It was with him, or rather his face, that we determined to cure our landlady of her prying propensities.

It was the work of a few minutes to slice the face from the skull, and arrange it so that from any point of view it would look horrible. Having procured a yard of oil-cloth, we sewed it to the face, and then rolled it carefully up ; tying this securely, we next enveloped it in a number of wrappers, fastening each separately, so that her curiosity would be excited to the utmost degree before the package could be completely opened. At the usual hour we returned home, carrying our extra face along ; not, however, without many a shudder.

Upon entering our room, we saw that the spoiler had been there, although she had endeavoured to leave things as near the condition she found them in as possible.

With a hearty malediction upon all curious women, we eat our cold snack, which the kind-hearted widow—for, despite of her being a widow, she was really kind-hearted—always had awaiting our return, and retired to rest, determined that the morrow's night should bring all things even.

I endeavoured to sleep ; but that hideous face, which we had locked securely in a trunk, kept staring at me through its many envelopes—and when the cold winter's sun shone in at the casement, it found me still awake. Nervous and irritated, I descended to breakfast ; and nothing but the contemplation of my coming revenge prevented me from treating the widow with positive impoliteness. Bless her not-despairing-of-marrying-again spirit ! who could keep angry with her ? Such a sweet smile of ineffable goodness and spiritual innocence rested on her countenance, that I almost relented of my purpose ;



but my love-letters read, my duns made evident, my poetry criticized by eyes to which Love would not lend his blindness, to make perfect ; and then—she is a widow ! My heart, at this last reflection, became immediately barred to the softening influences of forgiveness, and I determined in all hostility to *face* her.

The lectures that day, as far as we were concerned, fell upon listless ears, for we were thinking too much of what the night was to bring forth, to pay much attention to them. The day at last had its close,—I suppose father Time, its tailor, furnished them on tick. It had been snowing all the evening, and at supper we complained bitterly, how disagreeable it would be walking to the college, and working that night, and wished that we were not dissecting, so that we might stay at home and answer the letters we had received from home that day. “Business could not be neglected for the weather,” was our conclusion expressed to the widow ; so after supper we donned our dissecting-clothes, and putting the package for the widow in a coat pocket, hung it up in a prominent place, so it could be found readily. Telling the family we would not be back until late, and making as much noise as possible with our feet, so as to assure her we were going, we left the house as if for the college.

We went no further, however, than to the nearest coffee-house, where, by the time we had smoked a cigar, we judged sufficient time had elapsed for the widow to commence researches.

Returning to the boarding-house, we pulled off our boots and noiselessly ascended the outside steps, the door at the head of which we had left open. There was a short passage leading from it to the door of our room, which we had left closed, but now perceived to be ajar. Silently, as a doctor speaking of the patients he has lost,

we approached it, and, on peeping in, to our great gratification found everything working as we had desired. The widow had got the package out, and was occupied in viewing it attentively from all sides, and studying the character of the knots of the ligatures embracing it, so she could restore everything to its original condition, when her curiosity was satisfied as to its contents. Having impressed its shape, and the peculiarity of tie, well upon her mind, she proceeded to take off the first cover, which was soon done, when a similar envelope met her eye ; this, after undergoing the same scrutiny, was removed, when yet another met her gaze ; this detached, and still the kernel was unreached ; some six or eight were taken off, and at length she came to the last, the oil-skin. Poor old lady ! she has long been where the curiosity of life never penetrates, and the grandest and most awful mystery of our nature is revealed ; yet, I see her now, as the last envelope of the mysterious package was reached, and when a gleam of satisfaction shot like an erysipelatous blush over her anxious face, as she saw the consummation of her long expectancy approaching. There she stood, with spectacles buried so deeply 'neath her brows as almost to appear a portion of her visage ; neck—not of apoplectic proportions—elongated to its utmost capacity ; lips—from which the ruby of youth had departed,—wide disclosed,—showing what our swamp lands are famous for—big gums and old snags ; in fact, the embodiment of woman in her hour of curiosity. Holding the package in one hand and the end of the oil-cloth in the other, she commenced unrolling it slowly, for fear some peculiarity of its arrangement might escape her ; her back was towards the door, which we had nearly opened awide, and anxiously awaiting the *denouement* ; it came at last,—and never shall I forget the expression of that old woman's

face as the last roll left the hellish countenance, and it lay in all its awful hideousness upon her extended palm,—the fiendish tushes protruding from the parted lips,—still wearing the agony of the death-second,—and the eyes enclosed in their circle of red, gazing up into hers with their dull vacant stare.

 Ay, but she was a firm-nerved woman. If metempsychosis be a true doctrine, her spirit must have once animated, in the chivalrous times, a steel-clad knight of the doughtiest mould. She did not faint—did not vent a scream—but gazed upon its awfulness in silence, as if her eyes were riveted to it for ever.

We felt completely mortified to think that our well-laid scheme had failed—that we had failed to terrify her; when, to perfect our chagrin, she broke into a low laugh. We strode into the room, determined to express in words what our deeds had evidently failed to convey; when, ere she had become fully aware of our presence, we noticed her laughter was becoming hysterical. We spoke to her—shook her by the shoulder—but still she laughed on, increasing in vehemence and intensity. It began to excite attention in the lower apartments, and even in the street; and soon loud knocks and wondering exclamations began to alarm us for the consequences of our participation. We strove to take the fearful object from her, but she clung to it with the tenacity of madness, or a young doctor to his first scientific opinion. “She is gone demented!” we exclaimed; “we had better be leaving”—when a rush up the steps and through the passage, cut off our retreat, and told us the daughters and crowd were coming; but still the old lady laughed on, fiercer, faster, shriller than before. In rushed the crowd—a full charge for the room, impelled by the ramrod of curiosity—but ere they had time to discover the cause of the commotion, or

make a demonstration, the widow ceased her laughter, and, putting on an expression of the most supreme contempt, coolly remarked :—“Excuse me, gentlemen, if I have caused you any inconvenience by my unusual conduct. I was just *smiling aloud* to think what fools these students made of themselves when they tried to scare me with a dead nigger’s face, when I had slept with a drunken husband for twenty years!” The crowd mizzled ; and we, too, I reckon, between that time and the next up-heaving of the sun.



THE MISSISSIPPI PATENT PLAN FOR PULLING TEETH.



I HAD just finished the last volume of Wistar’s Anatomy, well nigh coming to a period myself with weariness at the same time, and with feet well braced up on the mantel-piece, was lazily surveying the closed volume which lay on my lap, when a hurried step in the front gallery aroused me from the reverie into which I was fast sinking.

Turning my head as the office door opened, my eyes fell on the well-developed proportions of a huge flatboatsman who entered the room wearing a countenance, the expression of which would seem to indicate that he had just gone into the vinegar manufacture with a fine promise of success.

“Do you pull teeth, young one?” said he to me.

“Yes, and noses too,” replied I, fingering my slender moustache, highly indignant at the juvenile appellation, and bristling up by the side of the huge Kentuckian, till

I looked as large as a thumb-lancet by the side of an amputating knife.

"You needn't get riled, young doc, I meant no insult, sarten, for my teeth are too sore to how your boots to jar them as I swallered you down. I want a tooth pulled, can you manage the job? Ouch! criminy, but it hurts!"

"Yes, sir, I can pull your tooth. Is it an incisor, or a dens sapientiae? one of the decidua, or a permanent grinder?"

"It's a sizer, I reckon. It's the largest tooth in my jaw, anyhow, you can see for yourself," and the Kentuckian opening the lower half of his face, disclosed a set of teeth that clearly showed that his half of the alligator lay above.

"A molar requires extraction," said I, as he laid his finger on the aching fang.

"A molar! well, I'll be cus't but you doctors have queer names for things! I reckon the next time I want a money-puss a molear will be extracted too; ouch! What do you ax for pulling teeth, doc? I want to git rid of the pesky thing."

"A dollar, sir," said I, pulling out the case of instruments and placing a chair for him.

"A dollar! dollar h--ll! do you think the Yazoo Pass is full of kegs of speshy? I'd see you mashed under a hogshead of pork 'fore I'd give you a dollar to pull the thing;" and picking up his hat, which he had dashed on the floor on his first entrance, off he started.

Seeing some fun in store, I winked at the rest of the students, whom the loudness of our conversation had called from the other rooms of the capacious office, and requested the subject to return.

"It's no use, stranger; I'd squirm all day fust 'fore

I'd give you a dollar to pull every tooth in my head," said he.

"Well, Mister, times are hard, and I'll pull your tooth for half a dollar," said I, determined, if necessary, to give him pay before I would lose the pulling of his tooth.

"You'll have to come down a notch lower, doc. I wants to interduce Kaintuck fashions on a Southern sile; and up thar, you can get a tooth pulled and the agur 'scribed for, fur a quarter."

"Well, but recollect, it's harder to pull teeth here than it is in Kentucky."

"Don't care a cuss; dimes is plentyer. I don't want to be stingy, though, doc, and I'll tell you what I'll do. I feels sorter bad from eatin' a mud-cat yesterday. I'll gin you a quarter to pull my tooth, if you'll throw in a dose of castor ile."

"It's a bargain," said I. "I couldn't possibly afford to do it so low if I didn't manufacture my own oil, and pull teeth on the 'Mississippi patent plan,' without the least pain."

"Well, I'se struck a breeze of luck, sure, to get it 'stracted without hurtin', for I 'spected it would make all things pop, by hoecake." And "all things did pop," certain, as the poor devil found to his sorrow, before the "Mississippi patent plan" was over.

The room in which we were was the operating one of the office, where patients were examined, and surgical operations performed. It was furnished with all the usual appliances of such an establishment. In the middle of the room, securely fastened to the floor by screws, was a large arm-chair, with head-board and straps, to confine the body and limbs of the patient whilst the operator was at work, in such cases as required it. On either side of

the house, driven into the wall, were a couple of iron bolts, to which were fastened blocks and pulleys, used when reducing old dislocations, when all milder means had failed. The chair, pulleys, and a small hand-vice were the apparatus intended to be used by me in the extraction of the Kentuckian's tooth, by the "Mississippi patent plan."

The patient watched all our preparations—for I quickly let the other students into the plan of the intended joke—with great interest, and seemed hugely tickled at the idea of having his tooth pulled without pain for a quarter, and a dose of castor-oil extra.

Everything being ready, we invited the subject to take his seat in the operating chair, telling him it was necessary, agreeably to our mode of pulling teeth, that the body and arms should be perfectly quiet; that other doctors, who hadn't bought the right to use the 'patent plan,' used the pullikins, whilst I operated with the pulleys. I soon had him immovably strapped to the chair, hand and foot. Introducing the hand-vice in his mouth, which, fortunately for me, was a large one, I screwed it fast to the offending tooth, then connecting it with the first cord of the pulleys and intrusting it to the hands of two experienced assistants, I was ready to commence the extraction. Giving the word, and singing, "Lord, receive this sinner's soul," we pulled slowly, so as to let the full strain come on the neck bones gradually.

Though I live till every hair on my head is as hollow as a dry skull, I shall never forget the scene.

Clothed in homespun of the copperas hue, impotent to help himself, his body immovably fixed to the chair, his neck gradually extending itself, like a terrapin's emerging from its shell, his eyes twice their natural size, and projected nearly out of their sockets, his mouth widely dis-

tended, with the vice hidden in its cavity, and the connexion of the rope being behind his cheeks, giving the appearance as if we had cast anchor in his stomach, and were heaving it slowly home, sat the Kentuckian, screaming and cursing that we were pulling his head off without moving the tooth, and that the torment was awful. But I coolly told him 'twas the usual way the 'Mississippi patent plan' worked, and directed my assistants to keep up their steady pull.

I have not yet fully determined, as it was the first and last experiment, which would have come first, his head or the tooth, for all at once the rope gave way, precipitating, without much order or arrangement, the assistants into the opposite corner of the room.

The operating chair not being as securely screwed down as usual, was upturned by the shock of the retrograde motion acquired, when the rope broke, and landed the Kentuckian on his back in the most distant side of the room ; as he fell, he struck the side of his face against the wall, and out came the vice, with a large tooth in its fangs. He raged like one of his indigenous thunderstorms, and demanded to be released. Fearing some hostile demonstration when the straps were unfastened, we took occasion to cut them with a long bowie knife. He rose up, spitting blood and shaking himself, as if he was anxious to get rid of his clothes. "H—l, Doc, but she's a buster ! I never seed such a tooth. I recon no common fixments would have fotch it ; but I tell you, sirree, it hurt awful ; I think it's the last time the 'Mississippi Patent Plan' gets me in its holt. Here's a five-dollar Kaintuck bill, take your pay and gin us the change."

Seeing he was in such good humour, I should have spared him, but his meanness disgusted me, and I thought I would carry the joke a little further. On examining his

mouth, I suddenly discovered, as was the case, that I had pulled the wrong tooth, but I never told him, and he had too much blood in his mouth to discover it.

"Curse the luck," I exclaimed, "by Jupiter I have lost my bet. I didn't break the infernal thing."

"Lost what?" inquired the patient, alternately spitting out blood, and cramming in my tobacco.

"Why, a fine hat. I bet the old boss that the first tooth I pulled on my 'Mississippi Patent Plan,' I either broke the neck of the patient or his jaw-bone, and I have done neither."

"Did you never pull a tooth that way before? why, you told me you'd pulled a hundred."

"Yes, but they all belonged to dead men."

"And if the rope hadn't guv way, I reckon there'd bin another dead man's pulled. Cuss you, you'd never pulled my tooth if I hadn't thought you had plenty of 'sperience; but gin me my change, I wants to be gwine to the boat."

I gave the fellow his change for the five-dollar bill, deducting the quarter, and the next day, when endeavouring to pass it, I found we had both made a mistake. I had pulled the wrong tooth, and he had given me a counterfeit bill.

VALERIAN AND THE PANTHER.

I HAD just returned from attendance on my first course of medical lectures. Although not a graduate, I had all the pruriency of a young neophyte, and felt very desirous of an occasion wherein my Esculapian acquirements



could be exhibited, from call, visit, patient, disease, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, to cure ; or else ominously and sorrowingly murmur to the bereaved friends who are taking the measure—“if he’d only sent for me sooner !” I wanted a case, the management all to myself, from comma to period, white, black, old, young, maid, wife, widow, masculine, feminine, old bachelor, or Indian, I cared not which ; a patient was what I wanted, and the shape in which it would come, however questionable, I was indifferent to. The country adjacent to the village where I was studying, is, on two sides, swamp of the vilest, muddiest nature imaginable, with occasional tracts of fine land, generally situated on some bayou or lake ; frequently an “island” of tillable land will be found rising out of the muddy swamp, accessible to footmen or horse only, when the river is within its banks, varying in size from fifty to two hundred acres ; and, wherever existing, generally occupied by a small *planter*. Every farmer in the South is a planter, from the “thousand bale” to the rough, unshaved, unkempt squatter, who raises just sufficient corn and cotton to furnish a cloak for stealing the year’s supply.

A few hours’ ride from town was one of these islands, “pre-empted” by a man named Spiffle, whose principal business was to fatigue him devising ways and means to live without work. He would have scorned to hoe an hour in his corn patch, and yet would not have hesitated a moment to pursue a deer or bear for days, with all the indefatigability of a German metaphysical philosopher studying an incomprehensibility. But hunting deer and bear, though it brought more sweat and fatigue in an hour than the hardest day’s work, was sport ; so was drinking whiskey, and between the two, Jim Spiffle had little time to extend the limits of his demesnes, or multiply the com-



forts of his household circle, wherein a wife and a dozen children attested Jim's obedience to scripture.

It is a sultry day in June, and I am about describing the external appearance of Jim's pre-emption. A small patch of green and waving corn, surrounded by a brush fence, save where it is eked out, by the side of an antiquated log-cabin, with a dirt chimney, around whose top the smoke is lying in dense heaps, too lazy to curl ; one or two bedraggled hens, by noisy cackling, are endeavouring to inform the mistress that their diurnal recumbencies are consummated—whilst the cock of the walk, desirous of egging them on to increased exertions, struts majestically before them, waving one feather, constituting his tail, and seriously meditates a crow ; but when he reflects that the exertion of flapping his wings must premise, contents himself with a low chuckle of admiration. An old hound, mangy and blear-eyed, is intent upon a deer's leg ; and, as he gnaws its tough sinews, tries to delude himself into the belief that it is a delectable morsel from the ham. A boy of some thirteen winters, in full dress swamp costume (a short, well-worn shirt), rifle in hand, at a short distance from the house, is endeavouring to allay the mental and bodily disquietude of a fox-squirrel, so that they both may be on the same side of a chunky gum, up which the aforesaid squirrel, on the approach of the incipient Nimrod, had incontinently retreated. Spiffle, jun., sneaks round to the south side, but "funny" hangs on the north, east, and west—back to the north and south, all in vain ! All the points of the mariner's compass are traversed, but still the cunning squirrel evades his foe, who, venting his malediction, finally retires from the pursuit, muttering, "Cuss you ! I was only going through the motions ; the rifle ain't loaded!" The lord of the soil, extended to his full proportions, is lying on a

log, beneath a shady bush ; a branch of which is bent down and so ingeniously arranged, that when the breeze moves, it will scratch his head ; his mouth is full of tobacco—and as he sleeps, true to his nature, his right hand is busily engaged stealing a couple of dimes and an old jack-knife out of his own pocket ; his jaws are relaxed, and the huge, well-chewed quid gleams beautifully dark from the profundity of mouth ; a gentle titillation on his lips half arouses him, and, champing his jaws with an emphasis, his waking senses are saluted by the yell of his eldest born, who, on the failure of his squirrel enterprise, finding dad asleep, had made an heroic attempt to hook his sire's quid out of the deep abyss. The poor boy pays dearly for the attempted larceny—three fingers hanging by mere shreds of skin, are the attestations of his dad's strength of jaw. The scream of the poor devil, and the boisterous grief of the miserable squatter, who, though the "Arab" of the swamp, has still a father's feelings, brings from the cabin a form which, begrimed with dirt, and haggard with premature age, would scarcely be taken for the best of God's works—a woman—but such she was ; and her tears and outcries also gave evidence that she, too, amidst the heart-hardenings of poverty, contumely, and lowliness, had still gushing up in her heart the pure waters of love.

"Lordy grashus!" she cried ; "you have ruined the child ! Oh ! how could you do it ? You, a man grown, and him, your own son ! Oh, Jim !"

"'Twasn't my fault, Betsy," answered poor Jim ; "'twasn't my fault ! Oh ! what must I do ? He's gwine into 'vulshuns."

"Jump on the critter and git the doctor !" said Betsy. "Quick, Jim ! Oh, Lordy ! only twelve children—and to lose one of them !" and the poor mother sobbed as if

her heart were rending ; whilst Jim, jumping on a better horse than befitted his circumstances, made all haste for town, whither he arrived about dinner-time—and dashing up with frantic haste to the office-door, yelled out, “ Doctor ! oh, doctor ! I’ve bit my son’s hand off, and he’s dying, sarten ! Come, quick ! dear doctor ! that’s a good old hoss !—oh, do !”

But the “ good old hoss ” not responding to his appeal, he dismounted, and rushed in, repeating his cry.

“ What’s the matter ? what’s the matter ? who’s sick ? ” said I, rushing in from a back room—one book open in my right hand, and a ponderous tome under my left arm.

“ Oh ! young doctor, where’s the old man ? I’ve bit my son’s arm off, and he’s gone into ’vulshuns, and I want the boss to come right out.”

“ He’s gone into the country, and won’t be back before night,” replied I. “ Did your boy’s arm bleed much ? ”—not reflecting on the absurdity of a man biting a boy’s arm off.

“ Bleed ! Yes, all three stumps bled like a stuck deer.”

“ Three h–lls ! Spiffler, you’re drunk ! How could you bite off three of his arms ? ”

“ Oh, doctor ! I meant his fingers ; he put them in my mouth when I war asleep. Sens the old man’s out, doctor, you must go. Jes’ save his life, doc, and you’ll never want vensun or a good trout-hole while I’m in the swamp ! Be in a hurry, that’s a good fellow.”

The chance was too good to be lost—a surgical and medical case combined—amputation and convulsions. What could be more opportune ?

Telling Spiffler I would go as soon as I got some medicine suitable to the case, I put near half a peck of valerian





in my coat pockets, and an ounce vial of prussic acid in my vest; some calomel, assafoetida, lint, and adhesive plaster, completed my preparations, and I was ready for business. The horse I intended to ride was a favourite one of the old doctor's, but one which, accomplished equestrian as he was, he dare not back, except when the visit lay over some old beaten road; and as for riding him through the devious path of the swamp—one moment on the horse's neck to 'scape an impending limb, the next with the body at a right angle, to avoid a gnarled and thorny tree—now on one side, now on the other, and again on both—wading the backwater, jumping logs, swimming the dark and sullen slough, or with feet raised to the pommel to clear the cypress-knees, which on every side, as the path would cross a brake, obtruded their keen points, ready to impale the luckless wight who there might chance to lose his seat; to ride "Chaos" midst such paths as these, the old doctor, I have said, would never have dreamed of doing, and, most assuredly, had he been at home, would not have allowed me to undertake; but such a ride, with its break-neck peril, chimed well with my youthful feelings, which pursued the same reckless course that the heart's current of the medical student has run in, from the time when "Chiron" was a "grave rat," to the Tyro of yesterday, who is looking in the dictionary for the meaning of "artery."

With all the seriousness naturally to be elicited by a responsible mission, I mounted Chaos, and started at a speed that beplastered the skeleton houses on each side of the way with mud, heaving a delectable morsel, as I passed the "doggery," full in the mouth of a picayune demagogue, who, viewing the political sky with open mouth, was vociferating vehemently on the merits of his side. "Hurrah for —," he had just ejaculated, when the substance,

which perhaps assisted in composing an antediluvian negathaslopsyolamagosogiam, or, possibly, "imperial Cæsar," hit him "vim" in the patent orifice. Cleaning his throat, he spluttered out, "Cuss the country, when a man can't holler for the feller that he likes best, but the heels of every 'prentice saw-bone's horse must fling clay in his teeth!"

But Chaos heeded him not; imagining I was for a jaunt over his usual road, he gave way to only sufficient movement to indicate his mettle; but when the end of the street was reached, where the roads diverged, one pursuing its upward course over the towering hills—the first from its source that steal down to gaze upon the wavelets of the "dark Yazoo—the other unobtrusively stealing its way a few hundred yards, and then yielding its being 'neath the placid waters of a bright-eyed lake. Seeing me turn to the latter, the noble horse gave a joyous neigh, and seemed to be imbued with a new life as he viewed the waters stretching far away into the forest, until wave and leaf were melted into one; and as he thought of the wild luxuriance of a hidden dell, gemmed with a glistening spring, the memory of which came floating up, fraught with the enjoyments of a month's pleasure the year gone by, when, disdaining the stable, he had sought the forest, and there, cropping the herbage, and roaming in all the wild luxuriance of freedom, forgot he was a slave, until the insidious wiles of Spiffle restored him to his owner.

Oblivious, apparently, of my weight, he sprung into the waters, and soon—dashing his beautiful head until the spray covered me with delicious coolness—breasted the sleepy lake; and when his feet struck the firm ground, like the fawn from the hunters, away he sprang up the narrow path, which pursued its tortuous way like a mon-

strous snake, amidst the nodding grass and fragrant spice-wood, and old trees, fantastically interweaving their limbs.

But little cared my courser for those old trees, clothed with moss, with the shadows of their arching boughs the pathway thrown across; he heeded not the verdancy beneath the eye displayed, nor the gorgeous summer mingling of the sunshine and the shade; the gentle voice of Eolus, as dallying with the grove, came breathing gentle symphonies, but not on him it wove the spell of soothing, subdued thought, such as the feelings haunt, when its tones renew the memory of a long-forgotten chant. With eye of dazzling brightness, with foam upon the breast, with mane back flaunting on the air, and proud erected crest; with champing bit, and eager bound, and earth-disdaining tread, and air, as if o'er battle-fields victoriously he sped. Soho! Soft, Chaos! Quiet! Soho!

“Which way now, Spiffle?” said I, as the path appeared to cease at a clear, deep, narrow “slough,” full of cypress “knees,” which did not come to the surface, but seemed some few inches under.

“Right across,” was the answer.

“What! through those shoots? Why there’s not room enough between them for a dog to swim, let alone a horse,” said I.

“You’d be mighty out of breath ‘fore you got through with the job, doc, if you tried to swim ‘tween them, seein’ as thar ten foot under. I war fooled here myself for mor’n a year; I’d take a ‘bee’ for home, an’ come to this slew, an’ then have to head it, on ‘count of the neas; ’till one day I got on a ‘bust’ in town, an’ my critter got loose and struck for home. I tract him up to whar we is, and here they stopt—the trax and me I mean; but on t’other side I seed them, and I knowed he must have swum. I war clean bothered to know how he got

over without leaving some of his innards on the neas,— so I tuck a stick and puncht at one of them that war near outen the water, to see if it war a real cypress nubbin. I missed it clear, and kerchunk I went head foremost 'mongst their sharp points. Oh, my ‘viscera!’ I yelled ; but I'll be cust if I toch a nea ; they war ten foot under, and thar they stay, and thar they 'tend stayin', for they ain't grown a lick sens that time, and that war so long ago, that the next day I seed the fust steamboat that kum up the Yazoo skare an old buck to death, makin' him jump so fast that he sprung plum through his skull, and the last I seed of him, as he floated down the river, his head had hung on his lines, and one ear on each horn war fluttering his dying elegy.”

By the time this veracious anecdote was over, we had crossed the slough, and a ride of a few miles brought us to the cabin of my patron, who, now elevated with whiskey, had lost his paternal solicitude, and giving way to the garrulity of the drunkard, was making revelations concerning his past history, which, if true, and he had his dues, would have swung him higher than “Barn Poker,” of Coahoma, when the regulators were out.

I found my patient doing very well, Mrs. Spiffle having sent, before my arrival, for one of those knowing old dames who match “’sperience agin book larnin’,” and detract so considerably from the physician’s income. The old lady, fortunately for the boy, had had sufficient knowledge of surgery to replace the fingers and apply bandages.

Whether it was my naturally prepossessing phiz, or my ready acquiescence in the correctness of her treatment, that softened the old dame, I know not ; but she appeared to take to me monstrously ; and, after having had her mind satisfied as to my name, natality, and genealogy,

she reciprocated intelligence, and, untying the scrap-bag of memory, proceeded to make a patch-quilt for me, of a case that resembled the one we were ministering to.

"Short arter I had kum from Georgy to Mass-ass-sip, a nere nabur—Miss Splicer—had a darter—Miss Spiffle, you had better gin Boney another sup of the sheep safurn—doctor, you said you had no injections to it—what made a slide one day, and 'lowed her dad's axe to fall on her foot, cutting her big toe clean off as sarcumstances would permit. It bled 'mazinly, and the gal hollered out till her mammy, who war splittin'—his throat, Miss Spiffle, a spoonful at a time—rails at the far end of the clearin' (for she was a monstrous 'dustryus woman, Miss Splicer was), heard the rumption and came to the house, lumbrin' over the high logs like a big bull in—a little more whiskey in mine, Miss Spiffle, if you please; what a pity it is that your husband drinks—a small pastur' in the worst of fly-time, as she told me arter, thinking some of the town-boys had got hold of the gal.

"When she got there and seed the blood, and the toe excavated off, a-trying to keep time with the stump which war quiverin' in the air, like the gal had the "skitters," she memorized what a doctor had told her to do in such cases—to displace the parts and heal them up by the fust contention; so she slapt the toe on the foot agin, an' tide a rag on tight, an' put the gal to bed. Well, everything went on monstrous nice—scat! Miss Spiffle, the laws-a'-massy! that cat's tail come mity nigh toching his hand; and 'twould never got well—an' in 'bout two weaks, Miss Splicer axed me to come over and sister her getting the rag off, as she hadn't been informed that far, for her husband had got drunk and run the doctor off jist arter he had showed her how to put the thing up for healin'.

"Well, I went over, and arter soaking her—stumak, Miss



Spiffle, put the goose grease on his stumak—foot in hot water, I peeled the rag off; and the Lord be marsyful to a sinful world, fur I seed the toe had grown fust-rate fast, but the poor ignerant creetur of a mother had put it on with the *nail turned down*, and the poor gal's dancing were 'ternally spiled."

Telling the people that I would not return unless they sent for me, and the sun being low, I mounted my horse and dashed off for home. Coming to a fork in the path, I took the one I thought I had come in the morning, and gave myself no further concern about the road.

I mentioned that I had filled my pockets with *Valerian* on leaving home, and on this simple thing depended two lives, as the sequel will show.

It is a root, when fresh, of a powerful and penetrating odour peculiar to its species; permeable things, by remaining in contact with it, become imbued with its characteristic odour, which they retain for a considerable length of time. The root possesses great attraction for the cat tribe, who smell it at a great distance, and resort to it eagerly, devouring its fragrant fibres with great apparent relish. The panther of our continent is closely allied to the domestic cat, susceptible, like it, of taming, active, treacherous, and cunning,—only in proportion to its increased size, resembling it in its tastes, and like it, fearless when aroused by appetite or hunger.

I had proceeded some distance, when it began to appear to me that the path I was travelling was not the one by which I had come in the morning, but as it was some miles back to the fork, and as far as I could judge, I seemed to be going in the right direction, I determined to proceed. So, cheering myself with a song, I tried to banish disagreeable reflections, and persuade myself that

some recognised object would soon assure me I was in the right track.

It was now near sunset, and, in despite of my endeavours to the contrary, I was becoming somewhat anxious, as a gloom was already settling over the swamp, when, to my joy, I found myself upon the bayou or slough, whose illusory appearance I have noted. Not remarking that the path, instead of crossing, turned up the bank, I gave my horse the rein and he sprang into the stream; but what was my dismay, when I found, by the struggling of my poor steed for releasement, that I was mistaken in the slough, and that in this instance, the proximity of the "knees" to the surface was no illusion. He had fortunately become wedged between two of the largest, which sustained his weight, and saved him from being impaled upon those beneath. I had nothing in the shape of a cutting instrument, except a small penknife, which, under the circumstances, could afford me no aid. Dismounting in the water, by main strength I released my horse, and, as the sun withdrew its last lingering ray from the topmost boughs of the trees—jaded, wet, and exhausted—we stood in the midst of the swamp, on the banks of an unknown slough, without food, fire, or weapon—lost! lost! lost! I could form no idea where I was, and go as I would, it would be hap-hazard if I went right, and the probabilities were that I would have to spend the night in the drearisome place.

I soon discovered that it was losing time and gaining nothing to stand there. So I determined, as I was mightily down in the mouth, my course should accord with my feelings, so down the slough I started.

The land, as far as I could see, was uniform low swamp, subject to the annual inundations of the Mississippi. The height to which the waters usually attained was several

feet above my head on horseback, which made it more favourable to me, as the frequent submergings had in a great measure destroyed the undergrowth, and thus facilitated passing between the trees. I would not have cared for the night jaunt, had I only known where I was, and whither I was going; but the uncertainty made my feelings very disagreeable, and I mentally vowed that if I got home that once, Spiffle, Sen., might chaw up Spiffle, Jun., inch by inch, before I would come out to stop it.

I sped on as fast as I dared, the darkness growing profound, and my anxiety—I will not say fear—increasing every moment. An unusual stillness rested over the swamp, unbroken save by the tramp of my horse; not even a frog or chichado was to be heard, and the wind had assumed that low, plaintive wail amidst the leaves, that never fails to cast a melancholy shadow over the heart, and awaken all the superstitions of our minds. I was musing over the sad fate of an intimate friend who had recently come to an untimely death, and reflecting how hard it was that so much youthful ambition should perish, such a glorious sun go down shrouded with darkness whilst it yet was day, when the ominous silence was broken by a sound which, God grant, I may never hear again. Like a woman's shriek, in the damning anguish of desertion and despair—lost and ruined—was the long, piercing scream of the *Panther*, whose awful yell palsied my heart, and curdled the blood within my smallest veins. Again and again it arose, filling the solemn aisles of the darksome swamp, till echo took up the fearful sound, and every tree, bush, and brake, gave back the hellish, agonizing shriek.

It was evidently approaching us; my poor horse trembled like an aspen beneath me, and seemed incapable of moving. Again, still nearer—the fierce and harrowing

scream fell on my shrinking ear ; and I knew the animal was upon my trail. Shaking off the lethargy into which I was fast sinking, I struck my horse, and, twining my hands in his mane, lay down on his neck, letting him go as he wished, as I did not know which way to guide him. With a snort of terror he sprung off with a speed that seemed miraculous, through the darkness and trees. I flattered myself that the rate at which we went would soon distance the panther ; when, God of heaven ! it arose more piercing and shrill, still nearer than before. I began to despair, as I had no weapon, save the pen-knife ; and the animal, I knew, was one of the fiercest nature—else why did he follow for my blood ? (I never thought of the *valerian*.)

The speed of my horse, with the fearfulness of my situation, made me half delirious, and my thoughts began to wander—colours of all hues, shapes, arabesque and fantastical, danced before my eyes. I imagined that I was in the midst of a well-contested battle, and in the wavering fight, and covering smoke, and turmoil of the scene, I caught the emblem emblazoned on the banner of my foe, and it was a panther *couchant*. Making an effort to draw my sword, my hand came in contact with the vial of prussic acid in my vest pocket with considerable force. This aroused me ; and, taking it out, I determined to commit suicide, should the panther overtake me—preferring to die thus, to being devoured alive.

Again and again the awful scream of the infuriated animal arose, and fell like the weight of a mountain on my trembling frame. Nobly my gallant horse strove to save me ; he required not the whip or spur ; I gave him a word of encouragement, and the animal,—which we term a brute,—returned a low, whining neigh, as if he wished me to understand that he knew my danger, and

would do all in his power. I looked up as the horse suddenly increased his speed, and found, to my delight, that we were in the right track ; I imagined I could almost see the lights in the windows—but this I knew could not be. It was pleasant, however, to think that I was going home, and that if my horse could only keep ahead a few miles further, we would be safe ; when—hist !—ha ! ha ! was it not enough to raise the laugh ? I heard the scream of the panther not two hundred yards behind, and could almost hear his feet as they struck the ground after his leaps. He seemed to be rejoicing over his approaching feast—his screams arose fiercer—shriller—more horrid than before. The heavens gave back the sound—it was caught by every breeze—echoed from every dell ; a hundred discordant voices joined in the infernal melody, while the loud neigh of my horse, as if for help, framed itself into a panther's shriek. I strove to breathe a prayer ; but my parched tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and what I uttered served but to add to the damning chorus of hellish sounds. I tore the neck of my poor horse with my teeth, to incite him to greater speed ; but my time had come. Again I heard the panther's scream, so near that it pierced my brain with its acuteness. I heard his spring, as he threw himself over the lowermost boughs of the trees, and shrank within myself, momentarily expecting him to alight, with his sharp teeth in my heart. The thought occurred to me, as, looking ahead, I really beheld the town lights glimmering—if I kill my horse, may not the panther be satisfied with *his* blood, and allow me to escape ? There was reason in it ; and, though a pang shot through me as I thought of sacrificing the noble animal who had borne me on thus far, yet the love of life overcame all scruples. With my penknife I felt carefully for the carotid artery, and, when it was found, plunged



DARLEY-BEE

GILBERT & GIHON SC

"And the huge form of the dead Panther was lying by my side, *with the pocket holding the valerian firmly clenched in his teeth.*"—Page 101.

the blade in, inflicting a small but deadly gash. Giving a terrible spring, the hot blood gushing all over me, he ran as none but a noble horse, in the agonies of death, can run, and then, with a low, reproachful moan, fell dead ; whilst I, disengaging myself, at a full run strove to make my escape.

I heard the yell of the panther as he reached the horse, and as he stopped I thought myself safe ; but not so long : for again his fierce scream came ringing o'er the air, and I was too well aware of the habits of the animal not to know that when the quarry is being devoured, their voice is still. Suicide by poison, or a more awful death, were all that was now left me. I heard the rapid leap of the panther, yelling at every spring. I uncorked the vial, and was raising it to my lips, when, as if by inspiration, came the blessed thought, that when the panther seized me, to pour the instantaneous poison down his throat. I uttered a low, deep prayer to God, and for one, who, if she had known my peril, would have sought to die with me, and then bracing myself firmly against a tree, with the vial clenched in my right hand, awaited the deadly foe. I heard his shriek, saw a huge form flying through the darkness, felt a keen pang in my shoulder, and then, pouring the acid in the mouth of the panther, fainted.

When I recovered consciousness the moon was shining in my upturned face, and the huge form of the dead panther was lying by my side, *with the pocket holding the valerian firmly clenched in his teeth.*

SEEKING A LOCATION.

IT was my intention, after graduating, to return and locate myself in the small town where I had studied my profession ; but “circumstances,” which exerted such a powerful influence over a late unsuccessful aspirant for political honours, exercised a like power upon me.

 The death of my preceptor, whilst I was absent attending my last course of lectures, left a vacancy in the profession at home, which was speedily filled, as far as numbers went, by a horde of new-comers. So I found I would have to encounter, if I settled there, a greater competition, without the assistance I calculated deriving from him, than my slender means and already embarrassed finances qualified me to meet. Besides, locating among those who had known me from boyhood, the probation I would have to undergo before I secured their full confidence would be more severe, and of much longer duration, than if I had landed in their midst a perfect stranger. The transition from the boy to the man, and from the mischievous student to the grave, serious physician, is so gradual and imperceptible, that our old and intimate acquaintances do not realize it ; and when they should know us as doctor they still give us our youthful appellatives, and regard us as boys. When I landed at home, proud of my new-fledged honours and “sheepskin” as a young mother of her first babe, I had, on meeting my former acquaintances, to fling my memory back to the eventful examining period to convince myself that I was really a “doctor of medicine ;” for every one, even down to the

children, called me “Madison” as before, and none of them seemed a moment to consider that a title, the acquisition of which had cost—both mental and pecuniary—as much as mine, should be occasionally used.

In despite of these disadvantageous circumstances, and my own disinclination, it was the opinion of some few friends, to whom I deferred greatly, that I had better locate there; so procuring an office, and having my name and title emblazoned on a sheet of tin, which I securely fastened to the door, I shook off gaiety and the dust of my feet at the lintel, and with a ponderous tome, and anatomically painted skull before me, took my seat at my small green baize coloured table, to await cases and patients.

I recollect distinctly, as no doubt every young professional man does in his own case, my sensations upon the first few days succeeding the setting of my trap, when I was constantly upon the look-out for some victim approaching the bait.

I tried to address myself to the volume before me, but my busy imagination had turned architect, and was erecting air-built tenements of the most magnificent and gorgeous nature.

“Calls” innumerable flitted through my brain. Fevers, from simple intermittents to congestive, were awaiting my curative dispensations; whilst a trumpeter stood ready to peal forth my triumphs to the world, and a quiet, unobtrusive grave, to cover the unsuccessful.

I had just performed a surgical operation, never before attempted, of the most difficult and dangerous character, upon the “President,” with the happiest results. The medical world was ringing with my name; and even the trading community, partaking of the general enthusiasm, mingled me in their thoughts, and spoke of my wonderful scientific achievements in the same breath that told of the

rise or decline of stocks, and a slight improvement in the price of cotton. And the ladies, too—God bless them! that their approving smiles sow the seeds of ambition in many hearts; ay, even the soft, tender-lipped lady, made me a theme of conversation, when her daily allowance of characters had been torn to pieces, and scandal palled the tongue. Edinburgh and London were striving which should obtain my services, as professor in one of their world-renowned institutions; and the crown was moving from the brows of Esculapius to my own; when—hark! “ ‘Tis the cathedral pealing my triumphs!” “ Listen how the solemn chant comes pouring up the mysterious aisle!” Pshaw! “ ‘tis the supper-bell;” “ a little negro ringing ‘ Jim along Josey.’ ”

I wrapped my cloak around me as if to shut out all the world, and strode off moodily to my supper, mad at myself for having yielded to my fancy, and almost allowing it to lead me astray.

One day passed without a call—six days died of miasma, and never the first patient crossed the threshold of my office. I could see other physicians hurrying by, attending to their numerous calls; some of them as youthful as myself; but, happily for them, they had the impress of the exotic, whilst I was indigenous to the soil. I sat in my lonely office, and could hear, as the busy noises of the town died away, and night allowed care to come on the face, which, through the garish day, had striven to appear mirthful, the hurried step of the messenger from the sick; but they never stopped at my door—but on, on by, till distance had eaten up their clanging tread. Mine is a temperament which, exalted to almost delirium one moment, sinks into proportionate depression the next; and even the short space of a week without employment made me down-hearted, and assailed me

with continual despondency. My debts, contracted through the long years I had devoted to my profession—for malicious tongues had estranged my preceptor almost from me before his death, and determined me to repay him for all his pecuniary expenditures—knocked continually against the door of my honour, and often, as I heard the saw and hammer of the artisan ringing through the town, I almost cursed the mistaken kindness of my friends, which had made a professional man of me, and wished, like the mechanic, I could go forth and earn my sweet and honest bread by the hot sweat of my brow.

By chance I learned that a good location for a young physician presented itself in the Louisiana swamps. To resolve to seek it, to communicate my resolution to my friends, to obtain the necessary letters of introduction, and take passage on a steamer bound for Vicksburg, where I would have to reship, was the work of a few hours.

The contemplated location was a short distance in the interior of the parish of Madison, and my next destination after arriving at V— would be Milliken's Bend, where I could obtain a horse and explore the country.



Just at sunrise, a steamer of rather slender dimensions and shabby appearance, came creeping along to V—. As it was the first upward-bound boat that had arrived, a crowd of passengers, who were there awaiting one, rushed on board to secure a passage, myself among the number. Ascertaining how long she intended remaining there, which was but a short time, I thought I would have time to go up town and purchase some articles which I required, and had nearly forgotten; I procured them, and heard, as I descended the levee, the boat ringing her last bell; hastening my steps, I jumped on board just as she was pushing out. On going up in the cabin, I found to my surprise that I was the only passenger. She had

brought none to Vicksburg, and of all the crowd who rushed on there, none had remained save myself.

There was a mystery about the thing that I could not fathom, and did not endeavour very hard to penetrate; for my future was a sufficiently impenetrable enigma to employ all my penetration. Attributing the absence of passengers to the poor accommodations that were visible, I gave myself no further thought about the matter, but taking my cigar, ascended to the hurricane-deck, and there seating myself, gazed abstractedly out upon the waters, and gave myself up to my reflections. They were of a mixed nature; joy and sorrow, pride and shame, struggling for the mastery through all my recollections, and making too many compromises with each other for a spirit that strove to be at peace with itself.

There, in the same bold, impetuous torrent, coursed the majestic "Father of Waters," as it did ten long years ago, when the doctor, who was ascending it, seeking for a home amidst strangers—his heart care-worn and filled with anxiety, descended its current—a scullion.

My pride was gratified to think that I had risen as it were superior to my station and opportunities, and, from a scullion, had become a member of an honourable profession; and that, too, ere the beard had come on my face, or years twenty-one stamped me a man.

We were within two miles of the "Bend," when, as I descended from the upper deck, being partly hidden by the wheel-house, I heard one of the officers remark to the captain, in a laughing tone, "I wonder if that young fellow up on the deck there, would smoke his cigar so unconcernedly if he only knew he was seated over twenty thousand kegs of powder?"

I almost slipped overboard in my surprise. Twenty thousand kegs of powder! Jehovah! how much of Ma-

dison Tensas, M. D., would be left, I wonder, after that quantity of explosive material had ignited under him? One of the finest instances on record of molecular disintegration would be presented, I expect. This explains why the passengers left so summarily. I must get out of this."

"I believe I will go ashore, captain; there is where I want to land," pointing to a house at least two miles below the "Stores."

The boat landed; and, after getting ashore, I did not cease running until I got considerable space and a large tree between her and myself. The crew, suspecting from my movements that I had discovered the nature of their cargo, gave vent to a hearty peal of laughter, with which sounding in my ears, I gained the high-road. And this was my first introduction to the state of my future adoption.

Having a letter of introduction for the principal physician in the "Bend," I slung my saddle-bags over my shoulder, and trudged along through the mud to his house, the direction of which I obtained from a passer-by.

Upon presenting my letter to Doctor J—, I was received with as much kindness and consideration as if I had been a magnate of the land, rolling up in my carriage and four, instead of a poor young doctor, saddle-bags on shoulder, seeking a home in the swamp.

Thine was a good, kind welcome, Doctor Tom, and the "Swamp Doctor," I assure you, often recurs to it with pleasure. Thine was the first stranger's hand, in my adopted state, that I pressed, and found, ere it had unclasped its pressure, that I held a friend's. Thine was the first roof in this land of hospitable homes that sheltered me; and oh! thy hands compounded the first *julep* which for long, long months had ecstasied my lips, thou hast to



answer to old D——e for the apostacy of one of his chosen disciples ; and though I have felt contrition for the fall, yet I forgive thee, Doctor Tom, cheerfully I forgive thee. Would that one sat before me now, as I write in my lonely bachelor den, the skies obscured with darkness, the rain pattering against the casement, the single bed looking so cold, so cold, and the December blast whistling through the chinks of the logs ; would that I had one now ! winter as it is, though it were heaped with ice, if it came from thy hands, thy warmth of heart would impart to it some of its cordial fire, and kindle up a genial glow within my frame. Though I were thrice a Son of Temperance, I could not refrain from a julep of thy mixing, and though my lips might murmur, my heart would not dictate, “ Deliver me from temptation.” Oh ! what a glorious bar-keeper was spoiled when they made you a doctor, Doctor Tom !

After partaking of a cold snack, it not yet being the dinner-hour, mounted on a horse which the doctor loaned me, I obtained the necessary directions, and turning my back on the Mississippi river, struck into the interior, in search of the contemplated location.

The settlement to which I was destined, was situated on a small river which, singular to relate, as I had never heard of any member of my family having ever lived there, bore the same name as myself, being called the “ Tensas.” Looking upon this coincidence of names as a good omen, an assurance at least that I would meet one acquaintance or kinsman there, I surrendered my mind to a renewal of my day-dreams of future professional success and distinction, and disregarding a proper notice of the road, suddenly awakened and found myself lost—the road having given out in a cypress brake.

To resolve to return was one thing, to do it another;

for the timber roads so crossed and interlaced each other that I frequently found myself returning to the same point in the "brake" from whence I started. Well, thought I, I hope my future lot will be a verification of the old adage, that a "bad beginning makes a good ending," for mine is bad enough. I wandered about several hours, occasionally dismounting to assist my horse out of some slough wherein he had bogged, and was about to give it up as a bad job, when I had the good fortune to find a road, which, being over knee-deep in mud, and dotted with the bones of deceased oxen, I judged to be the main highway, which conjecture I soon verified on meeting a traveller. After proceeding a few miles I reached Eagle Lake, which it was necessary to cross in a shallow ferry flat. Here an accident occurred, which came near preventing these pages from ever being written. The current was running very strongly from a small bayou into the lake, and as we approached the shore, suddenly striking the flat, it impelled it with considerable force against a tree, which the high water had submerged for ten or twelve feet. I was standing in the bow of the flat, holding my horse by the rein, and the shock nearly prostrated us both. Before I could recover, the horse plunged overboard. I would have been dragged with him to almost certain death, as I could not swim, had not the ferry-man caught me, and released my arm from the rein. The steed swam to shore, and after a short time suffered himself to be mounted. Matters, so far, I must confess, had not impressed me very favourably with the country—first to be lost in a cypress brake, and then my life placed in jeopardy, looked rather like discouraging treatment; but I had determined to bear up against everything, and if these were the heaviest misfortunes I had to encounter, to laugh at care.

Just as the sun was setting I reached the "Tensas," striking it at the "point," to the owner of which, Mr. C—, I had a letter of introduction. He received me very hospitably, and was profuse in his offers of assistance, both by employing me himself, and favourably recommending me to his friends.

The night passed off, and the next morning Mr. C— and myself started to visit the other families to whom I had letters of introduction and recommendation; not two hundred yards from the house, it became necessary to cross what was called the "Island shoot." The current was running swiftly, and it was nearly swimming. My companion, better acquainted with the passage, forded it safely; but in following, my steed got astride of a submerged log, and down we both went, head and ears, under the muddy waters. I determined, if possible, not to dissolve the union between horse and rider, and therefore held on to him, and at length he scrambled out. I was thoroughly drenched, but I knew at the outset it would never do to appear to mind such an accident before an "old swamper," like Mr. C—, and therefore joined him in his hearty laugh at the dolesome plight of myself and horse. To make the matter worse, I had only the suit of clothes I wore along, and was constrained to borrow a change of apparel. I am above the average size, and both Mr. C— and his overseer were considerably under; so a proper appreciation can be had of the nature of the fit. Laying off my cloth, I donned a suit of "swamp broad-cloth,"—yellow linsey—which clove to my proportions as if it were an integral portion of my frame. This time we had better luck crossing the "shoot," and after spending the day, visiting the neighbours, and making arrangements for securing the practice, we returned to the "point." My unique appearance created a good deal

of mirth and remark during the day ; but as I laughed with the loudest, ridicule was soon despoiled of his shaft, and my indifference at what would have affected the majority of young men, very sensibly raised me proportionately high in the opinion of the “swampers.”

The encouragement I had received, I thought sufficient to warrant me in locating there ; so the next morning I started, on my return, to procure a horse, and have my books and medicines brought to my new home. The settlement I designed locating in, was a very new one, the majority of the residents holding their lands merely by pre-emption claims, little of the country having been offered for sale by “Uncle Sam.” There was but one frame house in the whole settlement, the dwellings with that exception being composed of logs, some with the bark yet on them, others of split trees, whilst a few, by their squared appearance, gave evidence of the broad-axe, and a greater degree of refinement in their occupants.

Fortunately for me, as I thought at the outset, but unhappily, as the sequel proved, the most influential, or rather the most numerous portion of the settlers of my destined locality, were all of one family, or otherwise closely connected. Being originally from Virginia, they had all the proverbial clannishness of that highly favoured race, and the mortal upon whom one of the “set” smiled was immediately sneezed upon with favour by the rest. They all eat with the same tastes, and used the same pair of spectacles to view men and measures. They were a hardy, vigorous, industrious set, and, divested of their foolish clannishness, irreproachable. The first year, I was a small saviour with them ; the second, having aroused the ire of one of them, the whole clan were as strenuous to break me down, as the year before they had been solicitous to advance my interests ; but the “Swamp

Doctor" had grown beyond their reach. But I anticipate, and must return.

The lands were composed of rich alluvial, deposited by the turbid waters of the Mississippi, and protected by embankments termed "levees," ungratefully thrown up to keep out the very cause to which the country owed its existence. Whenever the levees proved insufficient, or happened to break, chickens and garden-tools fell to a discount, and ducks and cat-hooks rose to a premium.

The tillable land, varying in breadth from one hundred yards to several miles, lay upon the water-courses, which ramified the surface of the country, and formed, when swollen by rains or overflow, a perfect network of watery communications. The land between the tillable or cane ridges, was low swamp, almost quagmire, never thoroughly dry, and almost impassable nine months out of the year.

In the height of summer the country appeared to a fair advantage, surpassing any in the world for producing the great southern staple; but at the time I first visited it, not expecting company, it had on almost its worst garb. The mud was nearly saddle-skirt deep in the roads, and the low lands utterly impassable.

I thought that never yet did country merit its name so well as it; the whole of the Louisiana bottoms being indiscriminately known as the "swamp," and people, male and female, termed "swampers."

The appearance of the country would have disgusted and deterred many from settling, but it had the promise of being a sickly one, and highly suitable for a doctor—and such was the locality I sought; besides, I was certain of making a support, and to accomplish that, I would have submitted to any and all privations.

I returned safely to the "Bend," and being careful in my selection of a boat this time, to see that she had not a

government contract for transporting powder, arrived at my former home, and commenced making preparations for a speedy return to my adopted "swamp."

In a few days, I had concluded my arrangements, and without a sigh or a tear of regret turned my back on my student home, and sought my new location, which I reached without further adventure.

CUPPING AN IRISHMAN.

DURING my last year's attendance on the lectures, I became the inmate, for the purpose of walking the wards, of a certain marine hospital, situated on a certain western river—of which Randolph has recorded his opinion—where the patients receive—paradoxical as it may seem—the kindest, yet the grossest treatment imaginable.

There were four or five brother "Rats" besides myself residing in the hospital, all candidates for graduation, and consequently all desirous of obtaining sufficient medical lore to prevent us from being thrown higher at the "ides of March."

Never before—at least by any of us—was such assiduity displayed; so much mental pabulum devoured; so many of the latent energies of studiousness called into play, as then. No case, however disgusting, was put in the objective; no symptom, however trivial, obscure, or mysterious, could pass unnoticed; and the proudest soar of the bird of Jove would have passed unheeded, had a sore of another description occurred coincidently. Fingers which the previous session had never been employed in higher



surgery than forking a sleepy chum, or picking needle-points out of a pretty seamstress's hand, now gracefully adapted the pliant bandage to the fractured limb, or drew the ruby with the lancet keen. No longer the sweet vision of midnight oyster-suppers illumined the mental horizon, obscured by the listening to of six long lectures daily. No longer at the "wee short hours ayant the twal" was our Ganymede summoned to evoke the spirit of the whiskey jug. No longer musingly reclining did we watch the airy genii of the best cigar, borne up heavenward on the curling chariots of their consuming earthly tabernacles. No longer—pshaw! to comprise the whole, we were studying for our degrees, preparing for the opportunity of passing our opinion on the question, "Whether the sheep-skin of a young graduate, applied to his back, would be a contiguous or a continuous membrane?"

Among the rest was Charley L——, a young fellow of considerable talents—well aware, by the bye, of their possession—who having heard of my reputation for cupping, was not long in bantering me to a trial of skill, having some pretensions that way himself.

"Tensas," said he one night, when we had all assembled in the apothecary's shop of the establishment, to compare notes and discuss the day, "do you think you could cup an Irishman?"

"Cup an Irishman!" repeated I, "yes, or a Dutchman, or an eel, or a buck running, or a streak of slow lightning, or anything that wears four square inches of skin. But why do you ask, Charley?"

"Why, I tried to-day, and it took me so long, and was not well done at that, that I got in late to old D——'s lecture, and he looked as sour at me as if he had caught one of the vice presidents of the P. T. S., drinking something stronger than water."

"Well, just show your Irishman to me, and if I don't scarify and cup him in ten minutes I'll treat—that is, take notes for the whole crowd to-morrow."



"I'll give you half an hour, and you can't do it—scarify and put twelve tumblers on him. I'll bet you a box of cig—hem—give you choice of subjects at the next raising."

"Done! when shall the trial come off?"

"Right off; everything is ready, Irishman and all."

In the medical ward at that time was an Irishman, evidently not long caught, whose greatest disease, from all external indications, was poverty.



The weather being very inclement, and the hospital having the reputation of keeping up good fires, and feeding its inmates pretty well, Pat took an idea into his head that he would lay up within its friendly walls during the severity of the winter; so going to the mayor of the city, whose benevolent heart never allowed him to refuse an applicant for the city's charities, he obtained by his piteous representations and obvious want, a hospital permit, and was, in consequence of it, soon snugly ensconced.

Having the faculty of bending one knee, so that no efforts could straighten the joint, he came in as a case of chronic rheumatism, and manfully the rascal stood the kind exertions to relieve him, so as to deceive the most experienced, and cause the putting of him down in the books as one of the "incurables."

Charley, however, having fine opportunities of investigating the case, had his suspicions aroused as to the reality of Pat's disease, and, determining to settle the matter, selected him as my cupping subject.



"Boys," said he, "I believe Pat's shamming; suppose we tell him that old D—— has directed him to be scarified and cupped, and Tensas can apply the remedy!"

"Agreed!" said all with one voice. Filling a tray with tumblers and a bottle of alcohol, we proceeded in a body to the ward where the victim was placidly reposing.

Seeing us approach with all the apparatus for "making a night of it," Pat imagined he was going to be put on a more stimulating course of treatment, and his eyes fairly glistened, and his leg was, if possible, drawn still more closely to his body as he took a mental view of his situation; no work, good lodgings, pleasant medicine, liberal diet, and at last, to cap the climax of his earthly felicity, the pure "Crame of the Valley."

 "Well, Pat, my boy, how do you rise to-night?"

"Faith, an' good troth, young docthurs, like Inglan's tare for the ould countrry's misry, I don't rise at all at all—not even the laste bit; here is me stretched on me back like a nagur, unable to work for my praties, or a wee drap of the crathur, ochone! ochone!"

"Don't you improve any? Can't you walk a bit?"

"Shure, not a bit! How am I to travel when my fut is bent up to where a rich man's boot shakes hands with a puir man? ochone! Its 'frade I am I'll be always here, instid of warkin', an' drinkin', an' votin', an' bein' a fray-man, as me muther was to the fore."

"I hope not, Pat," said I, desirous of bringing the conversation to a close, "old D—— has directed me to cup you, and that is what has brought us up."

 "Cup me, is it? Well it's reddy I am—shure an' have been for the long time; make it strong with the whiskey; bless the ould man, I tould him the other day, when he was prachin' the could wather, that a good strong cup would cure me as well!"

Great was Pat's consternation when he found that the tumblers, from which arose the odoriferous scent of the alcohol, were to go on him, instead of their contents going

in him. He would have demurred, but he saw the uselessness of the attempt, and therefore assented to the operation with rather a lank visage, I must confess.

I soon repented the wager, and wished myself well rid of my bargain ; the rascal had perfect command of the muscles of his brawny chest, and no sooner would a cup be exhausted and applied, than with a sudden contraction of the muscles, he would send it, with a simmering noise, rolling to the distant side of the bed. I tried every way, in the usual manner, to make them retain their hold, but the task was fruitless ; occasionally one would flatter me it was going to remain, but scarcely could I give my attention to the other side, when off it would come. The half hour wanted but ten minutes of being out, and the cups were still unapplied. I became almost desperate, and called up two long-nailed Kentucky nurses, and made them hitch their fingers in the folds of the integuments on either side, so as to hold the muscles tense until the cups could adhere. This plan bid fair to answer, and the jeerings, remarks, and shouts of laughter, at my apparent discomfiture, which had greeted me in that unusual place for mirth, somewhat subsided ; one minute of the allotted time was left, and but one cup remained unapplied. Up to this time, the steward of the hospital had been waiting upon me, pouring the alcohol, with which to exhaust the cup, from a tumbler nearly full into an empty glass, and then turning it out, he would hand it to me, and by the time it was applied have another ready ; but one remained, as I have said, and I was waiting for it, when Charley, who had a finale for his test which none of us anticipated, suddenly substituted for the empty glass, the one nearly full of pure alcohol ; suspecting no such trick, and there being no time for critical examination, I stuck the candle to it, and essayed as the blaze burst out,

to apply it high up on the Irishman's breast. With a rushing, roaring sound, out burst the flaming liquid all over the poor devil's body.

With a loud scream, amidst the roars of involuntary laughter which attended his advent, Patrick gave a spring nearly to the ceiling, and dashing like fragile reeds the sturdy men who were holding him to the floor, amidst the cries of fire ! fire ! curses in Irish, loud and long, and the crash of the shivering tumblers, as he shed himself of them, took refuge in a large bathing-tub full of water, which, fortunately for him, stood in the ward.

The shouts of fire alarmed the whole hospital, and here, pell-mell, came the patients to see where it was. Forms emaciated by consumption rustled against others distended by dropsy. Four forms lay mixed up in the hall, and all of them could only muster up two pairs of legs, a pair and a half of eyes, and four arms. It was as though a false alarm had been given by Gabriel, and only a partial resurrection had taken place.

In one of the upper apartments was a private patient, labouring under the disease indifferently known as the blue-devils, red-monkeys, seeing injuns, or man-with-the-poker, or rather that mysterious individual had succeeded in overtaking his victim, and awful licks, to be sure, he was giving. His delirium was, that he was an alligator, and that there was a blood-thirsty minnow determined on taking his life at all hazards. Great were his struggles to preserve himself, requiring the constant presence of two keepers to restrain him from self-immolation.

Hearing the shouts of fire from below, they, acting on the conservative principle, left their patient, and sought safety in flight, not long unfollowed by the drunkard, who proceeded down stairs, until he came to the ward from whence the shouts of laughter had not ceased to issue.

The door being open, in he marched, presenting a fearful aspect—nearly naked, his eyes blood-shotten, and glaring with the light of delirium, his teeth clenched, with the lips drawn apart, a slight foam resting on them, blood dripping from a wound in his forehead, and brandishing a huge medical appurtenance, acting on the principle of the force-pump, and familiar to children on a small scale.

Seeing Pat in the tub, the cynosure of all eyes, the man with the red-monkeys took an idea that he was the identical minnow aiming at the vitality of his alligatorship, and this would be a good opportunity of killing him off.

With a loud yell, he sprung towards poor Pat, who, perfectly bewildered, let him get nearly on him, before he thought of getting out of the way.

“Hould him!” he yelled, “the crathur’s gone clane out of his head! Holy jabers! hould him! He’ll be afther the killin’ me!”

But no one having time, or showing a disposition to interfere, he found he would have to bestir himself in his own behalf, and the biggest tracks, and the fastest, and the more of them, were made by the man who, previous to the time, had not moved a step for months. Through the long hall, down the double steps, out of the yard, and over the commons he went, yelling at every jump, whilst the “man with the poker’s” friend, perfectly satisfied at the result, fish-like squatted down in the tub, and then quietly suffered himself to be led back to his room.

BEING EXAMINED FOR MY DEGREE.



READER! have you ever taken a shower-bath of a cold winter's morning? or felt a snake crawling over you whilst in bed? or tried to sleep with a deadly fight awaiting you in the morning? or tried to unite the oil of your nature with the agua pura of a chattering damsel, and found no alkali to effect the union—in other words, popped the question and been—refused? or swallowed poison, and no stomach-pump about? or slept with a man with the small-pox? or tried to write, with a couple of gabbling widows in the next room? or run for a political office? or shook hands with the itch? or been without a friend or dollar, thousands of miles from home, and a catch-pole after you for your tavern bill? or had the toothache? or—think of the most uneasy, miserable melancholy, dolesome action, sensation, occurrence, or thought of your life. Read of nothing for two weeks but earthquakes, famines, bankruptcy, murders, suicides, and distress in its blackest form: work on your imagination until you feel yourself labouring under all these combined misfortunes, and perhaps then you may have a slight appreciation of how a young grave rat feels just before he is examined for his degree. Examined, too, by seven old dried-up specimens of humanity, who look as if they had descended for the occasion from some anatomical museum, and who have looked on death, suffering, and annual ranks of medical aspirants, until they have about as much softness of heart as the aforesaid preparations.

The first course of medical lectures the *student* attends,

is generally distinguished by his devotion to everything but his studies. At the commencement of the lectures he purchases a blank-book, for the ostensible purpose of taking notes of the lectures; but unwittingly his fingers, instead of tracing the chirographical characters, are engaged in caricaturing the professor, who is endeavouring to beat into his and a few hundred kindred heads, the difference between a dirty Israelite and the 'nasty moses of an artery. He devotes the midnight hour to dissecting—pigs-feet, grouse, and devilled bones, or the delicate structure of the epicurean oyster. He strengthens his voice by making the short hours of the night-clad street alive with the agreeable annunciation, especially to nervous invalids and sick children, that he "will not go home till morning." He astonishes the professor of chemistry when lecturing upon electricity, by placing a few pounds of powder in communication with the machine, and blowing the laboratory to atoms, when the experiments are going on. He forms a pleasant surprise for his landlady by slipping into the dining-hall when the meats are on the table, and slyly inserting a dead baby, stolen from the dissecting-room, under the cover, in place of the abstracted pig, producing a pleasant sensation when discovered, and giving a good appetite to the boarders. He puts quick-lime into the young ladies' puff-box, and gives them a wash of lunar caustic to allay the irritation. He and the janitor go halves in raising game-cocks, and the expenses of a whole winter's lectures are often bet on a *main*. There is always some medical book that he wishes to purchase, of course very expensive—and to obtain which he is always writing home for money to parents or guardian. John Smith suffers, and always appears in the police reports, when the first course student is put in the watch-house, and let off by the kind-hearted mayor next

morning, on paying fees and promising to amend. To sum up the whole, the first course, with few exceptions, conducts himself in such a manner, that but little injustice is done him when he is classed with free negroes, rowdies, and low-flung draymen. But the second course —phew! what a change comes over the fellow! You would think, to see him, that when he was born, gravity and soberness had given up the ghost, and their disembodied spirits found a carnal habitation in his cranium.

He now endeavours, by unremitting attention, to retrieve lost time, and impress the professors favourably in his behalf, for he is now a candidate for graduation, and he dare not go home without his degree. His care-clad face is now seen on the foremost bench, listening with a painful absorption, and taking voluminous notes in a book—not the only thing bound in calf-skin in the room, by long odds—and always asks, with the utmost deference, long explanations on some favourite theory of the lecturer, so dazzlingly original, that he did not perfectly understand it, so bewildered was he by admiration. He smells of the dissecting-room, and takes occasion, when in the presence of the professor of anatomy, of jerking out his handkerchief, and with it the half cut up hand of a subject. He eschews tobacco, whiskey, and women, joins the physiological temperance society, and collects facts for a forthcoming work of the professor of practice. He is a strong *vitalist* with “*Old Charley*,” and lies-big with the Liebigian follower of acids and alkalies. He presents the pelvis of the female that obeyed the Lord’s ordinance twenty-six times in ten years, to the professor of obs—ervations, and has a faculty of making himself generally useful to the whole faculty. I, to return to particularities, had followed after the manner of *first coursers*, and would have been a *fac simile* of the candidate, or second course student, had



it not been for my habitual laziness, and perhaps an overweening confidence in my natural powers of impudence to push me through. I had had one or two fights the previous session, in the college, which brought me favourably, of course, before the notice of the faculty, as a quiet, studious gentleman, and removed all doubts from my mind of my having a safe and honourable passage. I held a high head, but was confoundedly frightened, and often wished that I were not an aspirant for the privilege of being a hired assassin, a slayer, without the victim having a chance to hit back. Many, I say, were my misgivings, as I saw the ides of March, the time for examination, approach, that my want of medical lore might knock me higher than the green baize of medicine could cluster—and yet, never was poor mortal better entitled to write M.D. after his name than I, miserable devil as I was. But fear would not keep back the evil day. The bell sounded for class T to go up and be examined, and away we went slowly, as to a summons for pistols and coffee for two, with feelings resembling those of a gambler who has staked his whole pile, and found at the *call* that he has been bluffing up against a *greenhorn* with “*three white aces*.[”]

We were to be examined in separate rooms; our class, consisting of seven members, by as many professors, fifteen minutes being allotted to each professor in which to find out the qualifications of the candidate.

I have already indicated the course I intended to pursue in my examination—impudence and assurance was a new method for a candidate, and might succeed where the old plan would be nearly certain to fail.

Entering boldly, without knocking, the room of one of the professors, who, being a superannuated widower, affected youthfulness very much, and prided himself very

much, like a Durham stock raiser, on the beauty of his calves, to his dismay I found him arranging a pair of elaborate false ones, which showed a great disposition to work around to the front of his spindle-shanks. I had him dead for his vote, sure. I held the calves, whilst he adapted them to their places, and smoking a cigar during his fifteen minutes—he congratulated me upon the progress, he had often remarked, I was making in my studies, and at the expiration of his time, as he conducted me to the door, assured me he would vote for me, adding, “by-the-bye, Tensas, you needn’t mention anything about the calves.”

Well! here’s one vote, sure; would I had the other six as safe, thought I. “Physiology, where are you? You are wanted!” said I, as the door enclosed me with the professor of that branch, who, fortunately for me, was what is called a *vitalist*—sticking up for nature, and bitterly denied the Liebigian theory, which refers so many of the living phenomena to chemistry. He and the professor of chemistry were nearly at daggers’ points upon the subject, and exceedingly excitable whenever it was mentioned in their presence. I knew my cue.

“Take a seat, Mr. Zensas, you appear wondrous full of vivacity,” said the professor, as I entered, singing “A was an artery,” &c. “Yes, sir, and I can assure you it is vivacity of the same kind that a beneficent Creator exhaled into the nostrils of the first-created—life in the sense in which every reasonable man—every man with a proper appreciation of the subject—every man of learning and intellect, and physiological acquisition, regards the vital principle—and not that degraded vitality of the Liebigian system, which makes man’s assimilating functions a chemical operation, and degrades his mighty nature to the level of the ass”—“hideous doctrine,” broke in the

old professor. "Mr. Tensas, would that the whole class possessed your discriminative wisdom; then I could descend to the grave with the proud consciousness that man held of his existence the same exalted opinion that I have always tried to teach; then would I see this chemical theory of life exploded. Theory which degrades man lower than the brutes, makes the subtlest operations of his nature a mere chemical effect, and the noble action of the lungs a scape-pipe for extra heat; magnificent—"

And the excited physiologist, carried away by his feelings, burst into one of his wildest harangues, battling for his favourite theory with more vigour than he had ever displayed in the rostrum—and there never had stood his superior for eloquence—until a knock at the door broke in upon his declamatory current and dammed its waters.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, rubbing his glasses and looking at his watch, "is my time out? Why, I have done all the talking. But go, Mr. Tensas, the views that you advocate attest your qualifications. You may depend upon my vote and influence."

"Two votes safe!" said I, as I regained the lobby, "and now for old '*Roots*,' as the professor of Mat. Med. was familiarly called by the class—he's deaf, but thinks no one knows it but himself. I'll talk low, and he won't know whether I am answering correctly or not."

"Take a seat, Mr. Tensas. How are you to-day? I suppose you are ready for being examined? What is calomel?" All this being said *sotto voce*.

"A drug, sir, that may be called the right bower of quackery, and the four aces of medical murder; referred to by Shakspeare when he said, 'Throw physic to the dogs,' and specifically mentioned by him, though a typographical error has somewhat obscured it, evidencing its

antiquity and universal administration at his time in the lines,

“ ‘ Be thou as pure as ice, as chaste as snow, thou shalt not escape Calumel.’ ”

I spoke in a whisper, but moved my lips as if vociferating.

“ Right, Mr. Tensas ; but you need not holler so as to alarm the college ; I am not deaf. What is the usual dose in the South ? ”

 “ Half a pound for an infant, and the quadrature of the stomach’s circle for a grown negro ! ”

“ What are its specific effects upon the system ? ”

“ The free use of coffins, spit-boxes, mush-and-milk, and the invention of new oaths with which to curse the doctor ! ”

“ What diseases is it usually given in ? ”

“ In all, and some others, from want of a clean shirt to the death-rattle ! ”

 “ Right, sir, right,” said the examiner, never doubting, from my aptitude of reply and perfect seriousness, but that they were to the point. “ What are emetics ? ”

“ Medicines, that a man who has dined badly, and wants to conceal it, should never take ! ”

“ What are the most certain ? ”

“ The first cigar, the first quid, or a spoiled oyster ! ”

“ What is their action ? ”

“ That of money won at gambling ; going back the way it came, and taking a good deal more than it brought ! ”

“ When should lobelia be given ? ”

“ At elections, where the people are writing a man down an ass, and he wants to be *brought-up* ahead ! ”

“ What dose would you give it in ? ”

“ If the patient was likely to leave a rich widow, I’d certainly give a pound ! ”

“When would you think an emetic had acted sufficiently?”

“When I was in doubt whether it was the patient’s tongue or his stomach that was hanging out of his mouth!”

“What are purgatives?”

“Medicines, whose action bears the same relation to that of emetics, which the possums did to the hollow where the dog was waiting to catch them—they go the other way!”

“Suppose your patient had a diarrhœa, what medicine would you give?”

“A quart of brandy, for it would be sure to make him tight!”

“What are the most dangerous preparations of lead?”

“Congressional speeches in Washington, and buckshot in the Southern States!”

“From what does hive syrup derive its name?”

“From the fact of bees living in hives, and there being honey in it!”

“Right, sir! all right! You have answered admirably. I see I must vote for you. You can go, sir!”—and out I went.

“Three votes! Hurrah! Two more, and I’m safe. Now for Old Sawbones. I’m sure of him, though;” for upon surgery I was prepared, and my intimacy with that professor assured me he must be aware of it, and would attribute the errors I might commit to natural trepidation under the circumstances.

He was a man of too much good sense to wheedle or fool with, and notwithstanding my confidence in my good preparation, and his appreciation of it, I anticipated a terrible time with him.

My heart sank as I entered his room. “Be seated, Mr. Tensas. Beautiful weather for this season. Have





an apple? Here is an instrument for deligating the sub-clavian artery, that the maker has done me the honour to call after me. How do you like it? Think I must order a dozen. Do to give to acquaintances," rattled on the kind-hearted professor, trying to reassure me, which he failed to do, for I regarded his pleasantry as somewhat akin to the cat sporting with its victim. " You never shave, Tensas, I believe? Apropos, how old are you?"

I jumped clear out of my seat at the question. The institution required a candidate to be twenty-one, which I was not, by several months.

" It's rather late in the day to inquire that, professor," replied I, " you should have asked that before I paid for your ticket."

" Well, you are old enough to be examined for your degree, I expect, as you'll be rejected, in all probability. How do you make chicken-soup?"

I began to get nettled, thinking he was sporting with me upon my embarrassed condition; but a glance at his face told me he was, or strongly pretending to be, in earnest.

" Professor ——," I said, " I came here, sir, to be examined upon surgery; not to be insulted, sir. What chicken-soup has to do with it, I cannot imagine. If you are disposed to twit me with my early life and humble occupation, I can assure you, sir —"

" Stop! stop! No insult was intended, and though you, with your wisdom of almost twenty-one years, cannot see the connexion between soup and surgery, I can tell you, young man, that the success of the surgeon depends very much upon kitchen medicine. Good soup is easily digested, and strengthens the patient, but bad discomposes, and prevents the reparative action of the system. But this is not answering my question. How do you, sir, ~~make chicken souin?~~"

Seeing that if he was not in earnest, it was the best imitation I had seen lately, I vouchsafed to answer the subtle inquiry.

After I had concluded—"Mr. Tensas, you have left out a very important item in the preparation of your soup: you forgot to mention in the first instance whether you would kill the chicken or not."

The glance I shot at him was too much for his gravity. Bursting into a hearty laugh, he said, "Tensas, I knew you were well prepared, but I thought I would teach you that nothing that may be conducive to the recovery of our patient, is too trivial to be remembered by the physician—also to try your temper. You have too much of the latter. The sick-bed is a fine moderator, however. Go, my dear fellow, study hard, and in ten years I will hear from you."

Tears sprung into my eyes as I wrung his hand, and thanked him, on leaving his room.

Four votes safe. One more, and the others may go to Hellespont. Now for chemistry. "How do you do, Mr. Tensas? Be composed, sir. Take a chair. Happy to have the opportunity of gratifying my chemical curiosity at your expense. I expect you candidates think your professors a very inquisitive set of fellows about this time. Ha! ha! Take a chair, sir."

"Professor —, I am quite well, I am happy to inform you, and desirous of appearing as composed as possible. I also felicitate myself that it is in my power to display to you the fruits, as elaborated in my mind, of those eloquent expositions of chemical science which it has been my good fortune to receive, at such an inadequate remuneration, from your lips. Here is a pamphlet, very denunciatory, I am sorry to announce, of you, that I thought you would like to see. It is by the professor of physiology, and appearing first in a distant city, I thought you might

not be aware of its publication; my admiration and friendship for you, together with my anxiety for the promotion of the Liebigian system, led me to procure a copy at an expense which, though considerable in the present dilapidated condition of my finances, never caused the least hesitation in its purchase, when the great good which doubtless would result from your early acquaintance with its pernicious principles was considered."

It took me at least five minutes, in a slow, monotonous, and pompous manner, to deliver this, and only ten were left to the examiner.

¶ "Thank you, Mr. Tensas, thanks for your kind consideration for myself and the system I am proud to advocate, even though it be through detraction and vituperation. I will examine it at my leisure—we have now other business before us. Give me an exposition, Mr. Tensas, of the Atomic or Daltonian theory."

Down below zero went my hitherto buoyant spirits—my scheme had failed—I am gone, thought I, when up my heart bounded again as he interrupted me with, "Ah! how did you say you obtained this atrocious publication? Mr. Tensas, that gentleman, the author, is doing a great and irremediable injury to the cause of truth and scientific controversy. In arguing with a man of philosophical pretensions, it is to be expected that he will combat only those principles which"—and in a tone of grieved and wounded innocence, not giving me an opportunity of giving him the required exposition of the Atomic or Daltonian theory, *which I very much regretted*, the professor concluded the time allotted him for examination, saying, as I bid him adieu, "Mr. Tensas, I shall be happy to see you at my house to-night; you may rest assured of my vote." I stood in the lobby with perfect ease, confident that in having five votes out of the seven—three being re-

quired to reject—I was soon to be dubbed Doctor of Medicine. The examinations of the other two professors I got through with very summarily, fainting away before one, and occupying the fifteen minutes to restore me, and before the other, being seized with a violent bleeding at my nose ; but in justification of my own honour, I must state that the representations by the rest of the faculty of the splendid examination I had passed before them, influenced their votes, and I obtained all ; and, at the appointed time, received my degree, and a square yard of sheepskin, as an attestation of the progress I had made in medicine, giving me a free permit to kill whom I pleased without the fear of the law.

STEALING A BABY.



I NEVER was partial to dogs (although I dined some years ago very heartily upon the haunch of one, that a rascally Indian sold to the family for venison—the scoundrel's back gave proof not long after, that it, to him at least, was really dear meat); they have always been my aversion, and the antipathy of my earlier years has not been in the least diminished by the part one took—not only out of my leg—but in breaking off as pretty a love-scrape as ever Cupid rejoiced at.

I was attending my last course of lectures, previous to graduation, in a northern state, and as a matter of course had but very little leisure to devote to amusement or love. But nevertheless, even amidst all my occupation, I found time to renew and continue a friendship bordering closely

upon love, even then, which I had formed the previous winter, with a young lady residing in the city.

We were both young—alas! that there similarity ceased—she was beautiful—my ugliness was so apparent that I acknowledged it myself. She was wealthy—I had nothing but my profession, it not then secure. She was—but why continue the enumeration of our contrasts? suffice it to say that we were fast approaching the condition when love in a cottage, and thoughts of an annual searching for sentimental and beautiful names occupy so much of the mind, when an infernal dog (not only of a daddy—but a real caniner) jumped—like a swamp gal into a jar of pickles—into the ring of our felicity, and left me to wail him first, and myself afterwards.

I hated dogs, and the father of my beloved had an equal aversion to Southerners, and according to the degree that class stood in his estimation, the old man and myself disliked the same objects; so his daughter and myself had to meet by stealth.

Twice a week the class of medical students attended clinical lectures at the hospital, which was situated in a retired part of the town; thither the young lady, on the appointed evenings, would repair, and awaiting the departure of the class, we, on our walk homewards, could talk over our love affairs without fear or interruption.

This pleasant arrangement had continued until nearly the close of the session, and we had agreed that when graduated, if her father's obduracy did not soften, we would elope, when some good-natured friend kindly informed her father of our intimacy, and that even as he came then to apprise him, he had met her going to keep her appointment.

Highly incensed, the old man started off to pursue her, but unfortunately did not arrive to prevent, but only wit-

ness an occurrence which attracted considerable attention at the time. Anatomy has been ever with me a favourite branch of my profession ; and when a student, I never let slip an opportunity, time and material permitting, to improve myself in it by dissection. It was a passion with me ; and whenever I met with a person extremely emaciated or finely developed, my anatomical eye would scan their proportions, and instead of paying them the usual courtesies of life, I would be thinking what glorious subjects they would be for museum preparations or dissection ; and even when my audacious lips were stealing a kiss from the pulpy mouth of my lady-love, instead of floating into ecstasies of delight, my anatomical mind would wonder whether, even in death, electricity, by some peculiar adaptation, might not be able to continue their bewitching suction. When holding her soft hand in mine, and gazing into the star-lit ocean of her soul, I would wonder if there was not some peculiarity in the formation of her optic nerve which gave her eyes such brilliancy. My poetical rhapsodies were mingled with scraps of anatomy, and in attempting to write her some verses, after writing the first line,

“The clouds which clothed yon beauteous shore with garments dark and hazy”—

to save me, the nearest approximation I could make to a rhyme, was :

“Pray use with me not the ‘*levator labii superioris alaque nasi.*’”

To tell the truth, I was becoming clean daft upon the *subject*, and consumptive people and orphan children began to look on me with suspicion, but Lucy attributed my conduct to the eccentricities of genius and love.

Connected with the hospital the class attended was a dead-house, as is usual in such establishments, where such patients whose constitutions are not strong enough

to stand the treatment, are deposited after death for forty-eight hours, in order that their friends may reclaim their bodies. The *morgue*, in this institution, was directly under the lecture room, but, as the door was kept locked, it was regarded as sufficiently private.

On the day when my intended father-in-law was made acquainted with the clandestine meetings of his daughter and myself, I had, as usual, accompanied the class to the hospital, and, during the delivering of the lecture, becoming suddenly very faint, I was forced to leave the crowded room and seek the fresh air.

As I passed the door of the dead-house on my return, I noticed that it was ajar, and curiosity prompting me to see what was within, I pushed it open and entered, closing it behind me. There were several bodies, male and female, cleanly arrayed upon the table ; but the object that attracted my attention the most was an infant a few weeks old lying by the side of its dead mother ; they were both so black in the face that I would have suspected foul play, had it not been accounted for by the fact that they were negroes. I strove to depart, but something formed a bond of association between that dead nigger baby and myself, which held me to my place, my gaze riveted upon it.

I wanted just such a subject—one I could carry up in my private room and dissect whilst I was waiting for my meals—something to wile away my tedious hours with—but how to get it was the thing ; the rules of the college and hospital were imperative, and I did not wish to be expelled. I could not beg, borrow, or buy—there was but one way left, and that was stealing.

The plan was simple and easily arranged. It was very cold weather, and under the ample folds of my cloak the baby would be concealed effectually.

Separating it from its dead mother's embrace, I rolled it, tenderly as if alive, into as small a space as possible, and tying it up in my handkerchief, I placed it under my cloak, and left the dead-house.

Had I left immediately for home, on the baby's absence being discovered I would have been suspected immediately; so, great as was the danger, I had no other resource than to return to the lecture-room, and await our regular dismissal, running the chances of detection. No one, on looking at me then, would have accused me of feigning sickness; for, manfully as I strove to be composed, the danger of discovery unnerved me completely, and gave me such a tremor as would have passed for a creditable ague.

I have been often enough in imminent danger of my life, to know what cold sweat and minutes appearing hours are; but the longest life, in the shortest space of time I ever led, was when, in the midst of four hundred students, I sat on those hard old benches, with the dead nigger baby under my cloak, waiting for the lecture to conclude.

It had its end at last; and, waiting till the class had pretty well dispersed, I sauntered slowly away towards my boarding-house, hoping that the inclemency of the weather had kept Lucy from keeping our usual appointment.

A sleety rain had fallen the preceding night, and, like Mrs. Blennerhasset's tears, freezing as it fell, had covered the pavement with a thin coat of ice, making the walking for pedestrians very insecure.

Surely, I thought, as a keen gust came round the corner, piercing my marrow with its coldness, her tender frame will not be exposed on such a day as this! 'tis a good thing, too; for she would be horrified if she found what my burden was;—when her smiling face, with her



beautiful nose red as an inflamed eye, appeared, and told me I did not possess a proper appreciation of the strength of a Kentucky gal's affection.

Somewhat vexed, and, for the first time in my life, sorry to see her, I wished her (as it was so cold) in the hottest place I knew of; but dissembling my feelings, I vowed, when she came up, that if I had received the appointment of surgeon-general to the angels, it could not give me more pleasure than to see her then. I appeared as unconcerned as I could, and sedulously talked to her of such things as are very interesting to lovers and old maids, but deuced tiresome to all other parties concerned.

We had nearly reached the street corner where we usually parted, when, horror of horrors! who should we see coming round the identical corner but the lady's father, accompanied by a man that bore a marvellous resemblance to the city marshal!

Instead of fainting, Lucy uttered a stifled shriek, and gritting her teeth dragged me into a house, the door of which stood invitingly open; one step more, and if Fate had not been against me, these pages would never have been written, that baby would have been anatomized, and in all probability, instead of being an old rusty swamp doctor, "caring a cuss for nobody, nobody caring for me," I would have been the happy head of a family, and, rolling in my carriage, describe the great operation of extracting two jaw-teeth, I saw performed the last time I was in Paris. But the beautiful hath departed, and never was.

A growl, a loud yell, bow! wow! wow! and with mouth distended like an alligator catching his dessert of flies, a huge bull dog sprang at us, placing us in rather a dilemma; it was the dog of a daddy on one hand, and the daddy of a dog on the other.

Unlike Miss Ullin, who preferred meeting the raging of the skies to an angry father, embarked in a skiff and got drowned, I preferred an angry father to a mad bull dog; so seizing Lucy, I made a spring backwards, forgetting in my haste the slippery pavement; our feet flew up, and down we came in the open street, cross and pile, our inferior extremities considerably intermingled, and her ankles not as well protected from the heat as they might have been.

My cloak flew open as I fell, and the force of the fall bursting its envelope, out, in all its hideous realities, rolled the infernal imp of darkness upon the gaze of the laughing, but now horrified spectators.

The old man had witnessed the whole scene; springing to my feet, I assisted the lady to rise, and handed her over to her father. As he disappeared with her round the corner, I volunteered to whip the crowd, individually or collectively, but nobody seemed disposed to accept of my services. Picking up my baby, I explained the whole to a constable who was on the point of arresting me for child-murder.

I sent the subject back to the dead-room, and came as near being expelled from college as ever a lover of knowledge did, to miss it. I have never seen Lucy since, and my haggard features and buttonless coat testify that the swamp doctor is still a bachelor.

THE "SWAMP DOCTOR" TO ESCULAPIUS.

BEHOLD me, then, who late was a city physician of a week's duration, a veritable "Swamp Doctor," settled down quietly, far from the blandishments of fashionable life, and awaiting, as when in town, though with not half of my then anxiety, the "first call."

A veritable "Swamp Doctor," to whom French boots and broadcloth must be obsolete ideas; the honest squatters thinking—and with propriety too—that a doctor who could put broadcloth over their stiles, must have to charge very high to support such extravagance. A charge to which it is almost fatal for a doctor to lay himself liable to.

A pair of coarse mud boots enclose my feet; copperas-coloured linsey pants occupy their proper position; a gaudy plaid vest with enormous jet buttons, blanket-coat and cap, complete the equipment of my outer man. Allow me to introduce you to my horse; for Charley occupies in my mind too large a space to be passed over silently when the "Swamp Doctor" is being described. Too poor to own but one, he has to perform the labour of several, which the fine blood that courses through his veins easily enables him to do; like his master, his external appearance is rather unprepossessing; but would that thy master, Charley, possessed thy integral virtues! High-spirited art thou, old friend—for age is touching thee, Charles, though thou givest no indication of it, save in the lock of gray which overhangs thy flashing eyes. Tall in thy proportions, gaunt in thy outline, sorrel in thy

hue, thou hast proved to me, Charles, that there is other friendship and companioning besides human kind ; thou hast shared my lowly lot for many years, Charles—together we have passed the lonely night, lost in the swamp—breasted many an angry stream, and given light to many darksome hearts, when fever-stricken they awaited my coming, and heard thy joyous neigh and eager bound. I did not know thy good qualities, Charles, when first I bought thee, but the years that have wasted away have taught thy true worth, and made me respect thee as a man. But I must return, Charles, to when we first took up our home within the "swamp."

My residence is as humble as my pretensions or my dress, being composed of split trees, and known in American parlance as a "log cabin."

A lazy sluggish "*bayou*"—as all the small water-courses in this country are Frenchifiedly termed—glorying in the name of the "Tensas," runs, or rather creeps, by the door, before which—on the margin of the stream—stands one of those grand alluvial oaks which could canopy an army.

The day is rather sultry ; a soft wind is moving its branches, on the topmost one of which is perched a mocking-bird ; how wildly he carols, how blithesome his every movement ! Happy fellow ! the barn-yard, the ploughed ground, the berry-laden tree, all furnish him with food. Nature clothes him annually, and the leafy branch beneath shields him from the cold, when clouds and darkness gather around. Happy fellow ! he can sing with a light heart ; his wants are few, and easily supplied. Would that the "Swamp Doctor" had as little care pressing upon him, that he might join you in your song ; would that his necessities were as few and as readily provided for ! Then, too, he could mock at the world, then, too, sing



like thine a joyous strain; but poverty, youthfulness, the stranger's want of loving sympathy, chill the rising ardour of his song, and fling him back upon the cold wave of the world.

But away, care, for the present! away, forebodings of the future! Be as in former days, Swamp Doctor, joyful at heart—thou hast sung in strains as wild as that winsome bird's! Let the harmony that pervades the air paint for thee the future; and of bygones, "let the dead Past bury its dead!"

Thou hast sung, Swamp Doctor! Then tune afresh thy harp, and give one strain before thy "first call" shall still with its responsibilities thy harp, and clothe with sober seriousness thy youthful heart.

Sayest thou so, fair bird? then will I obey. My seat is beneath thy oak—thine I call it, for early residence hath given thee a pre-emption to it, surely—thy song is pouring through my heart, the wave at my feet is glistening in the morning sun, the soft branches overhead rustle and mingle in joyful greenness, yet I cannot sing of these fair scenes; not of them can be the burden of my song. Manhood had not set its seal upon my form; yet not fifty holds an older heart than beats within my breast. In despite of myself my thoughts are with my calling, with the sick and suffering who are yet to cast their eyes upon my face, and from it draw their bright hope or withering despair. What, then, so proper, since sing I must, as breathing a soft prayer to the patron saint of the healing art, and invoking his assistance in my future course?

THE SWAMP DOCTOR TO ESCULAPIUS.

Wrapt in the gloom of Superstition's age,
The trade of Chance and men of low degree,

Long lay the Art which teaches to assuage
The many pangs that mankind heirs, to be,
The Art which stills the maniac's fiery rage,
And bids the horrors of his vision flee ;
Which soothes the pain its power cannot destroy,
And whispers hope, when hearts are rest of joy.

A Star arose amidst the heaven of gloom,
Which bended o'er this glorious Art divine ;
It nobly strove the darkness to illume,
And place the Science on its proper shrine.
It shrank not from the strife, but dared the doom
That meets full oft the soul of high design ;
It 'scaped this lot, was victor loud proclaimed,
And Esculapius with the gods was named.

Years have grown old, and Time's relentless hand
Has fallen on many a head of regal pride ;
Full many a warrior born to use command
Has kiss'd the grave—that dark repulsive bride ;
And many an arch whose fair proportions spanned
The heaving wave, has sunk beneath the tide ;
Earth's mightiest things have triumphed over night,
Gleamed forth in splendour, then been lost to sight.

But not so thou ; for thou hast never known
What 'twas to feel the waning love of them,
Who, once enchanted, drink in every tone,
Yet let Time chant their worship's requiem ;
Forget how praises from their lips have flown,
And eager seek for matter to condemn :
None such thy friends—they prove with deed and heart
That Friendship is of Death a thing apart.

Oh! Patron Saint, sure thine's a brilliant doom!

We judge the future by the seasons past,
And judging thus, eternity will loom
Upon Creation ere thy name is classed
Among the things that were. Thou hast no tomb,
Time cannot say thy glory shall not last,
For it has mocked him from his earliest years
And as he darkens, still more bright appears.

Look on me, Patron Saint, with glance benign!

An humble follower, I bend the knee,
And pray thy knowledge's light may on me shine
In all its splendour and intensity!
So when in death my icy limbs recline,
My name lik'st thine may long remembered be
As one who sought the useful to pursue,
And ease the pangs his fellow-mortals knew.

Yes, let them write upon my lowly grave:

"A true Philanthropist is sleeping here!"
And I no other recompense will crave
To cheer me onward in my future sphere.
Such epitaph as that in truth to have
Were worth all wealth that man amasses here.
High Heaven!—Mock-Bird, the rest must stay unwrit!
"Come, quick, Mass' Doctor, ole Missus got a fit!"

MY FIRST CALL IN THE SWAMP.

"COME quick, Mass' Doctor! ole missus got a fit!" aroused me from my poetical reverie, and brought the invocation to Esculapius to an abrupt termination.

I was just apostrophizing "High Heaven" when the voice outspoke; laughing at the ludicrous transition of sounds and ideas, I rolled up my manuscript and turned to take a survey of the speaker.

He presented nothing remarkable in his appearance, being only a negro messenger, belonging to a small planter living at the extremity of what I regarded as my legitimate circuit of practice; from the appearance of the mule he bestrode, he had evidently ridden in great haste.

Perceiving me to be laughing, and not knowing of anything in his annunciation to create mirth, he thought I had not heard him when he first spoke, and therefore repeated, "Come quick, Mass' Doctor! ole missus got a fit, an' I 'spec is monstrus low, for as I cum by de lot, I hear Mass' Bill holler to Mass' Bob, and tell him, arter he got dun knockin' de horns off de young bull, to cum in de house an' see his gran'-mammy die." But still I laughed on—there was such an odd mingling of poetry, Esculapius, missus, fit, Mass' Bob, and knocking the horn off the young bull, as to strike full my bump of the ludicrous, and the negro, sitting on his little crop-eared mule, gazed at me in perfect astonishment, as a monument of unfeelingness.

Suddenly the recollection that this was my "first call,"



came over and sobered me in a second; my profession, with all its sober realities and responsibilities, was again triumphant, and I stood a serious "Swamp Doctor."

Ordering a servant to catch my horse, I began to prepare for the ride, by questioning the negro as to the nature of the disease, age of the patient, and other circumstances of the case, that might enable me to carry medicines along suitable to the occasion, as my saddlebags were of limited capacity, and none of the people kept medicines at home, except a few of the simplest nature.

"You say your mistress has fits! Does she have them often?" The object of my inquiries will be apparent to the professional reader.

"Not as I nose on, Mass' Doctor, although I did hearn her say when she lived in Georgy, she was monstrus narvus-like at de full of de moon."

"How old is your mistress? do you know, boy?"

 "How ole! why, Mass' Doctor, she's a bobbulushunary suspensioner, an' her hare is grayer dan a 'possum's. Ole missus ole for a fák!"

"Has anything happened lately that could have given your mistress the fit?"

"Nuffin', Mass' doctor, as I nose on, 'cept pr'aps day 'fore yesterday night ole missus private jug guv out, an' she tole wun of de boys to go in de smoke-house and draw him full; de fule chile stuck de lite tu nere de baril, de whiskey cotch, an' sich a 'sploshun never war herd as de ole smoke-house guvin' up de goast!"

"Your old mistress drinks whiskey, then, and has been without any two days?"

"Yes, Mass' doctor, an' I 'spec it's that what's usen her up, for she'd sorter got 'customed to de 'stranger.'"

I had learned enough of the case to give me a suspicion

of the disease ; the verification must be deferred until I saw the patient.

She being very old, nervous, and excitable, accustomed to alcoholic stimulation, suddenly deprived of her usual beverage, and brought under the depressory influences of losing her smoke-house and barrel of whiskey, was sufficient cause to produce a case of disease formed by an amalgamation of *sub-hysteria* and *quasi delirium tremens* ; a not very flattering diagnosis, considered in a moral point of view, to the old lady, whose acquaintance I was yet to make. Knowing how much depended upon the success with which I treated my first cases, it was unnecessary to give me a serious and reflective air, that I should remember how much people judged from appearances, and that mine were anything but indicative of the doctor ; whiskers or beard had I none, and even when wearing the most sober mask, a smile would lurk at the corner of my mouth, eager to expand into a laugh.

But I must start. Labelling a bottle of brandy "Arkansas Fitifuge," I slipped it in my pocket, and mounting my horse, set off upon the fulfilment of my "first call."

When we reached the house, my horse reeking with sweat, from the haste with which we had traversed the muddy roads, I introduced myself, as I had never seen one of the family before, nor they me—as Doctor Tensas, and required to be shown the patient. I saw from the countenances of the assembly, which was more numerous than I had expected to find, that they were disappointed in the appearance of the new doctor, and that my unstriking and youthful visage was working fatally against me. In fact, as I approached the bed, which was surrounded with women, I heard one old crone remark "*sotto voce*," "Blessed J——s ! is that *thing* a doctor ? why, his face's as smooth as an eggshell, an' my son John 'peers a heap

older than him, an' he's only been *pupped* ateen years; grashus nose sich a young lookin' critter as that shuddent gin me doctor's truck; he can't have 'sperience, but sens he's here we'll have to let him go on; half a 'pology is better 'an no commisseration in an aggervated insult."

Paying no attention to her depreciatory remarks, but determined to show them that I knew a thing or two, I commenced examining the patient.

Had I not been prepared by the negro's description, I would have been surprised at the example of longevity in that insalubrious country which the invalid presented. Judging from external appearances, she must have had the opportunity of doing an immensity of talking in her time; her hair was whiter than the inside of a persimmon seed, and the skin upon her face resembled a piece of corrugated and smoky parchment, more than human cuticle; it clove tightly to the bones, bringing out all their prominencies, and showing the course of the arteries and veins beneath; her mouth was partly open, and on looking in I saw not the vestige of a tooth; the great dentist, Time, had succeeded in extracting the last. She would lie very quietly in a dull comatose condition for a few moments, and then giving a loud screech, attempt to rub her stomach against the rafters of the cabin, mumbling out something about "Whiskey spilt—smoke-house ruined—and Ginaler Jack-son fit the Injuns—and she haddent the histericks!" requiring the united strength of several of the women to keep her on the bed.

The examination verified my suspicion as to the nature of the disease, but I had too much knowledge of human nature to give the least intimation to the females of my real opinion. I had been told by an old practitioner of medicine, "if you wish to ruin yourself in the estimation of your female patients, hint that the disease they are

labouring under is connected with hysterics;" what little knowledge I had acquired of the sex during my student life went to confirm his observations. But if the mere intimation of hysteria produced such an effect, what would the positive pronouncing that it was not only hysterics but a touch of drunken mania? I had not courage to calculate upon such a subject, but hastily dismissed it. Pronouncing that she had *fits*, sure enough, I commenced the treatment. Brandy and opium were the remedies indicated; I administered them freely at half-hour intervals, with marked benefit, and towards midnight she fell into a gentle slumber. As I heard her quiet breathing, and saw the rise and fall of her bosom in regular succession, indicating that the disease was yielding to my remedies, a gleam of pleasure shot over my face, and I felt happier by the bed-side of that old drunken woman, in that lowly cabin, in that obscure swamp, than if the many voices of the city were shouting "laus" unto my name. I was taking the first round in the race between medicine and disease, and so far was leading my competitor.

It was now past midnight: up to this time I had kept my place by the bed-side of the patient, and began to get wearied. I could with safety transfer her care now to one of the old dames, and I determined to do so, and try and obtain some sleep. The house consisted of a double log cabin, of small dimensions, a passage, the full depth of the house, running between the "pens." As sleep was absolutely required for the preservation of the patient, and the old dames who were gathered around the fire, discoursing of the marvels of their individual experience, bid fair to step over the bounds of proper modulation in their garrulity, I proposed, in such a way that there was no withstanding the appeal, that we should all, except the one nursing, adjourn to the other room. The old ladies ac-

quiesced without a single demurrer, as they were all dying to have a talk with the "young doctor," who hitherto, absorbed in his patient, had shown but little communicativeness.

The male portion of the family had adjourned to the fodder-house to pass the night, so my once fair companions and self had the whole of the apartment to ourselves. Ascertaining by actual experiment that it was sufficiently removed by the passage to prevent ordinary conversation from being audible at the bed-side of the invalid, the old ladies, in despite of my hints of "being very tired," "really I am very sleepy," and "I wish I hadn't such a long ride to take to-morrow," commenced their attack in earnest, by opening a tremendous battery of small talk and queries upon me. The terrible breaches that it made, had the effect of keeping *mine* on, and I surrendered at discretion to the ladies, *almost* wishing, I must confess, that they were a bevy of young damsels, instead of a set so antiquated that their only knowledge of love was in seeing their grand-children. Besides, they were only exacting from me the performance of one of the prescribed duties of the country physician, performed by him from time immemorial; and why should they not exact it of me? The doctor of a country settlement was then—they have become so common now as to place it in the power of nearly every planter to own a physician, and consequently they attract little regard—a very important character in the community. Travelling about from house to house, he became the repository of all the news, scandal, and secrets of the neighbourhood, which he was expected to retail out as required for the moral edification of the females of his "beat;" consequently, his coming was an event of great and exciting interest to the womenkind generally.

It is a trite observation, "that when you have rendered

yourself popular with the wife, you are insured of the patronage of the husband ;" apply it to the whole sex of women, and it still holds good—married or single they hold the men up, and without their support, no physician can succeed. I had imagined, in my youthful simplicity, that when I entered the swamp, I had left female curiosity—regarding it as the offspring of polished society—behind ; but I found out my mistake, and though I was very sleepy, I loved my profession too well not to desire to perfect myself in all the duties of the calling. I have often had a quiet laugh to myself, when I reflect upon the incidents of that night, and what a ludicrous appearance I must have presented to a non-participant, when, on a raw-hide-bottomed chair, I sat in that log cabin, directly in front of a cheerful fire—for though spring, the nights were sufficiently cool to render a fire pleasant—the apex of a pyramid of old women, who stretched in two rows, three on each side, down to the jambs of the chimney.

There was *Miss Pechum*, and *Miss Stivers*, and *Miss Limsey*, on one side, and *Miss Dims*, who, unfortunately, as she informed me, had had her nose bit off by a wild hog, and *Miss Ripson*, and *Miss Tillot*, on the other. Six old women, with case-hardened tongues, and only *one* poor humble "Swamp Doctor," whom the verdict of one, at first sight, had pronounced a *thing*, to talk to them all ! Fearful odds I saw, and seeing trembled ; for the fate of the adventurous Frenchman came fresh to my mind, who proposed for a wager to talk twelve hours with an old widow, and who at the expiration of the time was found dead, with the old lady whispering vainly "frog soup" in his ear. There it was one against one, here it was six versus one, and a small talker at that ; but the moments were flying, no time was to be lost, and we commenced. What marvellous stories I told them about things I had seen, and



what wonderful recitals they gave me in return ! How, first, I addressed my attention to one side of the pyramid, and then bestowed a commensurate intensity upon the other ! How learnedly we discoursed upon "yarbs," and "kumfrey tea," and "sweet gum sav!" How readily we all acquiesced in the general correctness of the broken-nose lady's remark, "Bless Jesus ! we must all die when our time kums ;" and what a general smile—which I am certain, had it not been for the propinquity of the invalid, would have amounted to a laugh—went round the pyramid, when Miss Pechum, who talked through her nose, snuffled out a witticism of her youngest son, when he was a babe, in which the point of the joke lay in *bite*, or *right*, or *fight*, or some word of some such sound, but which the imperfection of her pronunciation somewhat obscured ! How intently we all listened to Miss Stiver's ghost-story ! what upholding of hands and lap-dropping of knitting, and exclamations of fear and horror and admiration, and "Blessed Master!" and "Lordy grashus!" and "Well, did you ever!" and "You don't say so!" and "Dear heart do tell!" and what a universal sigh was heaved when the beautiful maid that was haunted by the ghost was found drowned in a large churn of buttermilk that her mother had set away for market next day ! How profuse in my expressions of astonishment and admiration I was, when, after a long comparison of the relative sufferings of the two sexes, Miss Stivers—the lady who talked through her nose, in reply to Miss Dims, the lady who had no nose at all—declared that "Blessed Master permittin', arter all their talk 'bout women's sufferings, she must say that she thought men had the hardest time of it, for grashus knows she'd rather have a child every nine months than scour a skillet, and she ought to know!" How we debated "whether the 'hives' were catchin' or not?" and were

perfectly unanimous in the conclusion that "Sheep safern" were wonderful "truck!"

Suddenly one of those small screech, or horned owls, so common in the South and West, gave forth his discordant cry from a small tree, distant only a few feet from the house; instantaneously every voice was hushed, all the lower jaws of the old women dropped, every eye was dilated to its utmost capacity, till the whites looked like a circle of cream around a black bean, every forefinger was raised to command attention, and every head gave a commiserative shake, moderating gradually to a solemn settling. After a considerable pause, Miss Ripson broke the silence. "Poor creetur! she's gone, doctor, the Fitifuge can't cure her, she's knit her last pair of socks! Blessed Master! the *screech owl* is hollered, and she's bound to die, certin!" "Certin!" every voice belonging to the females responded, and every head, besides, nodded a mournful acquiescence to the melancholy decision.

Not thoroughly versed in the superstitions of the backwoods, I could not see what possible connexion there could be between the screech of the owl and the fate of the patient. Desirous of information upon the subject, I broke my usual rule, never to acknowledge ignorance upon any matter to ladies—from the first eruption of Vesuvius to the composition of a plumpitudinizer—and therefore asked Miss Ripson to enlighten me.

I shall never forget the mingled look of astonishment and contempt that the old lady, to whom the query was propounded, cast upon me as she replied:—

"How dus screech owls hollerin' make sick people die? Blessed Master! you a doctor, and ax sich a question! How is ennything fotch 'bout 'cept by sines an' awgrese, an' simbles, an' figurashuns, an' hiramgliptix, and sich like vareus wase that the Creator works out his desine to man's

intimashun and expoundin'. Don't spose there's conjurashun an' majestix in the matter, for them's agin scriptr; but this much I do no—I never sot up with a sick body, and heard a screech owl holler, or a dog howl, or a scratchin' agin the waul, but what they dide; ef they did dent then, they did 'fore long, which pruves that the sine war true; Blessed Master! what weke creetur's we is, sure enuf! I reculleck when I lived down to Bunkum County, North Carliny—Miss Dims, you node Miss Plyser, what lived down to Zion Spring?"—(Miss Dims, being the noseless lady, snuffled out that she did as well as one of her own children, as the families were monstrous familiar, and seed a heap of one another). "Well, Miss Plyser war takin awfil sick arter etin a bate of cold fride collards—I alwase tole her cold fride collards warn't 'dapted to the delicases of her constytushun, but the poor crittur war indoost to them, and wuddent taik my device; an' it wood hav been a grate dele beter for her ef she had, as the sekil wil pruve; poor creetur! ef she oanly had, she mout bin a settin' here to-nite, fur her husband shortly arter, sed ef sarkumstancis haddent altired his 'tarmynashun he didn't no but wat he wood like to take a look at them Luzaanny botums, wair all you had to do to clar the land, war to cut down all the trese and wate fur the next overflow to wash them off; but pr'aps she wuddent nethur, for arter all he dident cum, an' you no she cuddent kum 'cept with him 'ceptin' she dun like Lizey Johnson's middle darter, Prinsanna, who left her husband in the state of Georgy, and kum to Luzaanny an' got marred to a nother man, the pisen varmint, to do sich as that and her own laful husband, for I no that he borrerd a dollar of my sister Jane's sister to pay for the license and eatables for the crowd—but Blessed Master, where is I talking to!—well, as I sed, Miss Plyser made herself monstrous sick etin cold

fride collards ; wen I got where she was they had sent for the doctor, an' shortly arter I kum he cum, an' the fust thing he axed fur arter he got in the house war for a hanful of red-pepper pods—it war a monstrous fine time for pepper and other gardin truck that sesun—an' wen he got them he tuck a han-ful of lobely an' mixt the pepper-pods with it an' then he poured hot bilin' water over it, and made a strong decokshun. Jes as it was got ready for 'ministering; but before it was guy, I heered a screech owl holler on the gable end of the cabin. I sed then as I say now, in the present case, that it war a sine and a forerunner that she was gwine to die, but the doctor, in spite of my 'swadements, gin her a tin cup of the pepper and lobely, but I nude it war no use—the screech owl had hollered, and she war called fur ; an' jes to think of a nice young 'ooman like her, with the purtiest pair of twins in the world, and as much alike as two pese, only one had black hare and lite ise, an' the other had black ise and lite hare —bein' carrid to a grave by cold fride collards apeered a hard case, but the Lord is the Heavens an' he nose ! Well, the first dose that he gin her didn't 'fect much, so he gin her another pint, an' then cummenst stemin' her, when the pirsipashun began to kum out, she sunk rite down, an' begun to siken awful ; the cold fride collards began to kum up in gobs, but Blessed Master ! it war too late, the screech owl had hollered, an' she flung up cold fride collards till she dide, pooer creetur ! the Lord be marsyful to her poor soul ! But I sed from the fust she wood die. Doctor, weed better see how Miss Jimsey is ; it's no use to waste the 'Futifuge' on her, the screech owl has hollered, and she mus go though all the doctors of a king war here ; poor creetur ! she has lived a long time, an' I 'speck her Lord and Master wants her."

And thus saying, the old lady preceded the way to the

sick-room, myself and the five other old women bringing up the rear.

Somewhat, I thought, to the disappointment of the superstitious dames, we found the invalid still buried in a profound slumber, her regular, placid breathing indicating that the proper functions of the system were being restored. I softly felt her pulse, and it, too, showed improvement. Leaving the room, we returned to the other cabin. I informed the family that she was much better, and if she did not have a return of the spasms by morning, and rested undisturbed in the meantime, that she would get well. But I saw that superstition had too deep a hold on their minds for my flattering opinion to receive their sanction. An incredulous shake of the head was nearly my only reply, except from the owl enthusiast.

"Doctor, you're mistaken, certin. The screech-owl has hollered, and she is boun to die—it's a sure sign, and can't fail!"

I saw the uselessness of argument, and therefore did not attempt to show them how ridiculous, nay irreligious, it was to entertain such notions, willing that the termination of the case should be the reply.

It would require a ponderous tome to contain all that passed in conversation during our vigils that night. Morning broke, and I went softly in to see if my patient still slept. The noise I made in crossing the rough floor aroused, and as I reached the bed-side, she half raised herself up, and to my great delight accosted me in her perfect senses.

"I s'pose, young man, you're a doctor, aint you?"

I assured her that her surmise was correct, and pressed her to cease talking and compose herself. She would not do it, however, but demanded to see the medicine I was giving her. I produced the Arkansas Fitifuge, and as it

was near the time that she should take a dose, I poured one out and gave it to her. Receiving it at first with evident disgust, with great reluctance she forced herself to drink a small quantity. I saw pleasure and surprise lighting up her countenance ; she drank a little more—looked at me—took another sip—and then, as if to test it by the other senses, applied it to her nose, and shaking the glass applied it to her ear ; all the results were satisfactory, and she drank it to the dregs without a murmur.

“ Doctor,” said she, “ ef you’re a mineral fissishun, and this truck has got calomy in it, you needn’t be afeard of salavatin me, and stop givin’ it, for I wont git mad ef my gums is a leetle touched !”

I assured her that the “Fitifuge” was perfectly harmless.

“ It’s monstrus pleasant truck, ennyhow ! What did you say was the name of it ?”

“ Arkansas Fitifuge, madam, one of the best medicaments for spasmodic diseases that I have ever used. You were in fits last night when I arrived ; but you see the medicine is effecting a cure, and you are now out of danger, although extreme quietude is highly necessary.”

“ Doctor, will you give me a leetle more of the truck ? I declare, it’s monstrous pleasant. Doctor, I’m mity narvous, gineraly ; don’t you think I’d better take it pretty often through the day ? Ef they’d sent for you sooner I woodent bin half as bad off. But, thank the Lord, you has proved a kapable fissishun, sent to me in the hour of need, an’ I wont complane, but trust in a mersyful Saveyur !”

“ How do you feel now, sister Jimsey ? do you think you’re looking up this morning ?” was now asked by the lady of screech-owl memory.

“ Oh, sister Ripson, thank the Lord, I do feel a power

better this mornin', an' I think in the course of a day or two I will be able to get about agen."

"Well, mersyful Master, wonders will never stop! las nite I thot sure you cuddent stand it till mornin, speshully arter I heerd the screech-owl holler! 'tis a mirrykul, sure, or else this is the wonderfulest doctor in creashun!"

"Did the screech-owl holler mor'n wunst, sister Ripson?"

"No, he only screached wunst! Ef he'd hollered the second time, I'd defide all the doctors in the created wurld to 'ad cured you; the thing would have bin unpossible!"

Now as the aforesaid screech-owl had actually screeched twice, I must have effected an impossibility in making the cure; but I was unwilling to disturb the old lady in her delusion, and therefore did not inform her of that, which she would have heard herself, had she not been highly alarmed.

I directed the "Fitifuge" to be given at regular intervals through the day; and then, amidst the blessings of the patient, the congratulations of the family for the wonderful cure I had effected, and their assurances of future patronage, took my departure for home, hearing, as I left the house, the same old lady who had underrated me at my entrance ejaculate, "Well, bless the Lord I didn't die last yere of the yaller janders, or I'd never lived to see with my own eyes a doctor who could cure a body arter the screech-owl hollered!"



THE MAN OF ARISTOCRATIC DISEASES.

WHAT a queer thing is pride! Pride, that busy devil that breaks off the point of the lancet, and lets human nature die of the big-head before common sense can bleed freely. Pride, that sticks a pretty foot in a kid slipper in the dead of winter, and the owner shortly in the grave. Pride, that keeps man from acknowledging his error, and makes him a slayer of his kind, without being justified by a doctor's degree. Pride—but enough of philosophy.

I have seen this trait of humanity illustrated in various ways, according to the temperament, education, and habits of individuals, and thought I knew something of the various workings of the foible; but until I saw Major Subsequent, never did I know that man could find his chief glory in the possession of loathsome and incurable afflictions. But such is the fact, or rather was the fact, for the Major one day came in contact with rather a familiar friend of mine, whose known liberality is such that he never fails to give his visitors a fee simple to a small plantation. Yes, the Major is no more! he died in my arms, or rather a portion of him did; for my embrace, to have clasped the whole of his frame, muscle, and fat, would have had to be as comprehensive as the recipe for boiling water. Reader! in all probability you never knew him; if twoscore has not been chalked up against you, I know you never did, for I am now an old, bald-headed, wig-wearing Swamp Doctor, and he was buried when my natural hair was long as a Yankee pedlar's remembrance of a small debt due him. Major Billy Subsequent, F. F. V. O. K. M. T. R. L. M.



H. M. A. M. J. O. G. First Family Virginia, Olways Kritical, Major third regiment Louisiana Militia. His mother a Miss Jones of Georgia. Hic Jackson. Yes, here is the grave!

"Major Billy Subsequent, here are some friends of mine that wish an introduction to you. Will you rise? You're sleepy! Ah, Billy, you're a grave subject. But my readers are anxious to know you. Read, then, your biography from your posthumous memoirs. You haven't got your nap out yet?"

Reader, Billy won't rise, so I'll have to do as he directs, and call upon your imagination to prepare him from the material I shall offer.



Major Billy Subsequent, to use rather an old witticism, was one of the most classical men I ever knew. Byron must have had him in his eye—rather a large one would have been required to hold him—when he wrote his beautiful lyric, *The iles of grease! the iles of grease!* for Billy was fat almost to fatuity; nature had set up in his inner man a laboratory to convert everything that entered his mouth into adipose or fatty corpuscles. He would have been a trump at euchre, for in an emergency he could have been played as the right bower at clubs, to which important personage he bore a striking resemblance. It would have been impossible to have hung him, for he had no neck; his head was rather too hard to have suspended him by, and I have yet to learn that a man can be strangulated by tying the rope under his arms; so capital execution was not applicable to him, except when fish, flesh, fowl, or vegetables were to be devoured, and then his execution was capital. He had heard when very young that he, like the balance of the human race, possessed feet; but such was his abdominal rotundity grown to, that to verify the fact by ocular demonstration, was a feat, to accomplish

which he would have failed in *toto*. When we beheld his hands, we were struck with their resemblance to a pair of boiled hams, notched at the ends sufficiently to correspond to fingers and thumbs. He never trusted but one finger in the performance of friendship's manipulation, melancholy experience having demonstrated that human friendship was grown too weak to be intrusted with an entire hand. His face was coveted by every politician in the land, being broad enough to smile upon all parties, and look lovingly to all quarters of the Union at the same time. His wind, like a doctor's visits of charity, was short, but not sweet, his œsophagus being contracted, the proximity of his stomach being supposed to affect it in this respect. Set him to walking, and his puff! puff! sent every inland planter who had cotton to ship to the bayou directly.

Being the lineal descendant of a Scotch prince—who was hung as the finale of an unsuccessful *raid*—and belonging to F. F. V., it is natural to suppose that he shared in the modesty and personal humility that distinguish his like favoured brethren; in fact, he rather externally accomplished the thing, imitating them in every particular of common glorification, and taking exclusive grounds in things that they never dreamt of as forming subjects for self-gratulation. They referred to tradition, genealogy, or other equally as creditable sources, to prove their purity of blood and excellence of family; but Major Subsequent had another test, which with him was indubitably decisive of the present and past purity of his genealogical tree. Up to the time of my acquaintance with him, his wife, children, and self, all were, and had been from youth, in possession of various incurable and afflicting disorders, but according to the Major's statement not one of them had ever had a plebeian or unfashionable disease. This was the Major's chief source of glory and honour. The blood

of his family was so pure, that only aristocratic diseases could make any morbific impression on their susceptible systems.

He prided himself upon his Ciceronian wart and bluff Harry the Eighth proportions; every twinge of the gout was a thrill of exquisite pleasure, for only high living and pure blood could have the gout. His eldest son had the King's Evil—the King's Evil, mind you! Major Subsequent was one of those that believed that kings existed in a perpetual atmosphere of delight, and that consequently the King's Evil was only a play-synonyme for the king's pleasure, so his eldest born had little of his sympathy. His youngest son was terribly humpbacked, but this gave the Major no uneasiness, for were not Alexander and Richard humpbacked kings? One of his daughters was an old maid, "but then," argued the Major, consoling his child under this terrible disease, "Queen Elizabeth and Cleopatra died old maids, and why not you?" Another had a perpetual leer upon her countenance, "but then," quoth the Major, turning to a volume of Shakspeare, "there was a king Lear, a kingly precedent, Miss Subsequent; so don't talk of being operated upon for strabismus." His wife—but enough, you know the man. The Major was very proud of his family, or rather of his family's diseases, cherishing them in much the same spirit that Jenner, the father of vaccination, did his experimental cow, for the scab upon her.

I became a great favourite with the Major, not that I was diseased in any way, but on the contrary always enjoyed good health, but he said that as I was one of the chivalry, he was certain if I ever got sick, it would be a gentlemanly disease, and none of your d——n plebeian, chill-and-fever, poor folks' affections.

I used to visit the Major's house often, for the purpose

of studying his character, and getting a good dinner; for the Major fed well, all but horses, and they had to trust the chances of a stray nubbin falling through the chinks of the stable loft. Taking good care of a horse meant, with him, tying him to a fence, with nothing to eat but the dead wood. Taking extraordinary care signified hitching him to a green sapling, where he could have the privilege of gnawing the bark.

My open admiration of his character soon elevated me to the post of family physician—nearly a sinecure—for the Major was afraid to take medicine, not wishing to part with his hereditary honours.

One day, I had just finished my dinner at home, and had taken, cigar in mouth, my usual seat beneath a favourite oak, to indulge in a fit of meditation, when I saw the dust up the bayou road shaken up by a half-naked negro, who, having no pockets in his shirt, and being hatless, holding a letter in his teeth, was urging his mule along at the top of his speed. At a glance, I knew it was the Major's boy, or rather mule, for no one in the settlement save him owned an animal, the ribs of which could be counted at almost any distance.

They arrived; and first asking me for a chaw of tobacco, the negro delivered the note, which, true to my surmise, was from the Major, and written apparently under high excitement, requesting me to come up immediately, as he apprehended something terrible had either happened, or was going to occur.

My horse being ready saddled, in a short time I was at the Major's, whom I found waddlin_g up and down his long gallery, his path distinctly marked by the huge drops of sweat that had fallen from his brow.

“ Doctor, I am truly rejoiced at your arrival; my worst apprehensions have been excited upon a subject, upon

which the honour of my family depends, and the firm fame of my ancestors."

Thinking from his language there was a lady in the case, I told him that marriage would cure all indiscretions, and muttered something about accidents and the best of families. The Major understood only the conclusion.

"Best of families!" repeated he. "Yes, doctor, not only of the best, but the very best. I pride myself upon my blood. Mine is no upstart claim of a thousand years or so, but, doctor, drawn from the very creation, and transmitted in a stream of pure brilliancy down to me. But, doctor, something has occurred to-day, I fear, which, if it be as my darkest and gloomiest thoughts suggest, will prove my death, bring ruin and disgrace upon my house, and extinguish the ancient torch of the Subsequents like a farthing dip. I have looked over my list of ancestors, from the creation up, and find to my ineffable horror not one of them ever died with any but a noble and kingly disease. I know I have received the stream in all its pristine purity—and oh, doctor, on your honour as a man, on the awful sanctity of your calling, never reveal to mortal the terrible disclosure I am about to make. Doctor Tensas, I fear my eldest born has got—faugh! I sicken at the thought—the chill and fever! Oh, Lord! terrible! awful! horrible! Is it not enough to madden a man, to think, after having only noble diseases in his family, for twenty thousand years at least, that a cursed, plebeian, vulgar disease, which every negro and low poor man can have, should dare present itself in the habitation of aristocratic and kingly affections. Doctor, if it be as I fear, I shall go deranged! I shall die! I will disinherit the rascal! He shall change his name! To think of gout, king's evil, humpback, and their royal brethren, to attest my purity of blood, and then for chi—

faugh! it is too horrible to be true! Go, doctor, examine him. Heaven grant my fears may be groundless, or I shall certainly die. I cannot survive the disgrace."

Going into the room where the patient lay, I examined him, and sure enough chill and fever *was there* in all its perfection.

Fearing the effect the revelation might have upon the Major, I attempted a pious fraud, and blundered out something about its being a strange, singular, and anomalous affection, not laid down in the books—never had seen anything like it before. Certainly not chill and fever, though even if it were—ha! ha!—it was still a disease, though debased very much in modern times, I must confess, not to be looked on with coolness, as James the Second and Oliver Cromwell were said to have died of it.

"Doctor Tensas, don't deceive me," said the Major. I assured him that I did not—that his son had not the chill and fever. I was not fully assured of the nature of his disease, but he might rest easy, as far as ague was concerned.

Reassured and comforted by my positive declaration and manner, the Major heaved a deep sigh of relief, and asked me to stay all night. I would have assented, but my old sorrel, remembering his well filled trough at home, and fearing some such arrangement, put in an impatient and positive nay, and I departed.

A day passed in quietude; but who knows what the morrow will bring forth? I was summoned, in greater haste than before, to the Major's. On reaching there, I found him writhing in pain, both bodily and mentally, with a handful of buttons, and a couple of jaw-teeth with them, somewhat decayed.

"Doctor Tensas," he thundered out, "by the Eternal



you deceived me. My son had the chill and fever. He has it now! Now, sir, now! Look at these buttons off and these teeth shaken out, and then tell me if the blood of a line of noble ancestors is not defiled, and my family disgraced for ever?—my son have the chill and fever!” and a shudder ran over his frame. “Chill and fever! Ha! ha! ha!” a fit of hysterical, demoniacal laughter came over him. “Chill and fever! Ha! ha! ha!” gurgled, mixed with the death-rattle from his throat. I looked in his face—and thus died Major Billy Subsequent, F. F. V. &c., of a chill and fever his son had!

THE INDEFATIGABLE BEAR-HUNTER.

IN my round of practice, I occasionally meet with men whose peculiarities stamp them as belonging to a class composed only of themselves. So different are they in appearance, habits, taste, from the majority of mankind, that it is impossible to classify them, and you have therefore to set them down as queer birds “of a feather,” that none resemble sufficiently to associate with.

I had a patient once who was one of these queer ones; gigantic in stature, uneducated, fearless of real danger, yet timorous as a child of superstitious perils, born literally in the woods, never having been in a city in his life, and his idea of one being that it was a place where people met together to make whiskey, and form plans for swindling country folks. To view him at one time, you would think him only a whiskey-drinking, bear-fat-loving mortal; at other moments, he would give vent to ideas,

proving that beneath his rough exterior there ran a fiery current of high enthusiastic ambition.

It is a favourite theory of mine, and one that I am fond of consoling myself with, for my own insignificance, that there is no man born who is not capable of attaining distinction, and no occupation that does not contain a path leading to fame. To bide our time is all that is necessary. I had expressed this view in the hearing of Mik-hoo-tah, for so was the subject of this sketch called, and it seemed to chime in with his feelings exactly. Born in the woods, and losing his parents early, he had forgotten his real name, and the bent of his genius inclining him to the slaying of bears, he had been given, even when a youth, the name of Mik-hoo-tah, signifying "the grave of bears," by his Indian associates and admirers.

To glance in and around his cabin, you would have thought that the place had been selected for ages past by the bear tribe to yield up their spirits in, so numerous were the relics. Little chance, I ween, had the cold air to whistle through that hut, so thickly was it tapestried with the soft, downy hides, the darkness of the surface relieved occasionally by the skin of a tender fawn, or the short-haired irascible panther. From the joists depended bear-hams and tongues innumerable, and the ground outside was literally white with bones. Ay, he was a bear-hunter, in its most comprehensive sense—the chief of that vigorous band, whose occupation is nearly gone—crushed beneath the advancing strides of romance-destroying civilization. When his horn sounded—so tradition ran—the bears began to draw lots to see who should die that day, for painful experience had told them the uselessness of all endeavouring to escape. The "Big Bear of Arkansas" would not have given him an hour's extra work, or raised a fresh wrinkle on his already care-corru-

gated brow. But, though almost daily imbruining his hands in the blood of Bruin, Mik-hoo-tah had not become an impious or cruel-hearted man. Such was his piety, that he never killed a bear without getting down on his knees—to skin it—and praying to be d—ned if it warn't a buster; and such his softness of heart, that he often wept, when he, by mistake, had killed a suckling bear—depriving her poor offspring of a mother's care—and found her too poor to be eaten. So indefatigable had he become in his pursuit, that the bears bid fair to disappear from the face of the swamp, and be known to posterity only through the one mentioned in Scripture, that assisted Elisha to punish the impertinent children, when an accident occurred to the hunter, which raised their hopes of not being entirely exterminated.

One day, Mik happened to come unfortunately in contact with a stray grizzly fellow, who, doubtless in the indulgence of an adventurous spirit, had wandered away from the Rocky Mountains, and formed a league for mutual protection with his black and more effeminate brethren of the swamp. Mik saluted him, as he approached, with an ounce ball in the forehead, to avenge half a dozen of his best dogs, who lay in fragments around; the bullet flattened upon his impenetrable skull, merely infuriating the monster; and before Mik could reload, it was upon him. Seizing him by the leg, it bore him to the ground, and ground the limb to atoms. But before it could attack a more vital part, the knife of the dauntless hunter had cloven its heart, and it dropped dead upon the bleeding form of its slayer, in which condition they were shortly found by Mik's comrades. Making a litter of branches, they placed Mik upon it, and proceeded with all haste to their camp, sending one of the company by a near cut for me, as I was the nearest physician.

When I reached their temporary shelter I found Mik doing better than I could have expected, with the exception of his wounded leg, and that, from its crushed and mutilated condition, I saw would have to be amputated immediately, of which I informed Mik. As I expected, he opposed it vehemently; but I convinced him of the impossibility of saving it, assuring him if it were not amputated, he would certainly die, and appealed to his good sense to grant permission, which he did at last. The next difficulty was to procure amputating instruments, the rarity of surgical operations, and the generally slender purse of the "Swamp Doctor," not justifying him in purchasing expensive instruments. A couple of bowie-knives, one ingeniously hacked and filed into a saw—a tourniquet made of a belt and piece of stick—a gun-screw converted for the time into a tenaculum—and some buckskin slips for ligatures, completed my case of instruments for amputation. The city physician may smile at this recital, but I assure him many a more difficult operation than the amputation of a leg, has been performed by his humble brother in the "swamp," with far more simple means than those I have mentioned. The preparations being completed, Mik refused to have his arms bound, and commenced singing a bear song; and throughout the whole operation, which was necessarily tedious, he never uttered a groan, or missed a single stave. The next day, I had him conveyed by easy stages to his pre-emption; and tending assiduously, in the course of a few weeks, he had recovered sufficiently for me to cease attentions. I made him a wooden leg, which answered a good purpose; and with a sigh of regret for the spoiling of such a good hunter, I struck him from my list of patients.

A few months passed over and I heard nothing more of him. Newer, but not brighter, stars were in the as-



endant, filling with their deeds the clangor trump of bear-killing fame, and, but for the quantity of bear-blankets in the neighbouring cabins, and the painful absence of his usual present of bear-hams, Mik-hoo-tah bid fair to suffer that fate most terrible to aspiring ambitionists—forgetfulness during life. The sun, in despair at the stern necessity which compelled him to yield up his tender offspring, day, to the gloomy grave of darkness, had stretched forth his long arms, and, with the tenacity of a drowning man clinging to a straw, had clutched the tender whispering straw-like topmost branches of the trees—in other words it was near sunset—when I arrived at home from a long wearisome semi-ride-and-swim through the swamp. Receiving a negative to my inquiry whether there were any new calls, I was felicitating myself upon a quiet night beside my tidy bachelor hearth, undisturbed by crying children, babbling women, or amorous cats—the usual accompaniments of married life—when, like a poor henpecked Benedick crying for peace when there is no peace, I was doomed to disappointment. Hearing the splash of a paddle in the bayou running before the door, I turned my head towards the bank, and soon beheld, first the tail of a coon, next his body, a human face, and, the top of the bank being gained, a full-proportioned form clad in the garments which, better than any printed label, wrote him down raftsmen, trapper, bear-hunter. He was a messenger from the indefatigable bear-hunter, Mik-hoo-tah. Asking him what was the matter, as soon as he could get the knots untied which two-thirds drunkenness had made in his tongue, he informed me, to my sincere regret, that Mik went out that morning on a bear-hunt, and in a fight with one had got his leg broke all to flinders, if possible worse than the other, and that he wanted me to come quickly. Getting into the canoe, which

awaited me, I wrapped myself in my blanket, and yielding to my fatigue, was soon fast asleep. I did not awaken until the canoe striking against the bank, as it landed at Mik's pre-emption, nearly threw me in the bayou, and entirely succeeded with regard to my half-drunken paddler, who—like the sailor who circumnavigated the world and then was drowned in a puddle-hole in his own garden—had escaped all the perils of the tortuous bayou to be pitched overboard when there was nothing to do but step out and tie the dug-out. Assisting him out of the water, we proceeded to the house, when, to my indignation, I learnt that the drunken messenger had given me the long trip for nothing, Mik only wanting me to make him a new wooden leg, the old one having been completely demolished that morning.

Relieving myself by a satisfactory oath, I would have returned that night, but the distance was too great for one fatigued as I was, so I had to content myself with such accommodations as Mik's cabin afforded, which, to one blessed like myself with the happy faculty of ready adaptation to circumstances, was not a very difficult task.

I was surprised to perceive the change in Mik's appearance. From nearly a giant, he had wasted to a mere huge bony frame-work; the skin of his face clung tightly to the bones, and showed nothing of those laughter-moving features that were wont to adorn his visage; only his eye remained unchanged, and it had lost none of its brilliancy—the flint had lost none of its fire.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Mik? I have never seen any one fall off so fast; you have wasted to a skeleton—surely you must have the consumption."

"Do you think so, Doc? I'll soon show you whether the old bellows has lost any of its force!" and hopping to the door; which he threw wide open, he gave a death-hug

rally to his dogs, in such a loud and piercing tone, that I imagined a steam whistle was being discharged in my ear, and for several moments could hear nothing distinctly.

"That will do! stop!" I yelled, as I saw Mik drawing in his breath preparatory to another effort of his vocal strength; "I am satisfied you have not got consumption; but what has wasted you so, Mik? Surely, you ain't in love?"

"Love! h--ll! you don't suppose, Doc, even if I was 'tarnimed to make a cussed fool of myself, that there is any gal in the swamp that could stand that hug, do you?" and catching up a huge bull-dog, who lay basking himself by the fire, he gave him such a squeeze that the animal yelled with pain, and for a few moments appeared dead. "No, Doc, it's grief, pure sorrur, sorrur, Doc! when I looks at what I is now and what I used to be! Jes think, Doc, of the fust hunter in the swamp having his sport spilte, like bar-meat in summer without salt! Jes think of a man standin' up one day and blessing old Master for having put bar in creation, and the next cussing high heaven and low h--ll 'cause he couldn't 'sist in puttin' them out! Warn't it enough to bring tears to the eyes of an Injun tater, much less take the fat off a bar-hunter? Doc, I fell off like 'simmons arter frost, and folks as doubted me, needn't had asked whether I war 'ceitful or not, for they could have seed plum threw me! The bar and painter got so saucy that they'd cum to the tother side of the bayou and see which could talk the impudentest! 'Don't you want some bar-meat or painter blanket?' they'd ask; 'bars is monstrous fat, and painter's hide is mighty warm!' Oh! Doc, I was a miserable man! The sky warn't blue for me, the sun war always cloudy, and the shade-trees gin no shade

for me. Even the dogs forgot me, and the little children quit coming and asking, ‘Please, Mr. Bar-Grave, catch me a young bar or a painter kitten.’ Doc, the tears would cum in my eyes and the hot blood would cum biling up from my heart, when I’d hobble out of a sundown and hear the boys tell, as they went by, of the sport they’d had that day, and how the bar fit ’fore he was killed, and how fat he war arter he was slayed. Long arter they was gone, and the whip-poor-will had eat up their voices, I would sit out there on the old stump, and think of the things that used to hold the biggest place in my mind when I was a boy, and p’raps sense I’ve bin a man.

“I’d heard tell of distinction and fame, and people’s names never dying, and how Washington and Franklin, and Clay and Jackson, and a heap of political dieshunary-folks, would live when their big hearts had crumbled down to a rifle-charge of dust; and I begun, too, to think, Doc, what a pleasant thing it would be to know folks a million years off would talk of me like them, and it made me ’tarmine to ’stinguish myself, and have my name put in a book with a yaller kiver. I warn’t a genus, Doc, I nude that, nor I warn’t dieshunary; so I detarmined to strike out in a new track for glory, and ’title myself to be called the ‘bear-hunter of Ameriky.’ Doc, my heart jumpt up, and I belted my hunting-shirt tighter for fear it would lepe out when I fust spoke them words out loud.

“‘The bear-hunter of Ameriky!’ Doc, you know whether I war ernin’ the name when I war ruined. There is not a child, white, black, Injun, or nigger, from the Arkansas line to Trinity, but what has heard of me, and I were happy when”—here a tremor of his voice and a tear glistening in the glare of the fire told the old fellow’s emotion—“when—but les take a drink—Doc, I found I was dying—I war gettin’ weaker and weaker—I nude

your truck warn't what I needed, or I'd sent for you. A bar-hunt war the medsin that my systum required, a fust class bar-hunt, the music of the dogs, the fellers a screaming, the cane poppin', the rifles crackin', the bar growlin', the fight hand to hand, slap goes his paw, and a dog's hide hangs on one cane and his body on another, the knife glistenin' and then goin' plump up to the handle in his heart!—Oh! Doc, this was what I needed, and I swore, since death were huggin' me, anyhow, I mite as well feel his last grip in a bar-hunt.

"I seed the boys goin' long one day, and haled them to wait awhile, as I believed I would go along too. I war frade if I kept out of a hunt much longer I wood get outen practis. They laughed at me, thinkin' I war jokin'; for wat cood a sick, old, one-legged man do in a bar-hunt? how cood he get 'threw the swamp, and vines, and canes, and backwater? and s'pose he mist the bar, how war he to get outen the way?

"But I war 'tarmined on goin'; my dander was up, and I swore I wood go, tellin' them if I coudent travel 'bout much, I could take a stand. Seein' it war no use tryin' to 'swade me, they saddled my poney, and off we started. I felt better right off. I knew I cuddent do much in the chase, so I told the fellers I would go to the cross-path stand, and wate for the bar, as he would be sarten to cum by thar. You have never seed the cross-path stand, Doc. It's the singularest place in the swamp. It's rite in the middle of a canebrake, thicker than har on a bar-hide, down in a deep sink, that looks like the devil had cummenst diggin' a skylite for his pre-emption. I knew it war a dangersome place for a well man to go in, much less a one-leg cripple; but I war 'tarmined that time to give a deal on the dead wood, and play my hand out. The boys gin me time to get to the stand, and then cum-



menst the drive. The bar seemed 'tarmined on disappointing me, for the fust thing I heard of the dogs and bar, they was outen hearing. Everything got quiet, and I got so wrathy at not being able to foller up the chase, that I cust till the trees cummenst shedding their leaves and small branches, when I herd them lumbrin back, and I nude they war makin' to me. I primed old 'bar death' fresh, and rubbed the frizin, for it war no time for rifle to get to snappin'. Thinks I, if I happen to miss, I'll try what virtue there is in a knife—when, Doc, my knife war gone. H—ll! bar, for God's sake have a soft head, and die easy, for I *can't* run!

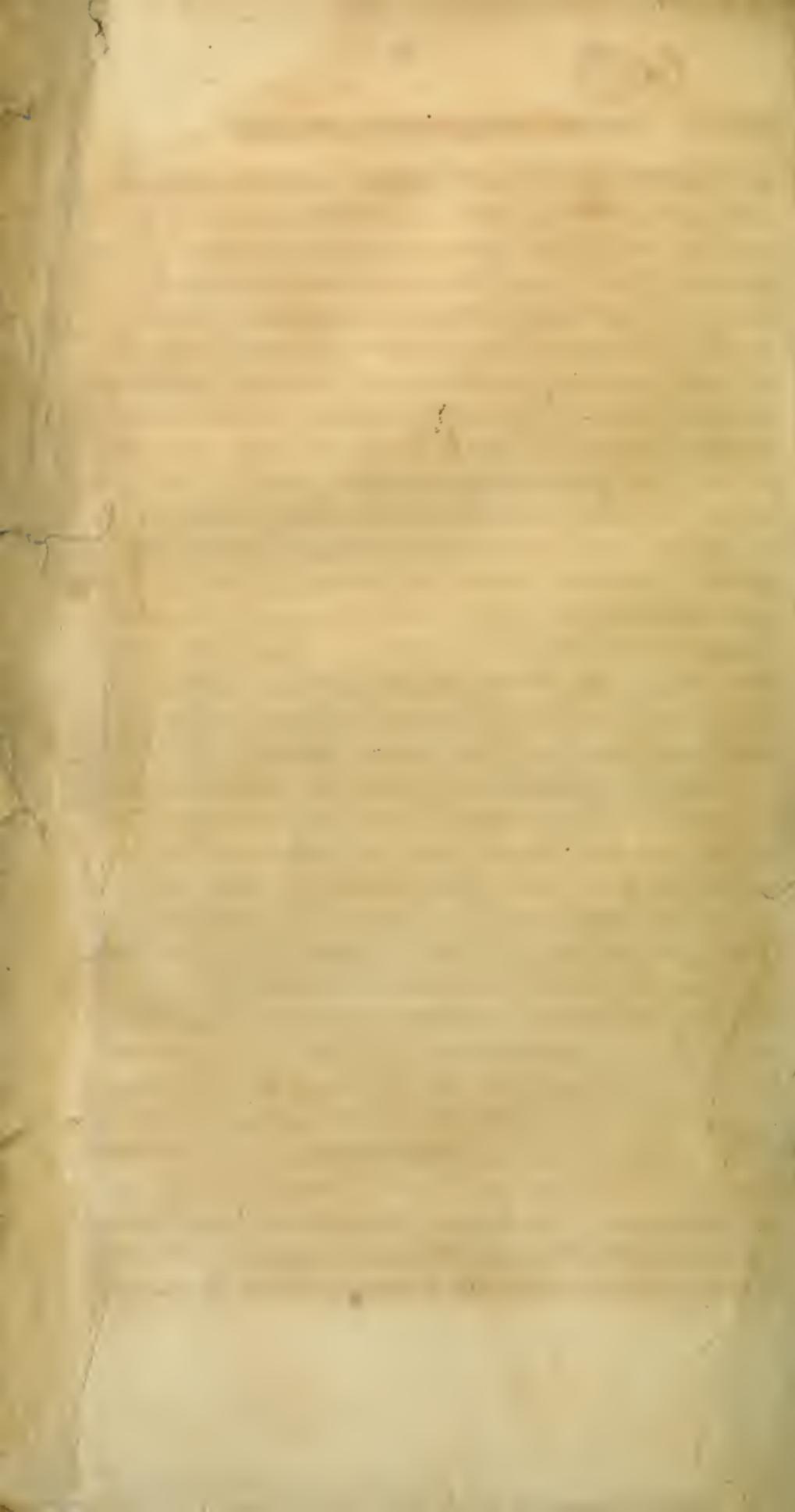
"Doc, you've hearn a bar bustin' threw a cane-brake, and know how near to a harrycane it is. I almost cummenst dodgin' the trees, thinkin' it war the best in the shop one a comin', for it beat the loudest thunder ever I heard ; that ole bar did, comin' to get his death from an ole, one-legged cripple, what had slayed more of his brethren than his nigger foot had ever made trax in the mud. Doc, he heerd a *monstrus long ways ahead of the dogs*. I warn't skeered, but I must own, as I had but one shot, an' no knife, I wud have prefurd they had been closer. But here he cum! he bar—big as a bull—boys off h—ll-wards—dogs nowhar—no knife—but one shot—and only one leg that cood run !

"The bar 'peered s'prised to see me standin' ready for him in the openin' ; for it war currently reported 'mong his brethren that I war either dead, or no use for bar. I thought fust he war skeered ; and, Doc, I b'leve he war, till he cotch a sight of my wooden leg, and that toch his pride, for he knew he would be hist outen every she bear's company, ef he run from a poor, sickly, one-legged cripple, so on he cum, a small river of slobber pourin from his mouth, and the blue smoke curlin outen his ears. I tuck

good aim at his left, and let drive. The ball struck him on the eyebrow, and glanced off, only stunnin' him for a moment, jes givin' me time to club my rifle, an' on he kum, as fierce as old grizzly. As he got in reach, I gin him a lick 'cross the temples, brakin' the stock in fifty pieces, an' knockin' him senseless. I struv to foller up the lick, when, Doc, I war fast—my timber toe had run inter the ground, and I cuddent git out, though I jerked hard enuf almost to bring my thigh out of joint. I stuped to unscrew the infurnal thing, when the bar cum too, and cum at me agen. Vim! I tuck him over the head, and, cochunk, he keeled over. H—ll! but I cavorted and pitched. Thar war my wust enemy, watin' for me to giv him a finisher, an' *I cuddent git at him*. I'd 'cummense unscrewin' leg—here cum bar—vim—cochunk—he'd fall out of reach—and, Doc, *I cuddent git to him*. I kept workin' my body round, so as to unscrew the leg, and keep the bar off till I cood 'complish it, when jes as I tuck the last turn, and got loose from the d——d thing, here cum bar, more venomous than ever, and I nude thar war death to one out, and comin' shortly. I let him get close, an' then cum down with a perfect tornado on his head, as I thought; but the old villin had learnt the dodge—the barrel jes struck him on the side of the head, and glanst off, slinging itself out of my hands bout twenty feet 'mongst the thick cane, and thar I war in a fix sure. Bar but little hurt—no gun—no knife—no dogs—no frens—no chance to climb—an' *only one leg that cood run*. Doc, I jes cummenst makin' 'pologies to ole Master, when an idee struck me. Doc, did you ever see a piney woods nigger pullin at a sassafras root? or a suckin' pig in a tater patch arter the big yams? You has! Well, you can 'magin how I jurkt at that wudden leg, for it war the last of pea-time with me, sure, if I didn't rise 'fore bar did.



"The way that bar's flesh giv in to the soft impresshuns of that leg, war an honor to the mederkal perfeshun for having invented sich a weepun."—Page 175.



At last, they both cum up, bout the same time, and I braced myself for a death struggle.

"We fit all round that holler! Fust I'd foller bar, and then bar would chase me! I'd make a lick, he'd fend off, and showin' a set of teeth that no doctor, 'cept natur, had ever wurkt at, cum tearin' at me! We both 'gan to git tired, I heard the boys and dogs cumin', so did bar, and we were both anxshus to bring the thing to a close 'fore they cum up, though I wuddent thought they were intrudin' ef they had cum up some time afore.

"I'd worn the old leg pretty well off to the second jint, when, jest 'fore I made a lick, the noise of the boys and the dogs cummin' sorter confused bar, and he made a stumble, and bein' off his guard I got a fair lick! The way that bar's flesh giv in to the soft impresshuns of that leg war an honor to the mederkal perfeshun for having invented sich a weepun! I hollered—but you have heered me holler an' I won't describe it—I had whipped a bar in a fair hand to hand fight—me, an old sickly one-legged bar-hunter! The boys cum up, and, when they seed the ground we had fit over, they swore they would hav thought, 'stead of a bar-fight, that I had been cuttin' cane and deadenin' timber for a corn-patch, the sile war so worked up, they then handed me a knife to finish the work.

"Doc, les licker, it's a dry talk—when will you make me another leg? for bar-meat is not over plenty in the cabin, and I feel like tryin' another!"

LOVE IN A GARDEN.

IN the whole range of human attributes there are not two more antagonistical qualities than courage and cowardice; yet, how frequently we find them existing in the same person, ensconced under the same coat of skin! In the form that contains a spirit that would face with unblenching eye the fiercest peril of man's existence, we will often discover a timorous sprite, who hems and hesitates, and falters and trembles, at an enemy no more formidable than a pair of soft blue eyes, pouring their streams of liquid subduing tenderness, or else a brace of piercing black orbits, which, like the fire of the ancient Greeks, burn the fiercer for the water which love pours over them, in the shape of tears.

And, odd as it may seem, this discordant association of heroism and timidity is not found in weak effeminate nervous men, but in those whose almost gigantic proportions, eagle eye, and dauntless bearing convey any idea but that there is stuff for trembling in their stalwart frames. But they are the ones who generally manifest the greatest cowardice—place them before a battery of girls' eyes, and it proves literally a *galvanic* battery, shocking them to such a degree that they usually do something they never intended, and say things that they never meant. Let one of these animals be in love, and what a mess he generally makes of the affair! Did you ever know one to “pop the question” in a respectable civilized manner?—That is, if he ever exalted his courage sufficiently to get that near to matrimony. My word for

it—never. No suit for breach of promise could be ever brought against one of them—for such is the non-committalism of their incoherency, that no woman, on her oath, could avow, even were they *conjugated* at the time, that he ever asked her to marry him ; the intuitive feeling of her sex alone enabled her to draw the idea that he was addressing her, from the mass of his discordant, incoherent, lingual ramblings, when the question was being popped.

This philosophizing is intended as a preface or premonitory symptom of a story, illustrative of the trait; which, like measles, when repelled by cold air, has struck in upon my memory, and which, carrying out the idea, requires, like the aforesaid measles, to be brought to the surface in order that I may feel relieved.

Among the many acquaintances that my profession enabled me to make in the swamp, no one afforded me more pleasure than Jerry Wilson, the son of a small planter resident some few miles from my *shingle*. There was something so manly and frank in his bearing that our feelings were irresistibly attracted towards him. In my case it proved to be mutual : he seemed to take the same interest in me, and we soon became bosom friends. A severe attack of congestive fever that I carried him through successfully, riveted him to me for ever ; and Jerry, upon all and every occasion, stood ready to take up the gauntlet in my defence, as willingly as in his own. Being very popular in the neighbourhood, he became of great assistance to me, by advocating my cause, and extending, by his favourable representations, my circle of practice.

The plantation adjoining Jerry's father's was possessed by an old, broken-down Virginian, who, having dissipated one fortune in conforming to the requirements of fashionable life, had come into the swamp, to endure its many

privations, in order that he might recruit his impoverished finances.

Adversity, or something better, had taught him the folly of the prominent foible of the Virginian—insane state pride, and consequent individual importance. His mind was prepared to test men by the proper criterion—merit, without regard to the adventitious circumstances of birth, wealth, or nativity.

Major Smith deserves the meed, I believe, for being the first one of the race to acknowledge that he was not an F. F.; which confession, showing his integrity of character, proved to me that he really was one of the very first of the land. But, in describing the father, I am neglecting by far the most interesting, if not the most important character of the story—his daughter—a sweet blooming girl of seventeen, at the time of which I write. Ah! she was the bright exemplar of her sex! Look in her eye—so luminous, yet so tender, and far down in its dreamy still waters, you could see the gems of purity and feeling glimmering; listen to her voice—and never yet forest bird, on the topmost leafy bough, gave forth such a gush of melody, as when it rose and melted away in a laugh; her modesty and timidity—you have seen the wild fawn, when, pausing on the brink of some placid lake, it sees its beautiful image reflected in the waters—thus shrank she, as if into herself, when voice of love, or praise, or admiration stole into her ears—and yet, with all her maidenly reserve and timidity, she loved and was beloved. Knowing that I am a bachelor, think not, in this recital, that my swelling heart is tearing open anew wounds which time and philosophy have just enabled me to heal. No! my fair friend—for friend she was, and is—never kindled in my heart the flames of love, or heard aught of the soft impeachment from me; for, long before I had seen her,

the “Swamp Doctor” had wedded his books and calling —rather a frigid bride, but not an unprolific one, and her yearly increase, instead of bringing lines of anxiety to my brow, smooths the wrinkles that care and deep thought—certainly it cannot be age—Lord! Lord! I have broken my wig spring—have dropped upon my visage!

My friend Jerry was the favoured mortal, and, without doubt, in an equal intensity reciprocated her love; but cowardice had hitherto prevented an avowal upon his part, and the two lovers, therefore, dwelt in a delicious state of uncertainty and suspense. No one, to know Jerry, as the majority of men—going through the world with their noses either too elevated or too depressed for observation—know their kind, would have thought him a coward: but I knew, that, as respected women, a more arrant poltroon did not exist. He would have met any peril that resolution, strength, or a contempt for life could overcome, without fear of the consequences or the least tremor; and yet he dared not for his life tell a pretty girl “that he loved her, and would be highly pleased, and sorter tickled, too, if she would marry him.” There was something more terrible in the idea of such an avowal, than fighting bears, hugging Indians, or strangling panthers.

The poor girl, with the intuitive perception of her sex, had long perceived that Jerry loved her as ardently as if the avowal on his part had already been made. Almost daily she saw him, eagerly she awaited a declaration, but poor Jerry never could get his courage to the sticking point; like Bob Acres, it would ooze out at his fingers’ points, in spite of himself and his determination to bring things to the condition of a fixed fact.

Matters were in this state when I became fully acquainted with them; she was willing, he was willing, and

yet, if they kept on in the way they were pursuing, they both bid fair to remain in single blessedness for a long time to come. Deeply interested in the welfare of both parties, I thought I could not manifest my sympathy better than by kindly intervening and producing that crisis which I knew would accord with the feelings of both.

A slight attack of fever of the lady's, not requiring medical aid, but which a father's fears magnified, and would not be allayed until I had been sent for, introduced me fully to the confidence of the daughter; and a trite experiment, which I tried upon her, convinced me that all that my friend Jerry had to do was to ask, and it would be given.

Holding my fair patient's hand, which, resting in mine, looked like a pearl in a setting of jet, I placed my fingers upon her pulse, and, whilst pretending to number it, accidentally, as it were, mentioned Jerry's name—the sudden thrill that pervaded the artery assured me that she loved—lifting my eyes to her face, I gave her an expressive look, which suffused her beauteous countenance, as if she was passing into the second stage of scarlet fever.

My next duty was to seek Jerry. I found him seated on a log, under a shady willow by the edge of the bayou, pole in hand, assuming to be angling. The tense state of his line, and an occasional quiver of the pole, indicated that a fish was hooked. Passing unnoticed by him, a stranger would have come to one of three conclusions: that he was deranged, in love, or a born fool.

Walking up to him briskly, without his hearing me, although I made considerable noise getting down the bank, I slapped him on the shoulder to engage his attention, and, as I had several patients to visit, and time was precious, without waiting for the usual salutations of the

day, commenced my address in a real quarter race manner:—

“Jerry, for a sensible man, and a fellow of courage, you are the d—dest fool and coward unhung. You love a girl—the girl loves you. You know that the old people are willing, and that the girl is only waiting for you to pop the question, to say ‘Yes!’ and yet, instead of having the thing over, like white folks, and becoming the head of a respectable family, here you sit, like a knot on a tree, with the moss commencing to grow on your back, pretending to be fishing, and yet not knowing that a big cat is almost breaking your line to shivers.

“Now I want to do you a service, and you must take my advice. Jerk that fish out, take the hook out of his mouth, and then put him back in the bayou—perhaps his sweetheart was waiting for him when he got hung; and as you are in a like predicament, you should be able to say to the gal, ‘That mercy I to others show, that mercy show to me!’ Go home, put on a clean shirt, shave that hair off your face and upper lip; for a sensible woman never yet accepted a man, with nothing but the tip of his nose visible from its wilderness of hair. Dress yourself decently, go up to old Smith’s, wait till you get rested, then ask the girl to take a walk in the garden—gardens are a h—ll of a place to make love in—to look at the flowers, to eat radishes, to pluck grapes—anything for an excuse to get her there—and when you have got her under the arbour, don’t fall on your knees, or any of your fool novel notions, but stand straight up before her, take both of her hands in yours, look her dead in the eyes, and ask her, in a bold, manly way—as if you were pricing pork—to marry you. Will you do it? Speak quick! I’m interested in the matter, for if you don’t do it to-day, by the Lord, I will, for myself, to morrow. I have held off for

you long enough ; and if you don't bring matters to a close, as I say, in the next twenty-four hours, as cold weather is coming on, I'll try my hand myself in the courting line—you know doctors are the very devil amongst the women !”

This method of address alarmed Jerry, and he promised he would do as I directed.

Accompanying him home, I saw him fairly dressed, and then left him, as the demands of my patients were urgent.

Jerry mounted his steed, and set off at a brisk canter for Major Smith's. It was only a mile and a half, and would have been travelled in a quarter of an hour, had the steed kept his gait. But, somehow, as the distance shortened, the canter ceased, and a pace superseded it ; the last half, his rate had moderated to a walk ; and when he made the last turn in the road, his horse was browsing the grass and cane. Up to the last few hundred yards, Jerry was as brave as a panther with cubs, and determined on following out my prescription to the letter ; but the moment the house, with its white chimneys, commenced appearing round the bend of the bayou, the white pin feathers began to peep out in his heart, and verily, nothing, I believe, but my threat, if he proved recreant to-day, of courting her myself on the morrow, kept him from giving up the chase, and retracing his steps home.

But the house was reached, and the hearty voice of the Major, bidding him alight, cut off all retreat. He was fairly in it.

Jerry got down, left the yard gate carefully open behind him, led his horse up the Major's fine grass-walk to the steps, and was about bringing him with him into the house, when a servant relieved him of the task by carrying the steed to the stable. Not noticing the air of as-

tonishment with which the old Major was regarding him, he shook hands with the negro for Major Smith, and bowing to a large yellow water-jar, addressed it as “Miss Mary,” and then finished the performances by sitting down in a large basket of eggs; the sudden yielding of his seat, and the laughter of both father and daughter, aroused him to a full consciousness of how ridiculously he was acting. His apologies and explanations only served to render bad worse, and he therefore wisely determined to take a chair and say nothing more. Dinner was shortly announced, and this he concluded in very respectable style, without making any more serious mistake than eating cabbage with a spoon, or helping the lady to the drum-stick of the chicken. A cigar was smoked after dinner, and then the old Major, giving a shrewd guess how the land lay, declared that he must take his afternoon nap, and retired, leaving the field to Jerry and the daughter. “Now or never,” was the motto with Jerry.

The old Major, in addition to planting cotton, and retrieving a dissipated fortune, was a great dabbler in horticulture, and had bestowed great attention upon the cultivation of the grape. By much care and grafting, he had so improved upon the common varieties of the country as to render them but slightly inferior to the choicest foreign specimens. An extensive arbour was in the middle of the garden—the finest and most extensive in the swamp—and this was literally covered with the ruddy clusters of grapes, now in the fullest tide of ripeness.

“Now or never,” I say, was the word with Jerry. Making a desperate effort, he faltered out, “Miss Mary, your father has a very fine garden! shall we go look at the grapes? I am very fond of them, Miss Mary! do you like grapes, Miss Mary? Ha! ha!”—the cold sweat bursting out from every pore.

"Very much, Mr. Wilson, and pa's are really very fine, considering that they have not the quality of being exotics to recommend them to our taste. I will accompany you to taste them with much pleasure," replied Miss Mary; and tripping into the house, soon appeared, with the sweetest little sun-bonnet on, that witching damsel ever wore.

Jerry, frightened nearly to death at the awful propinquity of the "question popping," could scarcely stand, for his agitation; and poor Miss Mary, apprehending from Jerry's manner that the garden was destined to become the recipient of some awfully horrible avowal—perhaps Jerry had murdered somebody, and his conscience was forcing him to disclose; or he had discovered that an insurrection of the negroes was contemplated; or—surely he was not going to make a declaration—oh, no! she knew it was not anything of that kind—began to participate in Jerry's embarrassment and trepidation. More like criminals proceeding to execution, than young people going to pluck grapes, they sought the garden; the gate was closed behind them, and in a few moments more they stood under the arbour.

The grapes were hanging down upon all sides in the greatest profusion; and, twining their purple masses together, seemingly cried out, "Come eat us!"

Jerry was the very picture of terror. Oh! how he wished that he was safe at home! But it was too late to retreat—he could only procrastinate. But still, men had gone as far as walking in a secluded garden with a lady, and then died old bachelors. But then that infernal doctor to-morrow—the die was cast, he would go on. The question was, how should he approach the subject, so as not to destroy life in the young lady, when the dreadful business of his visit was announced? He must prepare

her for it gradually—the grapes offered an introductory—the impolite fellow, not to offer her any during the long time they had been in the arbour—they had just a second before reached it.

Plucking off a large bunch, he handed them to her, and selected a similar one for himself. They were devoured in silence, Jerry too badly frightened to speak, and Mary wondering what in the world was to come next. The grapes were consumed, another pair of bunches selected, and the sound of their champing jaws was all that broke the stillness. Jerry's eyes were fixed on his bunch, and Mary was watching the motions of an agile snail. The cluster was in process of disappearance, when Jerry, summoning his whole energies, commenced his declamation: “Miss Mary, I have something to impart”—here he came to a full stop, and looked up, as if to draw inspiration from heaven; but the umbrageous foliage intercepted his view, and only the grapes met his eye—and their juice requires to be gone through with several processes, before much exhilaration or eloquence can be drawn from it. Plucking a quantity, he swallowed them, to relieve his throat, which was becoming strangely dry and harsh.

Miss Mary, poor girl, was sitting there, very much confused, busily eating grapes; neither she nor Jerry knew, whilst continuing to eat, the quantity that they had consumed: their thoughts were elsewhere.

“Miss Mary,” again upspoke Jerry, “you must have seen long before this—but la! your bunch is eaten—have some more grapes, Miss Mary? I like them very much”—and amidst much snubbling and champing, another package of grapes was warehoused by the lovers.

Jerry's fix was becoming desperate; time was flying rapidly, and he knew one subject would soon be ex-

hausted, for he could eat but few more grapes. Oh! how he wished that fighting a panther, fist-fight, had been made one of the conventionalities of society, and assumed to be declaratory of the soft passion! how quickly would his bride be wooed!—but those infernal words! he could never arrange them so as to express what he meant. “Miss Mary, you must know that I saw Dr. Tensas, to-day, he told me—have some more, Miss Mary, they won’t hurt you. I have come expressly to ask you—have another bunch, let me insist. I have come, Miss Mary, to propose—another small bunch”—“Mary, I have come,” he almost shrieked, “to ask you to have—only a few more—Oh! Lord!” and he wiped the cold sweat off. Poor fellow! his pluck would not hold out.

Mary, frightened at his vehemence, said nothing, but eat on mechanically, anxious to hear what it was that Jerry wished to disclose.

Again he marshalled his forces: the sun was declining in the west, and the morrow would, perhaps, see the “Swamp Doctor,” with his glib tongue, breathing his vows—“Miss Mary, I—I love—grapes—no, you—grapes—will you have me—some grapes—marry me—no grapes—yes, me! Oh! Lord! it is all over! You will—bless you—I must have a kiss. You haven’t consented yet—but you must!” The barrier seemed to drop, the spell was lifted off his tongue, and Jerry, in a stream of native eloquence, running the fiercer for being so long pent up, plead his cause; could it be unsuccessful? Oh! no! Mary had made up her mind long ago.

Side by side, now, all their diffidence vanished; they sat under the blessed arbour, and discoursed of their past fears, and bright hopes for the future! Jerry held the head of his mistress on his leal and noble breast, and, as in a sweet and pure strain he pictured forth the quiet do-

mestic life they were to lead when married, Mary could scarcely believe that the impudent fellow who now talked so glibly, and stole, in spite of her rebukes, kisses unnumbered, was the timid nervous swain of a few minutes before.

But lo! behold what a sudden transformation! Has Jerry struck some discordant note in his sweet melody of the future—for Mary's features are contracted, as if with pain, and her pretty face, in spite of herself, wears a vinegar aspect. Rather early, I opine, for ladies to commence the shrew—if I am wrong, lady reader, attribute the error to the ignorance of an old bachelor. Jerry, too, seems to partake of the sour contagion—he stamps upon the ground, writhes his body about, and presses his hand upon his stomach, ignorant, I presume, of anatomy. He meant to lay them over his heart, poor fellow! he got too low down. Mary, too, is evincing the ardency of her affection; and with the same deplorable ignorance of the locality of the organs. Verily, love is affecting them singularly. It may be a pleasant passion, but that couple, who certainly have a fresh, I will not say genuine, article of love, look like anything but happy accepted lovers. What can be the matter? They have just read an extract from one of Cowper's bu-colics—but can poetry produce such an effect? They groan, and writhe their bodies about, and would press their hearts, if *they* only lay where their digestive apparatus certainly does. Can the grapes have anything to do with their queer contortions? “Heavens!” Jerry cries, as a horrid suspicion flashes over his mind, “The cholera! The cholera! Dearest, we will die together, locked in each other's arms!” and Jerry sought to embrace his lady love; but she was *scrouched up*, I believe the ladies term it, and as he had assumed the same globular position, approximation could not be



effected, and death had acquired another pang, from their having to meet him separate.

Fortunately for them, the Major had got his sleep out some hours before, and, becoming anxious at their prolonged stay, set out to seek them. As the garden was a quiet, secluded place, he thought them most likely to be there, and there he found them, labouring under the influence, not so much of love as—the truth must out—an overdose of grapes: and you know how they affect the system.

A boy was despatched post haste after me. Fortunately I was at home, and quickly reached the spot. I reached the house, and was introduced immediately to the apartment where both the patients lay. A glance at their condition and position explained the cause fully of their disease. A hearty emetic effected a cure; and the first child of Jerry and Mary Wilson was distinctly marked on the left shoulder with a bunch of grapes.



HOW TO CURE FITS.



Not none of the least difficult problems, in the practice of medicine, is the distinguishing between cases of real disease, and those that are feigned. It is a great stumbling block in the path of young practitioners, and even the old members of the fraternity find a few chips of it in their way occasionally. To such a degree may the art of dissimulation be carried, that nothing but the eye of suspicion and blind presentiment will lead us to detect the imposition. I have known a case of simulated disease, after deceiving some of the first physicians in the South, and notwithstanding almost every species of treatment, to be cured by an energetic, liberal administration of the negro-whip. But this is a remedy that fearful humanity will not allow us to use, and consequently I never resort to it, but use equally as effective, but uninjurious means.

Shortly after I commenced practice, I was sent for in a great hurry to see a case of fits in the person of a negro wench, belonging to a plantation a few miles from where I was located. The fit was over when I reached the place, and I found the patient resting very composedly and showing no evidence of present or past disease ; but the testimony of her master went to show that she had had one of the worst fits he had ever seen, and he ought to know something about fits, as he had lived several years in Arkansas, where the doctors invariably throw every case into fits as preliminary to a cure.

I made a prescription suitable to his description, and returned home, only to be sent for in greater haste the

next day, and so on every day for a week, the fits seeming to increase in intensity under my treatment. I remarked, as a peculiarity of her case, that on Sundays, and when rain prevented her being put out to work, she escaped the attack ; but hardly could the hoe-handle salute her palm in the cotton-field, before she would be screeching, yelping, and struggling like a friend of mine, who, camping out, made his pillow of a fallen, but still tenanted hornets' nest.

I became desperate ; the owner was becoming tired of sending for me, and my reputation was suffering, for the patient was getting worse. I examined her again thoroughly, but nothing could I find in her digestive, arterial, nervous, muscular, or osseous systems, to indicate disease. I shaved all the wool off her head to feel for depressed skull-bones, and commencing the *Materia Medica* at Acetic Acid, administered through to Zingiber, concluding the course by knocking her senseless with a galvanic battery ; but she stood fits, treatment, and everything else without change, and not till a strong impression rested on my mind that she was feigning, did a different course of treatment suggest itself to me. The plantation lay on both sides of a deep bayou, the link of connexion a high wooden bridge. I happened in one day at the house, when I perceived four negroes approaching the bridge from the opposite field, bearing some object in a blanket.

Finding, on inquiry, that my patient had that morning started to work in that part of the plantation, I readily surmised that the blanket aforesaid contained my case of fits.

Asking the overseer to accompany me, we advanced to meet the negroes, who seemed to have great difficulty in keeping the object in the blanket ; we met them just as

they reached the centre of the bridge, the water underneath being some eight or ten feet deep.

"Who have you got there?" I asked.

"Hannah, sir, has got another of her fits," replied one of the negroes.

"Put her down on the bridge and let me examine her."

It was done; it required the united strength of the four negroes to hold her still whilst I made the necessary examination, the result of which confirmed my impression that she was simulating. I thundered almost in her ears, but she gave no answer, and I determined to put in execution my new plan of treatment.

"Pick her up and throw her in the bayou," I said, very clearly and precisely.

Knowing I rarely said what I did not mean, the negroes yet hesitated somewhat at the singular command, afraid either to obey or refuse.

"Throw her in!" I yelled, giving a thundering stamp on the bridge.

No longer in doubt, the negroes picked up the blanket, and giving it a few preliminary swings, to acquire momentum, were about to cast away, when, with a loud yell, the case of fits burst from their hold and made tracks for the cotton-field. I am pretty fleet myself, as were the negroes, but that *poor diseased invalid* beat us all, and had hoed considerably on a row before we reached her. A liberal flagellation completed the cure, and she has never been troubled with fits since!

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

It was the spring of 183—, the water from the Mississippi had commenced overflowing the low swamps, and rendering travelling on horseback very disagreeable. The water had got to that troublesome height, when it was rather too high for a horse, and not high enough for a canoe or skiff to pass easily over the submerged grounds.

I was sitting out under my favourite oak, congratulating myself that I had no travelling to do just then,—it was very healthy—when my joy was suddenly nipped in the bud by a loud hallo from the opposite side of the bayou. Looking over, and answering the hail, I discerned first a mule, and then something which so closely resembled an ape or an ourang outang, that I was in doubt whether the voice had proceeded from it, until a repetition of the hail, this time coming unmistakeably from it, assured me that it was a human.

“ Massa doctor at home ?” yelled the voice.

“ Yes, I am the doctor ; what do you want ?”

“ Massa sent me with a letter to you.”

Jumping in the skiff, a few vigorous strokes sent me to the opposite shore, where the singular being awaited my coming.

 He was a negro dwarf of the most frightful appearance ; his diminutive body was garnished with legs and arms of enormously disproportionate length ; his face was hideous : a pair of tushes projected from either side of a double hare-lip ; and taking him altogether, he was the nearest resemblance to the ourang outang mixed with the devil,

that human eyes ever dwelt upon. I could not look at him without feeling disgust.

"Massa Bill sent me with a letter," was his reply to my asking him his business.

Opening it, I found a summons to see a patient, the mother of a man named Disney, living some twenty miles distant by the usual road. It was in no good humour that I told the dwarf to wait until I could swim my horse over, and I would accompany him.

By the time I had concluded my preparations, and put a large bottle of brandy in my pocket, my steed was awaiting me upon the opposite shore.

"Massa tolle me to tell you ef you didn't mine swimming a little you had better kum de nere way."

"Do you have to swim much?"

"Oh no, massa, onely swim Plurisy Lake, and wade de back water a few mile, you'll save haf de way at leste."

I looked at the sun. It was only about two hours high, and the roads were in such miserable condition that six miles an hour would be making fine speed, so I determined to go the near way, and swim "Pleurisy slough."

"You are certain you know the road, boy?"

"Oh, yes, massa, me know um ebery inch ob de groun'; hunted possum an' coon ober him many a night. Massa, you ain't got any 'baccy, is you?"

"There's a chaw—and here's a drink of brandy. I'll give you another if you pilot me safe through, and a good pounding if you get lost."

"Dank you, Massa, um's good. No fere I lose you, know ebery inch of de groun'."

I had poured him out a dram, not considering his diminutive stature, sufficient to unsettle the nerves of a stout man, but he drank it off with great apparent relish; and

by this time, everything being ready, we commenced ploughing our way through the muddy roads.

We made but slow progress. I would dash on, and then have to wait for the dwarf, who, belabouring his mule with a cudgel almost as large as himself, strove in vain to keep up.

The road was directly down the bayou, for some miles. There were few settlers on it then, and the extent of their clearing consisted of a corn-patch. They were the pre-emptioners or squatters; men who settled upon government land before its survey, and awaited the incoming of planters with several negroes to buy their claims, themselves to be bought out by more affluent emigrants. To one of the first-mentioned class—the pre-emptioners—my visit was directed, or rather to his mother, who occupied an intermediate grade between the squatter and the small planter, inasmuch as she possessed one negro, the delectable morsel for whom I was waiting every few hundred yards.

It wanted but an hour to sundown when we reached the place where it was optional with me, either to go the longer route by the bayou, or save several miles by cutting across the bend of the stream, having, however, to swim “Pleurisy slough” if I did so.

The path across was quite obscure, and it would be dark by the time we crossed; but the negro declared he knew every inch of the way, and as saving distance was a serious consideration, I determined to try it and “Pleurisy slough.”

Taking a drink to warm me, for the dew that had commenced to fall was quite chilling, I gave one to the negro, not noticing the wild sparkle of his eye or the exhilaration of his manner.

We pressed on eagerly, I ahead as long as the path

lasted ; but it giving out at the edge of the back water, it became necessary for the negro to precede and pilot the way.

I followed him mechanically for some distance, relying on his intimate knowledge of the swamp, our steeds making but slow progress through the mud and water.

When we entered the swamp I had remarked that the sun was in our faces ; and great was my astonishment, when we had travelled some time, on glancing my eye upwards to see if it had left the tree-tops, to perceive its last beams directly at my back, the very reverse of what it should have been. Thinking perhaps that it was some optical illusion, I consulted the moss on the trees, and its indication was that we were taking the back track. I addressed the negro very sharply for having misled me, when, instead of excusing himself, he turned on me his hideous countenance and chuckled the low laugh of drunkenness. I saw that I had given him too much brandy for his weak brain, and that he was too far gone to be of any assistance to me in finding the way.

Mine was a pleasant situation truly. To return home would be as bad as to endeavour to go on ; it would be night at any rate before I could get out of the swamp ; and after it fell, as there was no moon, it would be dangerous to travel, as the whole country was full of lakes and sloughs, and we might be precipitated suddenly into one of them, losing our animals if not being drowned ourselves.

It was evident that I would have to pass the night in the swamp, my only companion the drunken dwarf. I had nothing to eat, and no weapons to protect myself if assailed by wild beasts ; but the swamp was high enough to preclude the attack of anything but an alliga-

tor, and their bellow was resounding in too close proximity to be agreeable.

Fortunately, being a cigar-smoker, I had a box of matches in my pocket, so I would have a fire at least. My next care was to find a ridge sufficiently above the water to furnish a dry place for building a fire and camp. After considerable search, just at night-fall the welcome prospect of a cane ridge above the overflow met my gaze ; hurrying up the negro, who by this time was maudlin drunk, I reached the cane, and forcing my way with considerable difficulty through it until I got out of the reach of the water, dismounted, and tying my horse, took the negro down and performed the same office for his mule.

My next care was to gather materials for a fire before impenetrable darkness closed over the swamp ; fortunately for me, a fallen oak presented itself not ten steps from where I stood. To have a cheerful blazing fire was the work of a few minutes. Breaking off sufficient cane-tops to last the steeds till morning, I stripped my horse—the mule had nothing on but a bridle—and with the saddle and cane-leaves made me a couch that a monarch, had he been as tired as I was, would have found no fault with. As the negro was perfectly helpless, and nearly naked, I gave him my saddle blanket, and making him a bed at a respectful distance, bade him go to sleep.

Replenishing the fire with sufficient fuel to last till morning, I lit a cigar, and throwing myself down upon my fragrant couch, gave myself up to reflections upon the peculiarity of my situation. Had it been a voluntary bivouac with a set of chosen companions, it would not have awakened half the interest in my mind that it did, for the attending circumstances imparted to it much of the romantic.

There, far from human habitation, my only companion

a hideous dwarf, surrounded with water, the night draped darkly around, I lay, the cane-leaves for my bed, the saddle for my pillow ; the huge fire lighting up the darkness for a space around, and giving natural objects a strange, distorted appearance, bringing the two steeds into high relief against the dark background of waving cane, which nodded over, discoursing a wild, peculiar melody of its own. Occasionally a loud explosion would be heard as the fire communicated with a green reed ; the wild hoot of an owl was heard, and directly I almost felt the sweep of his wings as he went sailing by, and alighted upon an old tree just where the light sank mingling with the darkness. I followed him with my eye, and as he settled himself, he turned his gaze towards me ; I moved one of the logs, and his huge eyes fairly glistened with light, as the flames shot up with increased vigour ; the swamp moss was flowing around him in long, tangled masses, and as a more vivid gleam uprose, I gazed and started involuntarily. Had I not known it was an owl surrounded with moss that sat upon that stricken tree, I would have sworn it was the form of an old man, clad in a sombre flowing mantle, his arm raised in an attitude of warning, that I gazed upon. A cane exploding, startled the owl, and with a loud “ tu whit, tu whoo,” he went sailing away in the darkness. The unmelodious bellow of the alligator, and the jarring cry of the heron, arose from a lake on the opposite side of the cane ; whilst the voices of a myriad of frogs, and the many undistinguishable sounds of the swamp, made the night vocal with discordancy.

My cigar being by this time exhausted, I took the bottle from my pocket, and taking a hearty drink to keep the night air from chilling me when asleep, was about to restore it to its place, and commend myself to slumber,

when, glancing at the dwarf, I saw his eyes fixed upon me with a demoniac expression that I shall never forget.

"Give me a dram," he said very abruptly, not pre-facing the request by those deferential words never omitted by the slave when in his proper mind.

"No, sir, you have already taken too much; I will give you no more," I replied.

"Give me a dram," he again said, more fiercely than before.

Breaking off a cane, I told him that if he spoke to me in that manner again I would give him a severe flogging.

But to my surprise he retorted, "D—n you, white man, I will kill you ef you don't give me more brandy!" his eyes flashing and sparkling with electric light.

I rose to correct him, but a comparison of my well developed frame with his stunted deformed proportions, and the reflection that his drunkenness was attributable to my giving him the brandy, deterred me.

"I will kill you," he again screamed, his fangs clashing, and the foam flying from his mouth, his long arms extended as if to clutch me, and the fingers quivering nervously.

I took a hasty glance of my condition. I was lost in the midst of the swamp, an unknown watery expanse surrounding me; remote from any possible assistance; the swamps were rapidly filling with water, and if we did not get out to-morrow or next day, we would in all probability be starved or drowned; the negro was my only dependence, to pilot me to the settlements, and he was threatening my life if I did not give him more brandy; should I do it or not? Judging from the effects of the two drinks I had given him, if he got possession of the bottle it might destroy him, or at least render him incapable of travelling, until starvation and exposure would



"Closer and firmer his gripe closed upon my throat, barring out the sweet life's breath."—Page 199.



destroy us. My mind was resolved upon that subject ; I would give him no more. There was no alternative, I would have to stand his assault ; considering I was three times his size, a fearful adventure, truly, thought I, not doubting a moment but that my greater size would give me proportionate strength ; I must not hurt him, but will tie him until he recovers.

The dwarf, now aroused to maniacal fury by the persistence in my refusal, slowly approached me to carry his threat into execution. The idea of such a diminutive object destroying without weapons a man of my size, presented something ludicrous, and I laughingly awaited his attack, ready to tie his hands before he could bite or scratch me. Wofully I underrated his powers !

With a yell like a wild beast's, he precipitated himself upon me ; evading my blow, he clutched with his long fingers at my throat, burying his talons in my flesh, and writhing his little body around mine, strove to bear me to earth.

I summoned my whole strength, and endeavoured to shake him off ; but, possessing the proverbial power of the dwarf, increased by his drunken mania to an immense degree, I found all my efforts unavailing, and, oh God ! horrors of horrors, what awful anguish was mine, when I found him bearing me slowly to earth, and his piercing talons buried in my throat, cutting off my breath ! My eyes met his with a more horrid gleam than that he glared upon me : his was the fire of brutal nature, aroused by desire to intense malignancy ; and mine the gaze of despair and death. Closer and firmer his gripe closed upon my throat, barring out the sweet life's breath. I strove to shriek for help, but could not. How shall I describe the racking agony that tortured me ? A mountain, heavier than any earth's bosom holds, was pressing upon my

breast, slowly crushing me to fragments. All kinds of colours first floated before my eyes, and then everything wore a settled, intensely fiery red. I felt my jaw slowly dropping, and my tongue protruding, till it rested on the hellish fangs that encircled my throat. I could hear distinctly every pulsation of even the minutest artery in my frame. Its wild singing was in my ears like the ocean wave playing over the shell-clad shore. I remember it all perfectly, for the mind, through all this awful struggle, still remained full of thought and clearness. Closer grew the gripe of those talons around my throat, and I knew that I could live but a few moments more. I did not pray. I did not commend my soul to God. I had not a fear of death. But oh! awful were my thoughts at dying in such a way—suffocated by a hellish negro in the midst of the noisome swamp, my flesh to be devoured by the carrion crow, my bones to whiten where they lay for long years, and then startle the settler, when civilization had strode into the wilderness, and the cane that would conceal my bones would be falling before the knife of the cane-cutter. I ceased to breathe. I was dead. I had suffered the last pangs of that awful hour, and either it was the soul not yet resigned to leave its human tenement, or else immortal mind triumphing over death, but I still retained the sentient principle within my corpse. I remember distinctly when the demon relaxed his clutch, and shaking me to see if I were really dead, broke into a hellish laugh. I remember distinctly when tearing the bottle from me, he pulled my limber body off my couch, and stretched himself upon it. And what were my thoughts? I was dead, yet am living now. Ay, dead as human ever becomes. My lungs had ceased to play; my heart was still; my muscles were inactive; even my skin had the dead clammy touch. Had men been there, they would have placed me

in a coffin, and buried me deep in the ground, and the worm would have eaten me, and the death-rats made nests in my heart, and what was lately a strong man would have become a loathsome mass. But still in that coffin amidst those writhing worms, would have been the immortal mind, and still would it have thought and pondered on till the last day was come. For such is the course of soul and death, as my interpretation has it. I was dead, all but my mind, and that still thought on as vividly, as ramblingly, as during life. My body lay dead in that murderer's swamp, my mind roamed far away in thought, reviewing my carnal life. I stood, as when a boy, by my mother's grave. The tall grass was waving over it, the green sod smiled at my feet. "Mother," I whispered, "your child is weary—the world looks harsh upon him—coldness comes from those who should shelter the orphan. Mother, open your large black eyes and smile upon your child." Again, I stood upon the steamer, a childish fugitive, giving a last look upon my fleeing home, and mingling my tears with the foaming wave beneath. I dragged my exhausted frame through the cotton-fields of the south. My back was wearied with stooping—we were picking the first opening—and as dreams of future distinction would break upon my soul, the strap of the cotton-sack, galling my shoulder, recalled me to myself. All the phases of my life were repeated, until they ended where I lay dead!—dead as mortal ever becomes. I thought, What will my friends say when they hear that on a visit to the sick, I disappeared in the swamp, and was never heard of more?—drowned or starved to death? Will they weep for me? for me?—Not many, I ween, will be the tears that will be shed for me. Then, after the lapse of long years, my bones will be found. I wonder who will get my skull? Perhaps an humble doctor like

myself, who, meditating upon it, will not think that it holds the mind of a creature of his own ambition—his own lofty instincts. He will deem it but an empty skull, and little dream that it held a sentient principle. But I know that the mind will still tenant it. Ha, ha! how that foul ape is gurgling his blood-bought pleasure. I would move if I could, and wrench the bottle from him; but mine is thought, not action. Hark! there is a storm arising. I hear with my ear, that is pressed on the earth, the thunder of the hurricane. How the trees crash beneath it! Will it prostrate those above me? Hark! what awful thunder! Ah me! what fierce pang is that piercing my very vitals? There is a glimmering of light before my eyes. Can it be that I the dead am being restored to human life? Another thunder peal! 'tis the second stroke of my heart—my blood is red-hot—it comes with fire through my veins—the earth quakes—the mountain is rolling off my chest—I live!—I breathe!—I see!—I hear!—Where am I? Who brought me here? I hear other sounds, but cannot my own voice. Where am I? Ah! I remember the dwarf strangled me. Hark! where is he? Is that the sunbeam playing over the trees? What noisome odour like consuming flesh is that which poisons the gale? Great God! can that disfigured half-consumed mass be my evil genius?"

I rose up, and staggering, fell again; my strength was nearly gone. I lay until I thought myself sufficiently recruited to stand, and then got up and surveyed the scene. The animals were tied as I left them, and were eating their cane unconcernedly; but fearfully my well-nigh murderer had paid for his crime, and awful was the retribution. Maddened by the spirits, he had rushed into the flames, and, in the charred and loathsome mass, nothing of the human remained; he had died the murderer's death and been buried in his grave,—a tomb of fire.

To remain longer in the horrid place was impossible ; my throat pained me excessively where the talons had penetrated the flesh, and I could not speak above a whisper. I turned the mule loose, thinking that it would return home, and conduct me out of the swamp. I was not incorrect in my supposition ; the creature led me to its owner's cabin. The patient had died during the night.

My account of the dwarf's attack did not surprise the family ; he had once, when in a similar condition, made an attack upon his mistress, and would have strangled her had assistance not been near.

His bones were left to bleach where they lay. I would not for the universe have looked again upon the place ; and his mistress being dead, there were none to care for giving him the rites of sepulture.



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